



Adventure Northumberland (Activities) Limited

Unit 2B Greensfield Court

Alnwick

Northumberland

NE66 2DE

# **Operations Manual And Staff Guidance Notes**

Version 1.5 – March 2019

**SAFETY MANAGEMENT.**

The lines of responsibility of general day to day safety management are as follows:

- Guidance is obtained following the Health and Safety at Work Act best practice guidelines.
- Adventure Northumberland (Activities) Limited is a Limited Company, registered in Wales.
- The Company Directors are responsible for the overall health and safety policy within the company. This includes formulation and implementation of policy and accident investigation.

**Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)****INTRODUCTION**

All activities offered by Adventure Northumberland will be covered by a specific S.O.P. This will outline the activity to be undertaken and detail the safety measures and restrictions which may be placed upon it.

When an enquiry is made regarding an activity, safety information will be given to the client to enable them to make an assessment whether to proceed with the activity or not. Initially this is done verbally and can be followed up with a written confirmation.

This will cover the general geographical area the activity will be held. What equipment, including safety equipment will be provided by Adventure Northumberland, or an agent working for or on behalf of Adventure Northumberland. Any general or specific items of clothing or equipment the client may need to provide for themselves.

In certain circumstances a call off or cancellation procedure will be outlined, this may be for activities whose risk is elevated to intolerable because of inclement weather or for some other unforeseen reason.

Where appropriate for each activity the instructor/participant ratio will be followed as per the recommendations of the NGB (National Governing Body) for that activity. Where there is no NGB qualification, i.e. Coasteering the “Best Practice” will be adopted. (See Appendix A)

Where no NGB exists to provide a benchmark then a risk assessment will be undertaken which shall determine the staff client ratio, or minimum required to begin to run an activity again this will be done by using “Best Practice”.

**STAFF SAFETY TRAINING AND INFORMATION.**

Staff are made aware of health and safety at their initial induction with the Company, so are made aware of our safety policy and methods of work from their first day of work. A copy of the “Instructors Code of Conduct” is signed and filed on their record. (See Appendix B)

Training and information regarding safety, manual handling etc., is given to staff periodically, and sessions are recorded in their personal training file.

A

## Adventure Northumberland – Operating Manual

All instructional staff must hold a current first aid qualification to enable them to deliver a course or activity.

Any risk critical safety information and changes in the law will be communicated immediately to staff via the most appropriate method, verbally or email.

Staff will be encouraged to share information on concluding an activity by holding an informal debrief, where the safety aspect, amongst other areas, is examined. Any improvements or recommendations will be discussed and if suitable may become part of future policy (via board meeting). Any risk critical issues shall be dealt with immediately, and all relevant staff made aware. Accident, Incident and near miss forms are attached (Appendix C).

### **INDUCTION, INSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT**

Clients will be given a full briefing before any activity begins, to explain how the session will run and to introduce the staff. The format of this brief is covered in Appendix D

Typical information contained in the brief will include:-

- The venue for the event.
- Introduction to the staff responsible for providing the activity. Emergency procedures, this will include Emergency contact telephone numbers from all participants. The emergency contact details the instructor uses, and its location, in the event the instructor/guide is involved in an incident.
- How the activity will be shortened or curtailed in the event of an emergency or because of the weather.
- The use of a late back procedure and how it will be implemented if the party is late or delayed, shall be explained.
- Any medication requirements or allergies.
- All safety equipment that is provided by Adventure Northumberland or agents working for or on behalf of Adventure Northumberland, will be explained and demonstrated to the client before the activity begins, so they are familiar with its use and comfortable with the fit.

All equipment will be inspected as per its manufacturer's instruction and guidelines. All equipment will receive a visual inspection before use in the activity, and will be inspected after the activity ceases. Defective equipment will be removed from service immediately, and either repaired or destroyed.

### **INSTRUCTOR / PARTICIPANT RATIO**

Where applicable NGB guidelines will be adhered to alternatively "Best Practice" will be followed as available.

Our general policy for all activities is 8:1 with maximum group sizes being dictated by equipment availability and staff.

**FIRST AID ARRANGEMENTS.**

Lead members of staff will have a valid First Aid Certificate appropriate to the Outdoor Industry.

**ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Accidents will be dealt with in the first instance by the leaders on the ground, who are delivering the activity. They will fall into two categories i.e. those occurrences of a minor nature, that they are able to deal with and conclude satisfactorily without outside assistance, and those incidents that will necessitate the attendance of outside help.

Leaders conducting the activities shall hold a valid first aid qualification to enable them to discharge their duties.

Adequate field first aid kits shall be carried on all activities. (First Aid Kits will contain large field dressings, sticky tape and triangular bandages – staff will not administer medication. (This includes pain killers)

Summoning help will where possible be via mobile phone, and thereafter from knowledge of the area and where there may be landlines or other forms of summoning help.

At the earliest opportunity contact will be made with Adventure Northumberland's base (01665 602925) or the on call senior member of staff, to inform them of the incident or assistance requests.

Consideration will also be given as to whether or not to begin an in house accident investigation.

**ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**Minor** accidents will be dealt with by the leaders and details taken to write up an accurate record on return.

An accident book is kept for this purpose at Adventure Northumberland's base.

The de-brief procedure will be used as a means for identifying whether the accident was avoidable or attributable to an action, inaction, or procedure that should be reviewed. The Accident report form will be used to document the de-brief and any additional recommendations.

**Serious** accidents shall be dealt with by the leaders and any other assisting organisation that may be required. Details will be noted at the time of the accident so an accurate account may later be recorded in the accident book on return. Again the Accident report form will be used to document the de-brief and any additional recommendations.

All serious accident shall be investigated by Adventure Northumberland as part of Adventure Northumberland's procedures, without prejudice or in place of any other investigation that may be conducted.

Dangerous occurrences that fall under RIDDOR shall be reported to the H&S Executive at the earliest opportunity. (RIDDOR notify able incidents are those where someone is likely to be off work for more than 3 days.)

**RIDDOR** is the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

Employers, the self-employed and those in control of premises must report specified workplace incidents.

- Report online
- Report by phone - 0845 300 99 23
- Report by e-mail
- Report by post

**Areas covered by the ICC:** England, Scotland & Wales

Once in house investigations have been concluded any recommendations will be fed through the organisation at board level to decide if a policy change is required. This will be decided by the board of Directors and any decisions will be implemented as soon as possible.

### **ACCIDENT DEFINITION**

#### **Minor Injuries**

In the event of an accident or emergency, first aid should be administered to the casualty. If the injury is minor in nature, such as minor cuts, abrasions or sprains the activity could continue once treatment administered.

The Personal details of the casualty must be noted along with injuries sustained and the accident report form completed as soon as practically possible.

#### **Major Injuries**

For an incident where a casualty is not fit to carry on after sustaining a minor injury the activity must be stopped and casualty evacuated.

### **INSTRUCTORS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS**

All Instructors and Guides will, where one exists, hold a National Governing Body Qualification appropriate to the activity. Where no such qualification exists, training will be delivered to ensure the activity is delivered in a safe and professional manner. Where "Best Practice" notes have been developed these will be followed.

**VALIDITY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

We hold all copies of training certificates and qualifications achieved by our staff in house.

We hold copies of certificates of competence.

In December each year staff qualifications are reviewed for currency and a training plan is formulated for the following year to renew any qualifications which shall lapse during that year.

If instructors are deemed competent through experience or in-house training then they shall be accompanied during delivery of an activity, where they can be verified as competent through direct observation. This will be undertaken by a suitably qualified member of staff for that activity (Technical Advisor). A record of these sessions will be recorded in the staff members Personal Record.

Any other evidence will be considered as supplemental to deeming competency. Diverse evidence of having carried out these actions several times before is admissible.

Mentoring from other qualified staff who will provide guidance and support during the activity, the PDR will be used to record this.

**RECRUITMENT TRAINING AND MONITORING**

Training for activities is by NGB for that particular activity.

Occasional monitoring will be undertaken during activities.

**EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT**

Safety equipment applicable to each activity, again where possible shall be purchased through reputable sources.

This general policy will apply to all equipment we purchase and use, in that it is fit for purpose, conforms to European standards and will have a limited life appropriate to each particular item.

Records shall be maintained for all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

**MAINTENANCE RECORDS**

All PPE shall have a history record which will also detail its service and inspection intervals. A visual inspection will be given to all equipment before and after each period of use.

Staff will be responsible for the testing and inspection of equipment before issue.

Any item which fails inspection will be immediately removed from service. It will be isolated from other equipment so there is no possibility of it being used by mistake.

Equipment damaged beyond repair will be destroyed.

Repairs will be carried out in house where suitable competence exists within staff.

Damage should be picked up during routine visual inspection, or when occurring during use.

Inspection regime will be dictated by manufacturer's recommendations. An inspection of all equipment will be carried out before and after use.

Defective equipment will be destroyed, and obsolete equipment will be disposed of or destroyed.

All PPE shall have a history record which will also detail its service and inspection intervals. A visual inspection will be given to all equipment before and after each period of use.

Equipment that is not PPE and does not have a service record:-

- Paddles
- Kayaks
- Raft Building Equipment
- Team Building Equipment
- Rafts
- Stand up Paddle Boards

A visual inspection of this equipment will ensure it is fit for purpose.

**Licensed Activities, Area of Operations and Staffing Ratios**

	<b>Paddle Sport</b>	<b>Surfing</b>	<b>Coasteering</b>	<b>Climbing</b>	<b>Walking</b>
<b>Special Needs Yes/No</b>	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Instructor / Participant Ratio</b>	8:1	8:1	8:1	8:1	8:1
<b>Assisting Instructor (if applicable)</b>	Trainee – registered with the NGB and working towards a substantive qualification	Trainee	Trainee	Trainee	Trainee
<b>Group Instructor</b>	BCU Coach or Leader – location & condition specific qualification	BSA Instructor with Beach Lifeguard	Site specific trained	SPA	BELA
<b>Operating Seasons</b>	All Year	All Year	All Year	All Year	All Year
<b>Operating Area &amp; description of geographical limits and / or environmental</b>	River Coquet at Rothbury and Warkworth. River Aln at Alnwick and Alnmouth	Coastal Area between Longhoughton and Bamburgh, Northumberland	Howick, Northumberland	Corby Crag / Simonside Crag / Bowden and Back Bowden Doors / Kyloe in the Wood	Northumberland National Park and Northumberland Coast
<b>Age Range of Participants</b>	8 to 18yrs	8 to 18yrs	8 to 18yrs	8 to 18yrs	8 to 18yrs
<b>Activity</b>	Canoe / Kayak / Raft Building	Surfing	Coasteering	Climbing	Walking



**Generic Risk Assessments**

<b>Activity – Water Based Activities</b>		
<b>List of Hazard</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>Arrangements to ensure control measures remain effective</b>
<b>Drowning</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Hyperthermia</b>	Provide / wear clothing suitable to the prevailing weather conditions. Monitor group members for signs of hyperthermia	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Head Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Minor Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<p>Note: The Braid Weir. This is a small weir with 2 drops. There is an obvious shoot towards river rights. The shoot can be inspected safely without committing. There must be 2ft of water before it is shot. If there is insufficient water the weir should be portaged. There are no stoppers or other hydraulic issues at the weir. This is a fun weir to play in with no entrapment issues. It is inspected regularly by senior staff at Low Water.</p>		
<p>All equipment to be pre-checked by staff before allocation and use.</p>		

<b>Activity – Surfing &amp; SUP</b>		
<b>List of Hazard</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>Arrangements to ensure control measures remain effective</b>
<b>Drowning</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Hyperthermia</b>	Provide / wear clothing suitable to the prevailing weather conditions. Monitor group members for signs of hyperthermia	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Head Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Minor Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
All equipment and water / weather conditions to be pre-checked by staff before allocation and use.		

<b>Activity – Rock Climbing</b>		
<b>List of Hazard</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>Arrangements to ensure control measures remain effective</b>
<b>Fall</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification (where applicable). Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Head Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing – warn about falling rocks and stones. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Trips</b>	Full safety briefing. Warn about trailing ropes around feet. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Slips</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
All equipment to be pre-checked by staff before allocation and use.		

<b>Activity – Walking</b>		
<b>List of Hazard</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>Arrangements to ensure control measures remain effective</b>
<b>Slips</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to weather. Staff to hold an NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Trips</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Falls</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Hyperthermia</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Heat or Cold Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
All equipment to be pre-checked by staff before allocation and use.		

<b>Activity – Bushcraft</b>		
<b>List of Hazard</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>Arrangements to ensure control measures remain effective</b>
<b>Slips</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Trips</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Falls</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Burns</b>	Cooking will be on open fires, there is a risk of burn from hot pots, pans etc., as well as from hot food and liquids	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Heat or Cold Injuries</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
<b>Use of sharp implements, knives, axes etc.</b>	Full safety briefing. Wear appropriate safety equipment and clothing appropriate to the weather. Staff to hold a NGB qualification. Current first aid certificate.	Field monitoring and continued professional development. Customer feedback. Hot de-brief of session. Risk Critical outcomes relayed to board / policy meetings. Quarterly accident reviews.
All equipment to be pre-checked by staff before allocation and use.		

In addition to generic risk assessments we also carry out Dynamic Risk Assessment as an activity progresses. This is carried out on the day and will mainly concentrate on changes on site since the last site visit. Challenge events will be covered initially by the generic risk assessment for the given activity and site location risk assessments will be conducted prior to the event with an ongoing dynamic assessment.

Where an NGB qualification does not exist then a technical sign-off from a suitably qualified Tech Advisor will be held by Adventure Northumberland.

Technical Advisors are:

Coasteering: Michael Curry

Canoe and Kayak: Simon Tibbits

Climbing and Mountaineering: Andy Swann

In some instances, activities fall outside of AALA and do not require a tech sign-off.

All lead staff are first aid trained, hold a current first aid certificate, in addition to qualifications appropriate to the activity being undertaken.

Adventure Northumberland are keen to share good practice and provide in-house training and offer shadow hours to trainee instructors. In some cases trainees may be present on an activity as part of their ongoing training.

Example Site Specific Risk Assessments are shown in Appendix E

## **Appendix A**



### **DRAFT - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR COASTEERING PROVIDERS**

**VERSION 3: MARCH 2010**

#### **BACKGROUND**

*The following document contains safety advice that providers of coasteering activities should consider when drawing up their own plans or guidelines. It should not be considered in isolation to a provider's other safety practices and should not be taken out of context.*

This guidance represents what is currently considered to be best practice. This guidance is not compulsory. Providers may use alternative systems or procedures that have been identified through a robust risk management process; these should be ideally benchmarked against a comparable industry.

Following this guidance will normally be enough to comply with the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (AALR 2004).

#### **SCOPE AND DEFINITION**

Coasteering involves traversing along a stretch of inter-tidal zone, often as part of an organised group activity. Participants travel across rocks and through water, using a variety of techniques including climbing, swimming and jumping into water. Wetsuits, buoyancy aids are commonly used for the activity. The following advice is based solely on providers offering coasteering activities. Further advice should be sought for operators providing additional activities to the public.

The following advice has been obtained from members of the National Water Safety Forum's 'Beach Advisory Group' – Working Group for Coasteering Safety. Members include; RNLI, ROSPA, MCA, RLSS UK, AALS, coasteering providers, governing bodies and associations. Much of the content is based on AALS's safety checklist for combined water/rock activities - C/Int34v10.

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The following safety guidelines are split into three key sections:

**1: Pre-activity safety guidelines**

**2: During activity safety guidelines 3:**

**Post-activity safety guidelines**

### **1.1 PRE-ACTIVITY SAFETY GUIDELINES**

#### **1.2 Risk in context – as safe as necessary not as safe as possible:**

*‘Water as a resource for recreation and leisure presents the attractions of challenge and of being at one with nature. However, any adventure activity has an element of danger to offer these challenges; adventure infers that there is an element of the unknown and it is this, which presents the biggest challenge.*

*The problem is how to balance the need to offer excitement and the feeling of potential danger with methods to ensure that the dangers remain a feeling in the minds of the water user and not a reality in terms of accidents.’*

An appropriate risk assessment for coasteering should be carried out by the centre/coasteering organisation and by a competent and experienced member of staff who has knowledge of the risk assessment process and the activity along with Standard or Normal Operating Procedures (S(N)OP’s) and Emergency Action Plans (EAP’s).

#### **1.3 Risk analysis and management systems**

**The rationale for conducting a risk assessment include:**

- Providing the basis for a risk management plan
- Improving safety, reducing the risk of death or injury at the site
- Ensuring the best use of resources and encourage effective management and cost effective operations
- Enhancing client satisfaction and reducing the potential for litigation stemming from accident and management practices
- Providing guidance for the development of policy, procedure and practices
- It is a legal requirement

#### **Conducting a Risk Assessment**

The World Health Organisation offers the following advice in relation to the assessment of hazard and risk in its guidelines for safe recreational water environments (coastal and fresh waters):



‘Assessment of hazard and risk inform the development of policies for controlling and managing risks to health and well-being in water recreation.’

‘The assessment of a coastline or water should take into account several key considerations, including:

The presence and nature of natural or artificial hazards  
The severity of the hazard as related to health outcomes  
The availability and applicability of remedial actions  
The frequency and density of use; and  
The level of development.

**The Health and Safety Executive has provided some generic guidance on practical risk assessments and also sets out a simple 5-step guide to conducting a risk assessment.**

1. Identify hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate risks, evaluate existing precautions and determine if more is required
4. Record findings
5. Review or establish a review process.

The biggest single factor affecting the safety of any participant taking responsibility for their own safety in any adventure sport is their own experience, competence, knowledge and judgement.

The key factor therefore in any led activity such as coasteering is the experience, competence, knowledge and judgement of the leader, instructor or guide.

Individual participants undertaking coasteering therefore should consider the following issues activity and providers of coasteering experiences for others. Providers in particular should note that in many cases their clients will be novices in the sport.

**Some example of coasteering hazards to be considered during a risk assessment an analysis of the risks that is inherent or can be introduced to a coasteering activity:**

### **1 - Impact**

#### Examples:

Rock falling from above  
Falling or slipping on to rocks below  
Jumping/falling onto submerged rocks  
Jumping from a height into water  
Being swept onto rocks.

## 2 - Drowning

### Examples:

Falling into water Entrapment under the water  
Repeated submersion in waves or sea swell Unpredicted tidal changes  
Being swept out to sea Tidal cut off  
Getting caught in rip currents  
Sudden immersion into cold water (dry drowning etc).

## 3 – Effects of cold water

### Examples:

Inadequate personal clothing or equipment during or after getting wet  
Submersion hypothermia e.g. being swept out to sea Over  
exposure to cold and windy conditions  
Exposure to high temperatures, hypothermia, sunburn and  
dehydration.

### **The Control Measures**

Control measures could be thought of in four contexts:

1. Where there is no (realistically) foreseeable possibility of a participant ending up in the water
2. Where participants MAY end up in the water
3. Where participants WILL end up in the water
4. Where participants MAY realise an injury from a dry incident.

It would be appropriate, in cases where participants MAY end up in the water to apply the control measures (and test them accordingly) as though participants WILL end up in the water.

Because of the large number of variations of activities and the wide range of local conditions and site-specific hazards universal guidelines must be augmented by site-specific polices and practices.

***It should be very apparent that not all of the issues would apply below to any one venue, participant or provider.***

### 1.4 Swim and fitness requirements:

It is important that each participant is made fully aware of the physical nature of coasteering and the type of environment they are expected to interact with.

It is recommended that participants are confident in the open water wearing a wetsuit and buoyancy aid to a level that suits the environmental conditions. Attention must be given to maximum distance from egress points. In specific

environments where participants maybe further than 25m from an egress point, a higher level of water confidence maybe needed.

It is essential that providers check each participant's physical abilities before the start of the activity. Providers should also advise participants never to undertake coasteer type activities on their own when not part of an organised coasteering provider.

### **1.5 Medical requirements:**

It is important that coasteering providers are aware of any medical conditions that a participant may have that will affect their ability to undertake coasteering in a safe and enjoyable manner.

It is recommended that all participants complete a standard medical declaration form listing any pre-existing or current medical conditions that could affect their safety and that of others.

Medical information should be treated confidentially and be obtained in a manner that respects the rights and sensitivities of the individual. Please allow time for the participant to discuss any medical concerns with a guide on a one to one basis.

It is best practice for individuals to carry their own medication and administer medication by themselves. However, in the coasteering environment, this may not always be possible and therefore it may be necessary for coasteering guides to carry participant's medication.

If a guide is to carry medication for a third party it is recommended that it is labelled clearly with the participants name and exactly what that medication is for and how best administered. Medication should be carried in a waterproof container/bag. It is important that the guide and participant always remain in the same group.

### **1.6 Age requirements**

Centres offering coasteering to participants under the age of 18 should conform to AALS licensing requirements and are subject to inspection.

There need be no upper age limit as long as the participant meets the necessary insurance and medical requirements as determined by the operator. Parents ought to be involved in determining the suitability of sessions for very young participants.

### **1.7 Identification of group competence:**

A policy ensuring identification of group competence is essential, identifying experience, special needs, physical and medical condition of the participants is advised. Particular attention should be paid to establish the water confidence and swimming ability of participants before undertaking activities.

As a result of identifying group competence it would be equally acceptable to either:

- a. Select the venue on the basis of the group's abilities; or

### 1.8 Guide safety briefing:

Basic principles that guides should address prior to a group's safety brief: Which

guide is leading the coasteering session  
Can the chosen route be led safely on *that* day with *that* group by  
the chosen guide(s)  
Plan B - If the sea conditions change or other factors vary or  
deteriorate what are the alternatives  
Escape routes and stopping the session early  
Equipment checks.

The **CLAP** mnemonic is a suggested format when briefing participants:

**C**ommunication  
**L**ine of sight  
**A**voidance is better than cure  
**P**osition and maximum usefulness

### 1.9 Participant safety briefing:

There will generally need to be a policy on the existence, content and presentation of a safety briefing. Participants should be advised on what they can do to help ensure their own safety. It may not be appropriate for instructors or guides to deliver all relevant instructions in one briefing. Verbal communication at some venues can be very difficult so prior thought should be given to what needs to be explained, where and when. Providers should decide whether a system of hand signal is necessary and introduce this at an appropriate point.

Introduction of coasteering guides and their role Description of coasteering  
i.e. what is coasteering How to enter the water safely  
Swimming alongside the cliffs, submerged rocks Exiting the water safely  
Climbing on the rocks  
Jumping procedures and participants competence and confidence  
Swimming and walking through caves  
Marine life (cuts, stings, poisons, barnacles etc...) Bunch up procedure  
Emergency procedure incase of an accident e.g. immediately halt activity  
Emergency escape routes Signals  
Group safety  
Self-awareness and awareness of others Communication  
Make sure that everybody is happy and understands all procedures before  
entering the water.

### **1.10 Forecasting conditions:**

A policy for obtaining and interpreting weather forecasts, water levels, sea state etc.. is generally needed. It must be clear who is to do this, when it is to be done, and what action they will take for a range of possible forecasts. These could include, but may not be limited to, modification of the venue, change of venue, cancellation and/or return of payment. If the addition of an assistant guide is the response, then there must be a mechanism where-by a suitable person can be deployed in the given time span.

### **1.11 Indemnity/insurance & acknowledgement of the risks:**

A policy on informing the participants of the nature and extent of risks, and what to expect from the activity is encouraged. This is particularly important where the participants may have no concept or prior knowledge of this type of activity.

It may be unreasonable to expect a commercial provider to detail the hazards in their primary advertising. However, it may be reasonable, for example, to leave this information until the point of booking or even (in some cases) to the point of departure. The identification of risks should be clear, and allow realistic and uninhibited options to any participants who, as a result, wish to decline the activity.

Coasteering providers should ensure that each participant acknowledges the risks involved in coasteering. An Acknowledgement of Risk form should outline any associated risks and fitness/medical requirements. It is important that such forms capture the participants name, contact details, contact person, etc. and their signature to confirm they appreciate the risks and agree with the terms and conditions outlined by the provider. N.B. This is NOT a disclaimer and does not indemnify the provider from any statutory responsibility.

Coasteering providers should ensure they have correct and in date insurance for conducting coasteering to the public.

### **1.12 Identification of route options:**

It will be beneficial to have the option of alternative routes or alternative start or finish points. In some cases the degree of difficulty or the duration of the trip or both can be determined by varying these. On the day the most appropriate route or variation on the route could be used depending on factors such as the weather conditions, experience and expectations of the group, group number and experience of staff available.

Guides should allow for groups and individuals to progress within a selected route. An example would be to start with low-level jump before asking a group or individual to jump from a highest platform or ledge on the chosen route.

New routes should only be considered for competent and experienced guides. Conservation and interaction with the natural landscape should be considered whilst selecting a new or alternative route.

### 1.13 Emergency action plans and pre departure communications:

Emergency action plans should be produced for the following situations:

- 1: Support personnel on shore
- 2: For the guide leading the group

**Support personnel on shore** - This will need to be site specific. Who contacts whom? When and how does an over-due group become a 'stand-by for action'? When and how does it become 'action required' and what action, and by whom?

**For the guide leading the group** - Since a rapid response to a complex situation may be required, the emergency action plan may well be used to guide an instructor's training.

The MCA (Maritime and Coastguard Agency) is responsible in the UK for coordinating maritime search and rescue. As such the MCA have advised the following systems be implemented and operated when operating coasteering activities:

**- Before setting out, the group should leave their planned route and itinerary with a competent person who could contact the Coastguard if they believe the group is overdue.**

**- That person should also have the following information with them:**

**Name of Organisation**  
**Number of participants/guides/total number**  
**Time and place of departure/arrival**  
**Route to be taken**  
**Contact details of group Name of group leader**  
**Vehicle details (make and registration)**

**- Before setting out the group should also contact the Coastguard to let them know the area in which Coasteering groups will be operating during the day.**

**- At the same time it would be expected that the group could ascertain tide/weather information from the Coastguard or from another source before they set out.**

**- When out during the activity the group should carry suitable means of raising the alarm, if possible carrying more than one means of communication, such as mobile phones in waterproof covers or handheld VHF radio.**

Alternative arrangements may have been agreed with the local Coastguard. In such cases, always follow the guidance/communications that were agreed. If in doubt, providers should use the system detailed above or contact their local Coastguard Sector Manager for further advice.

### 1.14 Guide/Participant ratio:

It will generally be appropriate to have a policy on ratios, maximum group size, use of assistants, etc. This should take account of group management

difficulties associated with only having one guide, which can arise at some venues. Similarly some providers find it useful to have two separate groups operating at the same venue, and available to give mutual support if required.

It is recommended that the group size does not exceed 10 with a single guide or 15 with two guides. The ratios will need to be decreased if the participant's ability, local conditions or guide experience is reduced or impaired.

### 1.15 Checking PPE:

Before a coasteering session commences, guides should check participant equipment for any defects, ill-fitting sizes or incorrect installation. Participants should also be told how to check their buddies PPE during the coasteering sessions.

If possible, extra equipment should be taken to the coasteering location to allow participants to change PPE in case a size change is required or the original equipment gets damaged.

#### **Participant personal protective equipment:**

It is important that all participants have the correct safety equipment prior to leaving the activity centre and allowed the opportunity to try it on to ensure it fits well. Equipment should be available in a range of sizes. The following equipment is recommended for all participants, regardless of ability and experience:

***Helmet (fit for water based activities) – BS/EN type approved Buoyancy Aid (min 50N) – CE marked (with adjustable shoulder straps, side panel adjusters and chest/waist straps)***  
***Full-length wetsuit (suitable size and thickness for environment) Wetsuit boots, trainers or canyoning boots (closed toes) Whistle***  
***Watch***

#### **Instructor safety equipment:**

Guides should have the following PPE and carry additional selected equipment to support the group whilst conducting a coasteering session.

#### **Personal:**

***Helmet (fit for water based activities) – BS/EN type approved Buoyancy Aid (min 50N) – CE marked (with adjustable shoulder straps, side panel adjusters and chest/waist straps)***  
***Wetsuit (suitable size and thickness)***  
***Wetsuit boots, trainers or canyoning boots (closed toes) Whistle***

**Additional safety equipment:**

*Day/night or/and mini signal flares*

*Rescue tube*

*Throw line (min 15m)*

*Fins*

*Carabineer and sling*

*Communications - Handheld VHF and/or mobile telephone*

*Dry bag for medication, group names, maps, knife and energy food/water*

*A standard first aid kit supplemented as appropriate for the coasteering environment. It is recommended the first aid kit only contains supplies that can be delivered by the level of the first aid training obtained by the guide)*

**2.1 DURING ACTIVITY SAFETY GUIDELINES**

**2.2 Session duration:**

The duration of the session needs to be appropriate to the age, abilities, equipment, expectations, etc of the participants (individually and collectively).

A rest part way through the session with food and drink

If individual or group members seem uncomfortable about a second session, the lead guide should discuss with the individual and discuss his or her's own requirements and safety options for the second session.

Change of wetsuit for second session due to adverse weather and sea conditions. A client or group member may require changing their 3mm to a 5mm wetsuit.

**2.3 Route cards:**

Before the coasteering session commences, it is advisable to complete route cards for the selected journey. Route cards should have the following information:

Number of participants/names

ETD and ETA

Route details (OS or Lat/Long)

Any medical concerns

Weather details

Emergency contact information

Other important information

**2.3 Buddy system:**

It is recommended that participant's could be paired up with other participants of a similar ability to observe each other's welfare and safety during a coasteering session. When there are odd numbers a group of three could be established.



## **2.4 The unexpected ‘panicker’:**

Sometimes even strong swimmers will panic when they fall or jump into deep, cold water. They may not be able to help themselves and their violent actions can sometimes make a rescue very difficult. It is good practice to anticipate this by:

- a) Carrying out realistic scenario based training (in a controlled environment) on the importance and practicalities of reaching, throwing and swimming rescues, particularly of struggling ‘casualties’. In some situations a throw -bag may be appropriate, although its use would need to be practiced.
- b) Positioning a competent person where they can affect a rescue, preferably by reaching or throwing or wading.
- c) Throughout the session always carry a piece of rescue equipment (e.g. rescue tube) with which to reach or throw to participants who need assistance in deep water.

## **2.5 Checking a site - jumping into water:**

On arrival at a planned jumping location it is advisable, particularly after flooding, at a new venue or an unfamiliar stage of the tide to carry out a reconnaissance. Depending on the location and proposed activity this could include:

Going down to water level to examine exit points. It may be appropriate to practice the exit, to ensure that participants will be able to get out. Determine whether someone should be located there to assist with exiting and whether they should have equipment to reach or throw to a swimmer in difficulty.

Wade in and, if necessary, duck-dive to check the bottom for obstructions, depth, current etc... It may be appropriate to be attached to a throw line, although not if there is a strong current. A mask and snorkel search might also be considered at some venues.

It is recommended that guides check unfamiliar depths prior to any jumps taking place. Lowering a weight on the end of a line with markers indicating depth in feet or metres is the most commonly used system for determining depth.

There may be considerable advantages if the participants also wade in as a trial, particularly if the activity will involve jumping in from a height. The shock of sudden immersion in cold water can be very overwhelming.

Careful consideration must be given to the height of the jump. It is recommended that if possible, participants start with lower jumps and are only allowed to progress to higher jumps if their technique is acceptable. Jumps should be no higher than 5m.

## Adventure Northumberland – Operating Manual

Ledges and projections: If it is necessary to jump outwards in order to clear ledges and projections or simply to reach the water, it is recommended that participants start with jumps which do not require this, so as to build up technique and confidence. They should not be allowed to progress to higher jumps until both are acceptable.

At the take off point for the jump, guides should assess the possibility of being pulled off the ledge by a participant. They may find it necessary to secure themselves to something secure. This allows the guides to approach the edge to give assistance or support.

### **2.6 Alternative exits:**

Some venues have a number of possible entry and exit points. Knowledge and familiarity of these escape routes has clear benefits, particularly if it becomes necessary or desirable to cut a trip short. Some consideration should be given to any extra equipment that may be required for particular exits, ascents or a retreat.

### **2.7 Plan B option:**

Accidents have happened in the past when groups did not have an alternative plan in mind. NOT having a plan B can and has resulted in the group going ahead even though they knew the conditions were far from ideal.

### **2.8 Remote locations:**

Extra considerations should be given to safety when operating in remote and isolated locations. These considerations should factor in to the risk assessment. Factors can include:

Communications  
Emergency help  
First aid equipment  
Participant/guide ratio  
Group and guide experience

## **3.1 POST ACTIVITY SAFETY GUIDELINES**

### **3.2 Post equipment checklist:**

All equipment should be checked on return to ensure no damage has been sustained during the coasteering session.

It is recommended that a system for checking, recording and labelling all equipment be established and held in a central place.

### **3.3 Debrief and lessons learnt:**

There should be an opportunity for each participant to feed back his or her thoughts on the session in a discreet way.

### **3.4 Staff feedback:**

Guides should be able to feedback and review coasteering sessions and have the opportunity to learn from sessions and deal with any specific issues.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

**AALS**

**Adventure Activities Licensing Service 44**  
**Lambourne Crescent**  
**Cardiff Business Park**  
**Llanishen**  
**CF14 5GG**  
**Tel: 029 20755715**  
**Email: [info@aals.org.uk](mailto:info@aals.org.uk)**  
**Web: [www.aals.org.uk](http://www.aals.org.uk)**

**MCA**

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**  
**Spring Place**  
**105 Commercial Road**  
**Southampton**  
**Hants SO15**  
**1EG**  
**Tel: 02380 329100**  
**Web: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)**

**RLSS UK**

**Royal Lifesaving Society UK River House High**  
**Street**  
**Broom**  
**Alcester Warwickshire B50**  
**4HN**  
**Tel: 01789 773994**  
**Web: [www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk)**

**RNLI**

**Royal National Lifeboat Institution**  
**Prevention and Lifeguards**  
**West Quay Road Poole**  
**Dorset**  
**BH15 1HZ**  
**Tel: 01202 663000**  
**Email: [beachsafety@rnli.org.uk](mailto:beachsafety@rnli.org.uk)**  
**Web: [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk)**

**RoPSA**

**Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents RoSPA House**  
**Edgbaston Park**  
**353 Bristol Road**  
**Edgbaston**  
**Birmingham**  
**B5 7ST**  
**Tel: 0121 248 2000**  
**Web: [www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)**

**Appendix B**

**INSTRUCTORS & STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

Safeguarding and Protecting Children Guidelines

Whilst it is important for all adults to understand their responsibility with children, The CENTRE (Adventure Northumberland Limited) is concerned that specific advice is given concerning the behavior of all coaches, staff, volunteers and other officials. In addition, those who employ coaches for example, should know what standard of behavior is acceptable. This applies to anyone working in either a paid employed role or as a volunteer.

Instructors and Staff :

1. Must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of their sport.
2. Must place the wellbeing and safety of the child above the development of performance. They should follow all guidelines laid down by the THE CENTRE and hold appropriate insurance cover
3. Must develop an appropriate working relationship with participants, especially children, based on mutual trust and respect. Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
4. Must encourage and guide participants to accept responsibility for their own behavior.
5. Should hold up to date nationally recognized THE CENTRE coaching qualifications.
6. Must ensure the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.
7. Should at the outset clarify with participants, and where appropriate their parents, exactly what is expected of them and what participants are entitled to expect from the coach.
8. Should cooperate fully with other specialists e.g. other coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, and physiotherapists in the best interests of the participants.
9. Should always promote the positive aspects of their sport e.g. fair play and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.
10. Should not be under the influence of drink, drugs or any substance.
11. Must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.
12. Should be acutely aware of the power that a coach develops with participants and avoid any intimacy (sexual or otherwise).
13. Should be acutely aware of situations with participants that could be construed as compromising and actions that others could perceive as being outside the coaching role.
14. Should report any concerns within the area of Child Protection/Vulnerable Adults in confidence and

without delay to the appropriate person.

15. Should at no time make comment to the media. The CENTRE Press Officer should be made aware of any media interest in relation to Child Protection/Vulnerable Adults.

In the event of an allegation of improper behavior being made, the personal conduct and professional behavior of the adult will be very important evidence. For child abuse to take place, particularly sexual abuse, the child and adult(s) will generally be alone and away from public view. Therefore the best practice is to avoid all situations in which behavior cannot be observed. Child Protection is about putting in place the best possible practices and procedures, this will protect not only the child but also you, the adult. If you have any comments on this guideline or require any further support or guidance relating to children and young people, please contact the The CENTRE Child Protection Officer (Michael Curry).

**Appendix C****Accident Report form**

Accident Report Form Group Name ..... Session Date .....

1.1 About the person who had the accident		
Name	Occupation	
Address	Postcode	
About the accident		
2.1 When it happened	Date	Time
2.2 Where it happened - e.g. location, place		
2.3 Who was involved.		
2.4 Witnesses.		
2.5 Events leading up to the accident.		
3.1 Outcomes of the event, e.g. injury or damage, and the severity		
3.2 Is it a RIDDOR reportable Incident? Y/N		
If Yes date and time informed		Method
4.1 Causes of injury or damage.		
4.2 Immediate and underlying causes of the accident.		
5.1 Emergency action taken at the time to prevent a reoccurrence or to minimise injury/damage.		
5.2 Further action required to prevent a reoccurrence.		
6.1 Record completed by Name	Signature	Date
Address	Occupation	
Postcode		

For Adventure Northumberland Use;

Date .....

Entered to log .....

Number .....

Action taken

Notes;

Complete the form as comprehensively as possible. Once completed please post/fax a copy to Adventure Northumberland. Please identify as far as possible not just the immediate cause of the accident, but the underlying causes. For example, a fall may have been sustained due to an obstruction or slippery surface, but why was the obstruction there. Was there a lack of warning?

Adventure Northumberland – Operating Manual  
**Incident Report Form**

**FORM 2**

Incident Report Form Group Name ..... Session Date .....

1.1 About the person involved in the Incident		
Name	Occupation	
Address	Postcode	
About the Incident		
2.1 When it happened	Date	Time
2.2 Where it happened - e.g. Room, location, place		
2.3 Who was involved.		
2.4 Witnesses.		
2.5 Events leading up to the Incident.		
3.1 Outcomes of the event		
4.1 Immediate and underlying causes of the Incident.		
5.1 Emergency action taken at the time to prevent a reoccurrence or to minimise injury/damage.		
5.2 Further action required to prevent a reoccurrence.		
6.1 Record completed by Name		Signature
Address		Occupation
Postcode		Date

For Adventure Northumberland Use

Date..... Entered to log.....

Number .....

Action taken.....

Notes;

Complete the form as comprehensively as possible. Once completed please post/fax a copy to Adventure Northumberland. Please identify as far as possible not just the immediate cause of the Incident, but the underlying causes. For example a fall may have been sustained due to an obstruction or slippery surface, but why was the obstruction there. Was there a lack of warning?



Adventure Northumberland – Operating Manual  
**NEAR MISS REPORT FORM**

**FORM 3**

Near Miss Report Form Group Name ..... Session Date .....

<b>About the Near Miss</b> 1.1 When it happened Time of day 1.2 Where it happened - e.g. Room, location, place 1.3 Who was involved. 1.4 Events leading up to the Near Miss.
2 Potential Outcomes of the event, e.g. injury or damage, and the severity.
3 Immediate and underlying causes of the Near Miss.
4 Further action required to prevent a reoccurrence.

For Adventure Northumberland Use;

Date ..... Entered to log..... Number ..... Action taken;

Notes:

- 1 Adventure Northumberland use the strongest endeavours to promote a safety culture.
- 2 We very much appreciate any information that identifies any threat to health and safety so that this information can be shared and used to strengthen systems and prevent actual accidents We therefore ask you to report any occurrence which could result in an accident.
- 3 Please identify as far as possible not just the immediate cause of the Near Miss, but the underlying causes. For example a fall may have been sustained due to an obstruction or slippery surface, but why was the obstruction there. Was there a lack of warning?
- 4 To encourage completion we do not ask for your identification and guarantee that the form will not be identified to yourself or your group at any time unless you expressly ask or agree that we should do so.
- 5 Once completed please post/fax a copy of this form to Adventure Northumberland.

**Appendix D**

**Introduction and Safety Brief – Water based Activities**

Introduce company, self and staff.

Explain the format and location of the activity

Issue Equipment

- Helmet
- Buoyancy Aid
- Wetsuit

Safety Points.

- Check that participants are wearing suitable footwear, speak to anyone not privately.
- Identify anyone with a medical condition
- Glasses – make sure they are secured
- Emergency contact numbers are done and carried.
  - Explain the process in the event of single person working.
- Confirm that everyone can swim
- Establish hand signals
- Shout / whistle for help

How to summon help from Emergency Services

- Staff phone – location and how to use
- Location of Public / Emergency Phones

Adventure Northumberland – Operating Manual  
**Introduction and Safety Brief – Land based Activities**

Introduce company, self and staff.

Explain the format and location of the activity

Issue Equipment

- Helmets and harnesses as appropriate

Safety Points.

- Check that participants are wearing suitable footwear / clothing, speak to anyone not privately.
- Identify anyone with a medical condition
- Glasses – make sure they are secured
- Emergency contact numbers are done and carried.
  - Explain the process in the event of single person working.
- Shout / whistle for help (6 Blasts every 2 minutes in the Mountains)

How to summon help from Emergency Services

- Staff phone – location and how to use
- Location of Public / Emergency Phone