

GOC Definition of Mountain Walking

Mountain walking means walking in hilly or mountainous areas, which does not involve rock climbing, but may involve any of the following:

- going more than 610m (2000 feet) above sea level in the UK or Ireland or to equivalent heights elsewhere
- winter conditions requiring the use of snow goggles, walking ice-axes or walking crampons
- other difficult weather conditions requiring the use of special protective clothing such as waterproofs designed for mountain conditions
- moving on steep and rocky ground, which may require a head for heights and/or the use of scrambling techniques and/or the use of a confidence rope
- difficult navigation, e.g. in mist with no clear path to follow.

'Rock climbing' means the planned use of ropes to ascend or descend.

'Equivalent heights elsewhere' requires a common sense interpretation. In the Alps, for example, conditions equivalent to those found above 610m in the UK would normally be found only at higher elevations, whereas in Iceland, for example, they might be found at elevations lower than 610m.

'Scrambling' in this context means Grade I or Grade II scrambling. It excludes Grade III scrambling as this comes within the GOC definition of rock climbing. The following page of the British Mountaineering Council's website explains what these grades mean:

<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/hill-skills-scrambling>

'Confidence rope' means a rope intended for occasional, unplanned use by a mountain walking leader to assist a participant who becomes nervous on steep or rocky ground.