



Mountain sports & COVID-19: Recommendations of the Swiss Alpine Club SAC for the practice of mountain sports in times of coronavirus.

As a mountain and outdoor sports enthusiast, you know the importance of the sense of responsibility, risk-aware behaviour and comradeship. Unexpectedly and inexperienced, we are now facing a new virus for an indefinite period of time. We must therefore extend our usual safety precautions by adopting several new measures to minimise the risk of infection when practising mountain sports.

1. Ground rules

In principle, the current recommendations of the Federal Council (status as at 29.04.2020) apply during the coronavirus epidemic, i.e.:

- Meetings of more than 5 people are forbidden.
- Keep at least 2 m distance.
- Wear a mask when maintaining distance is not possible.
- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Cough and sneeze into a handkerchief or the crook of the arm.

The following always applies to the practice of mountain sports:

- Inform yourself in advance about the planned tour.
- Do a conservative tour planning with a realistic self-assessment.
- Adapt your equipment to your tour and to the conditions.
- Always take a first aid kit and a mobile phone with you.

During COVID-19 the following applies in particular:

- Keep the circle of people as small as possible around people living in different households.
- Reduce your risk taking. Stay well below your personal performance limit in all mountain sports and turn back when in doubt.
- Take disinfectant with you and wash or disinfect your hands regularly. A mask should also be in your backpack.
- Follow the usual directives and wear the mask when providing first aid.
- Follow social distancing directives on the way to and from the start of a tour. Distance must also be maintained in private cars.
- Avoid long journeys to the start of a tour.
- Temporarily avoids public transport as much as possible.

2. Specific recommendations by sport discipline

The ground rules must be observed in all sports activities!

Mountain and alpine hiking / Trailrunning

- Stay on the marked trails.
- Be particularly careful when walking through a firn.

Ski touring

- Inform yourself about snow and avalanche conditions.
- Be on the defensive and avoid falls.
- Be aware of the danger of slipping.

Sports climbing (climbing garden) and outdoor bouldering

- Change sector or climbing site if a cliff is overrun.
- Perform remote partner control: require your partner to check each other's knots, carabiners, belay device and harness while supervising one another.
- Avoid highballs and boulders with dangerous landing areas in case of a fall.

Multi-pitch routes/alpine climbs/high mountain tours

- Perform remote partner control: require your partner to check each other's knots, carabiners, belay device and harness while supervising one another.
- Make sure no more than two people are at the belay at the same time.
- Keep handling short and efficient at the belay.

Via ferrata

- Give up the planned via ferrata if several people are already climbing it and jams are foreseeable.
- Keep your distance, be cautious and wait at the start.
- Only overtake if the distance rule can be complied with and no belaying is necessary (flat areas, ledges).

Mountainbike

- Keep a distance of 5 m on the way up, 20 m on the way down and in the plain.
- Drive on the defensive and avoid falls.
- When overtaking, do so quickly and only if sufficient lateral distance can be maintained.