



Brecon Mountain Rescue Team

Pre-Assessment Information for Prospective Volunteers



Every prospective member volunteering for operational hill duties must demonstrate their mountaineering competence to the team in a formal pre-assessment. There are no exceptions to this rule; whether you're a professional instructor or a casual hill walker, you must pass a pre-assessment before basic training can start.

Purpose of the Pre-Assessment

The pre-assessment will be straightforward for experienced hill walkers or mountaineers. However, casual hill walkers may find it more challenging. The purpose of the pre-assessment is to demonstrate to the team that the prospective member will not be a liability on the hill. It's not a difficult challenge, but is a practical test of hill skills appropriate to the work we do.

Possible outcomes of the assessment are:

Pass	Demonstrates full readiness to begin operational duties (rare).
Conditional Pass	Skill is sufficient for training but not yet operational standard. Guidance is given for improvement prior to a further assessment on completion of basic training.
Fail	Key areas of competence are lacking. Candidates are encouraged to develop skills and reapply (rare).

Assessment Process

The pre-assessment begins with candidates signing a disclaimer confirming that they consider themselves adequately skilled to participate. Personal equipment is checked, and past experience is reviewed. The physical component starts with a short rock scramble, followed by a test of movement over steep ground — a skill far more relevant to our work in South Wales than rock climbing. Candidates will traverse, ascend and descend steep grassy slopes. Confidence and safety on this type of terrain are fundamental to rescue work.

Navigation Assessment

The second part of the assessment focuses on mountain navigation. Candidates should be confident using 1:25,000 scale maps and capable of locating their position with an accuracy of within 150 metres. The navigation exercise lasts about two hours and involves

both compass and distance-measuring skills. This section is usually conducted at night and is the area most likely to determine a conditional pass or fail, as navigation underpins almost everything we do in mountain rescue.

Assessment Outcome

At the end of the assessment, candidates receive a debrief and feedback on each of the assessed skill areas. Those achieving a pass or conditional pass are invited to begin basic training. Candidates who do not meet the required standard receive guidance on improvement and are encouraged to reapply once they have developed the necessary skills. There is no limit on the number of times a candidate may be reassessed.

Commitment to Volunteering

Volunteering with Brecon Mountain Rescue Team takes time, training and commitment. Our team members play a vital role in saving lives across South Wales. If you're ready for the challenge and would like to make a difference, we'd love to hear from you.

For more information or to express your interest, please contact:
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