

Glasgow HF Outdoor Club

Risk assessment of club activities

Approved by the committee at its meeting on 28 October 2025

Glasgow HF Outdoor Club (HF) organises low- and high-level walks, occasionally using (mountain) bikes or kayaking to access remote hills. Sometimes it organises high-level routes involving scrambling. It also occasionally organises social events (usually at commercial venues).

General risk assessment

Walking, hillwalking and scrambling are potentially dangerous sports with progressively increasing risks of injury.

HF makes members aware of these risks in its safety policy: this is made available to new members and circulated periodically to all members by direct email and by making it available on the club's website(s).

The risks of these activities include:

(1) Getting lost

This risk increases from low to high level walking due to the more difficult terrain and greater navigation skills required, especially in bad weather and/or winter conditions

Mitigation:

- only recognised club walk organisers with appropriate navigation skills may organise club walks
- the club encourages and subsidises members to attend navigation courses run by Aspen Outdoors and/or Mountaineering Scotland: high level walk organisers are recommended to attend this course
- the club also encourages and subsidises experienced high level walk organisers to complete the more rigorous and accredited silver NNAS course
- the club recommends and subsidises high level walk organisers to attend a mountain leadership course organised by Aspen Outdoors: this course offers training in how to manage a walk group safely by actions before and during the event

(2) Injury due to tripping, slipping or falling

- the risk of injury associated with low level walking is low but it increases with high level walking due to the typically more severe, possibly rocky, terrain
- the risk of a slip or fall is increased in winter if there are snowy/icy conditions on the route

Mitigation

- walk organisers insist on appropriate footwear and equipment for walks under winter conditions (e.g. the requirement for an ice axe, crampons/compatible boots on high level routes potentially involving snow/ice; or micro spikes on low level routes under these conditions)

- the club encourages and subsidises high-level walkers and particularly high-level walk organisers to attend winter skills courses organised by Aspen Outdoors and/or Mountaineering Scotland
- the club recommends and subsidises high-level walk organisers to complete the nationally accredited mountain first aid safety course run by Outdoor Pursuits
- the club stipulates that a bothy shelter should be carried by every high-level walk group and makes first aid kits and bothy shelters available to high-level walk organisers

(3) Risks associated with scrambling

The consequences of a fall whilst scrambling may potentially be fatal since roping-up is not routinely practiced.

Mitigation

- the club limits any scrambling on club events to grade II maximum (where roping-up is not normally considered necessary for adequate safety)
- only appropriately experienced walk organisers may organise scrambling routes
- the club encourages and subsidises the organisers of scrambling events to attend rope-work and scrambling training courses run by Aspen Outdoors and/or Mountaineering Scotland

(4) Risk of a group being out on a hill overnight

Unexpected injuries, adverse weather or problems with the route, or members of the party being unexpectedly unfit or unwell, may all result in a delay in the group being able to get off the hill safely, or before it is dark.

Mitigation

- the club stipulates that a bothy shelter should be carried by every high-level walk group and makes shelters available to high level walk organisers
- the club has 'late-back' policy whereby a walk organiser can inform the WhatsApp 'club's walk monitoring group' when the party is safely back, or otherwise of any problems, injuries, or if a delayed return is likely
- the club has a standard action plan the monitoring group will implement if it is not informed of a safe return, or about the situation with the walk group, by certain deadlines, including calling the Mountain Rescue.

(5) Risk of hypo- or hyper-thermia

There is a risk of becoming unwell in summer due to hot conditions and/or dehydration, especially on strenuous routes. Conversely, there is a risk of hypothermia in winter in very cold conditions.

Mitigation

- the club's safety policy and website recommend what clothing, gloves, foot ware, and food/fluids are appropriate for both summer and winter conditions
- the club encourages and subsidises high-level walk organisers to complete the nationally accredited mountain first aid safety course run by Outdoor Pursuits

- the club stipulates that a bothy shelter and a mountain first aid kit should be carried by every high-level walk group and makes shelters and first aid kits available to high level walk organisers

Event-specific event risk management

- only paid-up members of the club may RSVP for club walks (potential new members may attend a walk as a guest on up to up to two occasions at the discretion of the walk organiser, depending on then prior walking experience and fitness)
- all walk descriptions on the webpage for the event include a A-C grading system (explained on the website) rating the strenuousness and difficulty of the walk: also details of the amount of ascent, distance and time involved in that particular trip, together with the proposed route (often a link to the route on the Walkhighlands website), a note of any particular difficulties involved and any particular equipment that must be carried (such as crampons and an ice axe in winter)
- the walk webpage for the event includes a statement that attendees are reminded that they must abide by the club's safety policy and code of conduct (and gives a link to the documents on the club's website)

This risk assessment will be reviewed by the committee every two years. The next review is due in October 2027.