



## **Member to Member meets – best practice guidance**

This guidance concerns informal member to member meets such as those organised via Member-to-Member tour pages or via club social media (e.g., Facebook group, WhatsApp or website forums).

These events have not previously been seen as 'official meets'. However, under our terms of insurance, any member to member meet that is 'advertised' via club social media accounts is now considered an 'official meet' and will be covered by third-party and combined liability insurance. This benefit places a responsibility upon the club and its members to ensure that they follow basic best practice in terms of safety and organisation.

The guidance applies to any event advertised through the club in which any member could participate. It does not apply to situations where a meet is organised casually within a small group of friends.

- It includes non-skiing activities such as walking, mountain-biking, climbing etc. if advertised through the Club.

The club recognises that a meet organiser is not responsible for 'leading' the activity; it also wishes to avoid placing onerous requirements on those members who are willing to organise events. However, the meet organiser (i.e., the person(s) proposing the activity) and members should ensure that basic best practice arrangements are followed.

### **1. "Leadership of the Group by the Group"**

- All members must accept responsibility for their own safety. They do so by acting responsibly, carrying necessary kit and taking steps to increase their own skills and experience level before, during and after trips to the hill.
- All members must exercise a duty of care to others in their group at a level commensurate with their own current skill and experience level.
- All members should explicitly accept the risks of mountaineering and accept that if they decide to rely on more experienced members, this is part of that risk.
- All members should take part in dynamic risk assessment discussions and decisions as they arise during the trip.

### **2. The role of the Meet coordinator is solely to coordinate and facilitate logistics of the meet.**

- Suggest an objective, time and place to meet
- Facilitate travel, lift sharing etc.
- Provide and share information on distance, altitude gain and technical difficulty.
- Signpost group members to useful information e.g., kit lists; checking of relevant weather forecast.
- Check access issues (including stalking if relevant) and advise as necessary.
- Liaise with the group to ensure that all required group kit (e.g., first aid kit, group shelter) is brought along.
- Facilitate a discussion within the group about any important medical conditions which the group need to be aware of in the event of an incident.

- Facilitate a discussion about the day's objective and its suitability for the group members at their level of experience and fitness, and given the forecast weather conditions. It is the responsibility of the prospective members to decide if the activity is within their fitness and ability level.
- However, if the group feels it is too much for someone, then it is the group to decide this and to invite that person to withdraw.
- **Prior to setting out on the activity the meet organiser should ensure that:**
  - a) **The names, phone numbers and an 'in case of emergency' contact name / number of all participants are obtained and held by at least two people in the party (i.e., not only the organiser).**
  - b) **At least one external contact should be made aware of the parties' plans, when to expect a return (and therefore when a lack of contact warrants a call to the emergency services). If relevant (i.e., a weekend meet) a route card could be left with a responsible person at accommodation used.**
  - c) **The organiser should account for all participants at the end of the activity and inform the designated external contact of their safe return.**

### **3. Restrict Group size.**

The larger the group size, the more difficult it is to coordinate safely. If more than six members want to do a particular activity, then ideally, they should split themselves down into smaller subgroups before departing. They should be truly autonomous groups responsible for navigating themselves and carrying all necessary individual and group kit.

With 'mixed ability' groups, a system of 'buddying' could be introduced, (less experienced with the more experienced) making it more likely for issues to be picked up and resolved more quickly.

**4. All group members on any Club meet should be Eagle Ski Club members to ensure that their activities are covered by appropriate insurance.** (or should have third party liability insurance through affiliation with a national mountaineering body e.g., Mountaineering Scotland, BMC etc).

### **Appendix.**

N.B. There will be no single 'correct' way to facilitate the setting up of a group check in person as outlined above. An ad-hoc meet may present challenges, for example organising an unfamiliar group of members at last minute in a car park prior to setting off on an activity. Meet organisers may wish to:

- a) Request that each member text the organiser and one other person, with their name, ICE contact name & number, and any other relevant information (assuming all members have mobile phones and adequate signal). This information could then be sent to an external contact.
- b) Collate information (via note app or text on phone, or on paper); second person to photograph this information or write out physical copy. For an example form the [ESC Scottish Route Card](#) may be useful.

These principles of best practice have been adapted from those set out by Mountaineering Scotland in its document ["Supplementary Guidance for Meet up Groups"](#)