



## Press Release

21 March 2019

### ***Mountain Safety***

### **New booking procedures for mountain huts on the Mont Blanc “normal route” from Saint-Gervais via the Aiguille du Goûter from the 2019 season onwards**

During summer 2018, there were many incidents of disrespectful behaviour on the trail and in the mountain huts along the Mont Blanc “normal route” from Saint-Gervais. This unacceptable state of affairs, which began several years ago, became more severe in the summer of 2018.

After extensive consultations, conducted in close cooperation with the Mayor of Saint-Gervais, the Prefect of the Haute-Savoie region has made a number of requests and recommendations to ensure that all climbers are able to complete the ascent safely and with peace of mind, and that the wardens and mountain guides can work under normal conditions.

With particular reference to the reservation system for accommodation located on the Mont Blanc “normal route” from Saint-Gervais, the Prefect has asked, as from the 2019 season, that it meet the following requirements:

- a comprehensive system incorporating all the accommodation on the route (whether the Nid d'Aigle, Tête Rousse or Goûter mountain huts or the Tête Rousse base camp);
- collection of complete personal details (surname, first name, date of birth and nationality) and other relevant information concerning the persons staying in the accommodation (guide including the number of their professional licence, apprentice guide, private individual).

Thus, in conjunction with the municipality of Saint-Gervais, the FFCAM has been working since 14 January (the date of receipt of the letter from the Prefect) to implement these measures for the mountain huts under its management.

These require both the technical design of new booking procedures and the modification of the Internet booking system, as well as the revision of the general terms and conditions of sale.

The chosen system has been discussed and agreed to by all parties. It is based on the following principles:

- Bookings with names: the full names of all participants in the trip must be indicated at the time of booking, and may not be changed;

- flexibility for professionals: the names of guides accompanying clients can be changed up to 48 hours before the start of the stay;
- the issuance of an individual personal receipt, for use during all checks: this document will be automatically generated at the time of booking;
- flexibility maintained for cancellations;
- reservations already made through professional channels for the summer of 2019 are not affected; the customers concerned will be asked to comply with the new ID gathering provisions (a specific notification message will be sent to them).

Despite the technical complexities involved in implementing these new provisions, reservations for all the accommodation mentioned above will be made during weeks 16, 17 and 18, i.e. well before the opening of the season when hut wardens are present. The exact date will be specified later. The tickets will be sold in phases: 4 for the Goûter and Tête Rousse huts (including 2 through the professional channel), and 2 for the Nid d'Aigle hut.

Meanwhile, a review is underway to improve management of the Tête-Rousse base camp, which is responsible for ensuring everyone's safety. It should be based on the same principles: mandatory booking and a limiting of the number of visitors, with a view to significantly reducing the number of spaces. It also provides for accommodation in pre-installed tents to prevent any unauthorised camping outside of this campsite, since all camping is strictly prohibited in the Mont Blanc protected area. The practical details relating to this new management system will be specified at a later stage.

This system is being implemented on an experimental basis for the 2019 season. A further round of consultations will be organised at the beginning of the autumn in order to evaluate the system and to fine-tune it, if necessary, for the 2020 season.

We are convinced that the new provisions will ensure that all mountaineers, both amateur and professional, will be able to enjoy their experience on the Mont Blanc “normal route” from Saint-Gervais in the safest and most stress-free conditions possible.

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