

A. Introduction and general advice for Members

As we have all learned, Covid-19 is highly unpredictable, which makes this kind of advice document subject to the volatility of emerging events and political decisions. Whilst Alpine activities always carry risks, the current pandemic adds other layers of risk, primarily those of threats to health but also risks around travel and accommodation cancellations.

Participants should make sure they are up-to-date on the Covid constraints affecting travel to and accommodation in the locations of the event.

Please check the ACC(UK) website for further information and links.

Tour leaders may also circulate, in a pre-tour briefing, news about Covid-related developments in the places included in the tour.

B. Specific advice for Leaders

No leader should feel pressured into leading an event. Leaders should consider their own vulnerability and that of their families. Unless cancellation is mandated by government rules, tour leaders are expected to remain committed to their planned tour. In the event that a tour leader wants to cancel a tour due to growing concern about the Covid situation but in the absence of new government rules, this should be discussed with the overseas tour coordinator and a proposal put to the Club's Covid sub-group for a cancellation decision.

Keep and use registration information to communicate with the participants for Covid-19 tracking purposes, as per the tour participants list agreed with the office. If anyone within the group subsequently tests positive for Covid-19, with AAC(UK), seek office guidance and support, supply this information to NHS Test and Trace. If the positive test occurs while on tour, consult with the accommodation manager who will advise about regional Covid protocols.

During tour planning agree a cancellation go/no go decision point with the Office and Overseas Tour Coordinator. At this time you can make a conservative decision to cancel the tour. Where possible select this date with group agreement and consider hut and hotel cancellation fees (see section D below).

At the time of the pre-tour briefing email, Tls should check the latest Covid news and use their knowledge of the tour locations to remind participants about prevailing Covid constraints they may face, notably the alpenverein protocols on behaviour and equipment in mountain huts (e.g. need to carry sleeping bags where blankets are not provided, sanitation supplies etc.)

Establish Covid-19 protocols, which may vary from alpenverein protocols, with the Hüttenwirt/ accommodation manager before the start of the tour. Pay attention to boot room, drying room, showering, dining and breakfasting procedures and timetables. If required pre-book arrival and departure times to ensure that social distancing is possible in these confined spaces. Note: a part of the requirement for advance hut bookings is to allow hut staff to plan 'sittings' in busy areas of huts.

Create a plan to deal with participants showing or letting you know about Covid-19 symptoms. Keep it simple:

1. *Before the tour has convened.* No further participation from the individual concerned.
2. *After the tour has started* Inform Hüttenwirt/in and support them in executing their Covid-19 plan. Liaise with emergency services in normal manner. Discontinue tour for all participants. Retreat to nearest safe-haven, self-isolate as required, inform local authorities. Liaise with AAC(UK) office or head of discipline. Facilitate all participants liaison with their insurance companies for medical evacuation to home country.
3. *After the tour is complete.* Liaise with the AAC(UK) office or head of discipline if out of hours.

C. Advice for all participants

Before the event

1. If you (or someone else from your household) have COVID-19 symptoms you should self-isolate in line with government guidelines. You must not take part in the event and inform the tour leader and the office.
2. Book travel and accommodation as flexibly as you can.
3. Consider insuring against cancellation as refunds will not be paid by the Club.
4. Make sure you are familiar with both the UK governments' travel advice and the Covid regulations in the destination Alpine region.

During the event: Follow the guidance and regulations affecting the country and region where you are touring

After the event: Notify the event leader and the AAC(UK) Office immediately if Covid-19 symptoms are suspected in yourself or anyone close to you within 14 days of the event.

D Guidance on Cancellation

The Club recognizes the uncertainty that Covid creates. The Club therefore has developed this policy to re-imburse costs incurred should an event be cancelled for Covid related reasons in line with the agreed expenses guidance of the Club. Participants will receive no re-imbursements when cancellation is mandated by government rules.

Tour leaders will act in a manner that minimizes the cost to the Club of Covid related cancellations (e.g. by agreeing where possible terms that provide 100% refunds in these situations).

1. The Club will be supportive of any event leader/organizer who decides to cancel an arranged event at short notice due to their own assessment of the Covid risk even when Government action does not require cancellation. Such a decision will need to be approved by the Covid sub-group.

Deposits

2. In the event of a Covid related cancellation other than as a result of Government action, any approved deposits that are not refunded by the provider of the accommodation will be re-imbursed by the Club.
3. If the participant withdraws from an event for Covid related reasons any costs over and above the deposit will need to be refunded to the Club. (NB this applies to any withdrawal by a confirmed participant).

Participant travel expenses

4. In circumstances where the Club and its leaders cancel an event for Covid related reasons other than as a result of Government action, the Club will re-imburse non-refundable expenses providing these are:
 - a. deemed reasonable;
 - b. incurred solely for the purposes of the event; and
 - c. are not covered by a participant's insurance policy.
5. A maximum of £300 will be paid for travel related expenses.
6. If the participant withdraws from an event for Covid related reasons no refunds will be payable and any additional costs to the Club will need to be refunded. (NB this applies to any withdrawal by a confirmed participant)
7. If the event is canceled due to a government ruling, no refunds from the Club will be made to participants.