

Swansea University Athletic Union Mountaineering Club

Code of Care and Safety

18th April 2008

It is *essential* that you read and *understand* this document.

While it is important to provide guidelines for safety within the mountaineering club, it is too simple to lay down dogmatic rules and regulations which lead people into a false sense of security. Below are some guidelines which should be observed, keeping in mind the above.

Rock Climbing

Members should learn the following:

- Terminology of climbing and instruction of climbing techniques.
- Types of ropes, slings, harnesses, karabiners and other equipment, correct use and their care.
- Belays and belaying, holding a falling body.
- Communication by standard calling systems.
- Abseiling.
- Rope coiling.

You are recommended to carry most of the below on any trip, however this is left to your own discretion. You must not rely on anyone else as you put them at a higher risk.

- A map, at least 1:50,000 in scale and a compass.
- Spare warm clothing, especially gloves, balaclava and a spare sweater as well as windproof and waterproof outer garments.
- Emergency rations.
- A whistle, torch and watch.

The following are essential guidelines when on any trip.

- In general leave word of your route and then keep to it. However, appropriate alternative escape routes in case of emergency or bad weather should be taken into consideration.
- Until you have a great deal of experience, never go out on mountains alone. The minimum recommended number of people for a safe trip is four or more.

- Know where the local mountain rescue posts and nearest telephones are situated.
- An approved safety helmet should be worn when there is danger of rock fall, or a dangerous leader fall.

All equipment must be in good condition. If you are using the equipment you must check it yourself. Do not rely upon others to have checked the equipment.

Winter Climbing

In addition to the above equipment the items below are required for winter rock climbing and walking, particularly on snowy terrain:

- Clothing which is adequate to meet the most adverse conditions should be worn or carried.
- Suitable gloves or mittens.
- A walking axe or two technical axes depending on technical difficulty.
- Crampons.
- An approved safety helmet should be worn when there is danger of rockfall.

Snowy and wintry conditions often present greater hazards and it is essential that you recognise the limitations and capabilities of yourself and your group before embarking on such climbs.

Artificial Climbing Walls

The majority of artificial climbing walls provide their own terms of use, which you will be required to read and agree to before using the wall. These should be adhered to at all times unless it would put you in danger, or you are instructed otherwise by a member of climbing wall staff.

The University Sports Centre wall requires you to use your own judgement as to how to use the wall. While it is common for climbers to solo (un-roped) on a wall, a large number of people will want to be roped, especially at the beginning of the year. The Committee insisting on helmets and ropes would distort the normal process of training and inhibit the climber from developing the judgement on which safety depends. If a climber gets into difficulties, fellow climbers will take steps to provide back up. The club Committee and staff of Swansea University Sports Centre reserve the right to deny access to the wall if, in their judgement, a member is climbing in an unsafe manner.

More Information

Mountaineering is regarded as a particularly dangerous form of recreation. It certainly does involve danger and there will be occasional accidents, but its very danger prompts the most judicious care and good judgement from its participants. Danger concentrates the mind wonderfully and climbers are extremely aware of this.

If you have any questions, club Committee members will be happy to help.