



CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAINEERING INSTRUCTORS

This CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT (the Code) sets out the rights and duties of a member of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (the AMI or Association) when acting within the fields of competence set out below. In this Code the term "Instructor" is used to mean a full member of the AMI. The term "client" is used to mean an individual, group or body with whom the Instructor has a professional relationship, whether for remuneration or as a volunteer and "participant" is used to refer to any person taking part in an enterprise under the control of an Instructor.

This Code should be read in conjunction with MTUKI's "National Guidelines for Climbing and Walking Leaders".

The Code of Conduct (and any changes to it) should be approved at an AGM.

FIELDS OF COMPETENCE

1. An Instructor who holds the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor Award (MCI) may undertake all mountaineering activities, including all aspects of rock climbing, but excluding mountaineering on snow- and ice-covered terrain. If the instructor also holds the Winter Mountain Leader Award, mountain walking in winter conditions may also be undertaken.
2. An Instructor who holds the Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor Award (WMCI) may undertake all mountaineering activities in summer and winter conditions, including all aspects of rock climbing, snow and ice climbing and winter mountaineering.
3. A Trainee member of the Association holds a Mountain Leader Award and has attended an MCI training course. A Trainee member may undertake mountaineering activities covered by awards held. In addition, a Trainee member may undertake other mountaineering activities under supervision of an MCI, WMCI or British Mountain Guide.
4. A Trainee WMCI holds the MCI and the Winter Mountain Leader Award and has completed the training course for the WMCI. A Trainee MCI may undertake mountaineering activities covered by awards held. In addition, a Trainee WMCI may undertake other mountaineering activities under supervision of a WMCI or British Mountain Guide.

NOTE: These awards and their remits are more fully defined in the handbook for each award published from time to time by Mountain Training UK and Ireland (MTUKI).

ARTICLE 1: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTRUCTOR

1(a) The Instructor may instruct the activities referred to in the field of competence for the award or awards held. In giving instruction the following will be given due consideration:

1(a)(i) The Instructor will establish the needs and abilities of the client and will plan the enterprise accordingly.

1(a)(ii) The Instructor will choose the most appropriate teaching method in the circumstances.

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1(a)(ii)(a) The Instructor may lead the client or group or:

1(a)(ii)(b) The Instructor may allow the participant to progress by being placed in an apprentice situation, whilst remaining under the direct supervision of the Instructor.

1(a)(ii)(c) Further progression may involve the participant leading a rope or climbing on a rope independent of the Instructor. Participants may be allowed to choose and navigate walking routes independent of the Instructor. In all cases the Instructor shall be satisfied that such independence does not occasion an unacceptable risk to the student.

1(a)(iii) The Instructor shall ensure that participants are clear as to the meaning of instructions given, particularly where the instructions relate to safety.

1(a)(iv) Wherever possible the Instructor shall discuss any decision to abandon or change a route or plan with the client or participant. However, in the interests of safety the Instructor shall make the final decision.

1(a)(v) The Instructor shall not leave participants alone in the mountains or on a route unless this was the agreed plan, or it is necessitated for the purpose of seeking rescue. In such cases the Instructor shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the participants.

1(b) The Instructor may undertake the role of technical consultant to a client, advising on aspects of mountaineering within the Instructor's field of competence.

1(c) A qualified Instructor may supervise Trainee Instructors in order to allow them to gain quality direct experience prior to being assessed for an award.

'Trainees can gain experience in a wide range of managed positions within organisations where the responsibility for their deployment lies with a suitably competent individual'. - National Guidelines For Climbing and Walking Leaders 5th Edition.

1(c) (i) The Trainee will have undertaken appropriate training for the activities. In such cases the supervising Instructor retains full responsibility for the enterprise and should be responsible for assessing the experience of the Trainee and for making final decisions concerning the appropriate deployment of the Trainee (e.g. choice of route).

1(c) (ii) Deployment should take place in a progressive manner which allows, but does not commence with, remote supervision and records of this progression should be kept by the Instructor and the Trainee. If the Association's logo is displayed, the Instructor will ensure that mentoring begins with direct experience for the Trainee working with a qualified Instructor, before progressive deployment. Mentoring for the Trainee before, during and after working with clients will form an intrinsic part of this process.

1(c) (iii) Clients must be informed of the exact status of the Trainee Instructor, including their formal qualifications and level of experience.

ARTICLE 2: THE STATUS OF THE INSTRUCTOR

2(a) The Instructor may undertake work for clients and will agree individual terms for the enterprise undertaken. The Instructor may work as part of a team on a self-employed basis, but in such cases the Instructor must retain autonomy in decision-making.

2 (b) An Instructor may be employed on a salaried basis and will follow the instructions of the employer, except when the instructions conflict with the Instructor's professional judgement as to the safety of participants. NOTE: An Instructor shall decline to participate in any project that, in the Instructor's professional opinion, would occasion an unacceptable risk to the physical or psychological safety of the participant. In such cases the Instructor may wish to seek advice and support from the Association.

ARTICLE 3: GENERAL PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

3 (a) Mountaineering, by its nature, will involve an element of risk and such risks must be accepted by the client. The Instructor shall endeavour to ensure that the client and participants are made aware of the risks involved in the proposed enterprise.

3 (b) The Instructor shall use suitable equipment, which shall be appropriate for the task, and subject to a routine maintenance programme.

3 (c) The Instructor shall keep informed as to conditions in the mountains, using appropriate weather, snow and avalanche forecasts.

3 (d) (i) The Instructor should maintain the appropriate number of CPD points to retain full membership of the Association and ensure that CPD is relevant to their work.

3 (d) (ii) Members should be familiar with current safe practice and techniques relevant to the areas in which they professionally operate.

3 (d) (iii) Members should keep a record of their personal and professional mountaineering and associated experience.

3 (e) An Instructor shall respond courteously and helpfully to all requests for advice and information about mountaineering matters. Instructors should offer help and advice to aspirant instructors and to professionals from another area. However, the Instructor should be aware of the possible legal implications of giving advice.

3 (f) In the event of an accident, an Instructor shall endeavour to render such assistance as is possible to those in need. However, by giving assistance neither the Instructor nor the participants should be caused unnecessary risks to their safety. It must be remembered that the Instructor's first duty is to the participants and themselves.

3 (g) By example, advice and vigilance the Instructor shall encourage environmental best practice in the mountains, the proper use of access routes and observation of voluntary access restrictions. At all times the Instructor shall display proper respect for the mountain environment and shall abide by the policies of the respective Mountaineering Councils.

ARTICLE 4: INSTRUCTOR/CLIENT RELATIONS

4 (a) When working with young people (under the age of 18 years) it must be remembered that the Instructor must be aware of the legal framework and may be acting in loco-parentis and will need to have particular regard to their safety and welfare. The Instructor should be clear as to the extent of the responsibilities involved and should ensure a clear transfer of responsibility at the commencement and conclusion of the enterprise.

4 (b) The Instructor shall ensure that the terms of engagement are fully agreed with the client. Agreement should be reached between the Instructor and the client on the planned objectives, fees, expenses, equipment and number of participants.

4 (c) The Instructor shall ensure that the client is taught the relevant safety precautions and shall endeavour to encourage the development of a spirit of self-reliance and initiative.

ARTICLE 5: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INSTRUCTOR AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

5 (a) The Instructor shall endeavour to maintain cordial, co-operative relations with mountain centres, the representatives of professional bodies, landowners, rescue organisations and the mountaineering public.

5 (b) Instructors' co-operation with the manufacturers and retailers of clothing and equipment is based on principles of loyalty and reciprocity. It is to be conducted in a spirit of partnership and courtesy, and within the terms of each AMI agreement with the retailers/manufacturer/brand partner, as displayed on the AMI website.

5 (c) The Instructor should, wherever possible, co-operate with MTUKI, the Home Nation Training Boards, The British Mountaineering Council, the Mountaineering Councils of Ireland and Scotland, the Sports Councils and public bodies in general.

ARTICLE 6: GENERAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

6 (a) In order to retain status as a full member, the instructor shall fulfil the Association's requirements for demonstrating Continuing Professional Development, as agreed by the Association's membership at an AGM vote and described on the Association's website.

6 (b) In order to retain status as a full or trainee member, the Instructor shall fulfil the Association's requirements in the Professional Standards Policy by reporting incidents and near misses as described on the Association's website.

6 (c) The Instructor shall hold suitable insurance for civil liability for professional negligence. If the Instructor does not hold such insurance, it must be confirmed that the organisation for which the Instructor is working does hold appropriate insurance. The Instructor shall advise the client as to the extent of insurance cover held.

6 (d) Where the Association's name or logo is used for promotion or marketing purposes, such promotion must be clear, honest and contain no falsehoods or misrepresentations that might bring the Association into disrepute. Only full members may use the logo to advertise, and then only to advertise activities for which they are qualified. Full members may use the logo to advertise courses directed by a member of the Association where such courses are staffed in accordance with National Governing Body guidelines.

6 (e) A dispute or complaint may be referred to the Association and will be decided with reference to this code using the AMI Complaints Procedure.

6 (f) All members of the Association shall ensure that they will always act in a manner that reflects a positive approach to equal opportunities and the elimination of discrimination.

6 (g) An Instructor shall, always seek to enhance the status of the profession of Mountaineering Instructor and the public perception of it. Instructors shall avoid any behaviour that may bring the Association into disrepute.

6 (h) An Instructor who fails to fulfil the obligations contained in this code (be this by action or omission) or who behaves in such a way as to bring the Association into disrepute may be required to account to the Association and may be made subject to sanctions imposed by the Association as detailed in the AMI Complaints Procedure.

6 (i) A serious criminal conviction, or criminal conviction relating to a member's work as a Mountaineering Instructor may be considered to bring the Association into disrepute and may be subject to paragraph 6 (h). In the case of criminal convictions, any sanctions would be reconsidered once any court sanctions have been spent.