



Adventurous Activities

Standard Operating Procedures

Guidance for:

**Moray
Education
Establishments**

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ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES OPERATING PROCEDURES

Introduction

The following Operating Procedures have been designed to give guidance to staff that are directly providing adventurous activities in the context of their employment (either paid or voluntary) with The Moray Council. **This guidance should not be read in isolation**, but in conjunction with the council's excursions policy.

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file95603.pdf>

In addition to offering guidance for safe planning and supervision of adventurous activities, there are clear 'must do' points given for each activity. Where clear rules are given, staff **must** ensure that these are adhered to during the planning and delivery stages of the activity. Staff **must** also ensure that they are always operating within the remit of their training and the scope of their experience. Where the word '*should*' is used in this guidance it should be regarded as **normal good practice** and the guidance it relates to should only be deviated from in exceptional circumstances by those with the appropriate qualifications, experience and judgement to make that decision.

The Adventure Activities Consultant (AAC) should be contacted for advice wherever doubt exists.

Risk Assessment

The links below will direct you to **generic risk assessments** for common adventurous activities. You should ensure that you read these in conjunction with the **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)** for the activities in which you plan to provide instruction/leadership.

Using generic risk assessments

Generic risk assessments have been created in order to save time and effort and are reflective of the operational requirements in the equivalent SOP's. You are required to read the relevant risk assessment carefully and then:

- 1 Consider the specifics of the activity or venture that you are planning and use the blank site specific template to consider any additional hazards and the management of any **additional risks** that relate to the specific activity, seasonality, location or group composition for your particular visit.
- 2 Sign the bottom of the risk assessment document to confirm that you have read and understood it and that the required control measures will be in place.

Follow the links below to access relevant generic risk assessments for your planned activity:

[Walking/Hillwalking](#)

[Expeditioning/Wild camping](#)

[Rock Climbing](#)

[Rockwall climbing](#)

[Mountaineering \(summer only\)](#)

[Cycling \(On and off road\)](#)

[Inland Kayaking](#)

[Kayaking in swimming pools](#)

[Sea kayaking](#)

[Surf kayaking](#)

[Stand up paddleboarding \(SUP\)](#)

[Open canoeing](#)

[Piste skiing/snowboarding](#)

[Ski touring/Off Piste skiing/snowboarding](#)

[Orienteering](#)

[Swimming in natural waters](#)

Other activities

In cases where staff wish to provide activities for which no specific guidance is provided in this document, the advice of the Technical Adviser **must** always be sought.

Dynamic risk assessment

The process of continually monitoring changing or developing circumstances, a willingness to remain flexible and responsive and the possession of the experience necessary to make appropriate and timely

changes of plan are all fundamentally important contributors to safe and positive outcomes of adventure activities.

This process of dynamic risk management should be continually and consistently applied by instructors and their assistants throughout the activity.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)

The SOP's below are largely informed by the generic risk assessments and provide a framework of rules and guidance within which THE MORAY COUNCIL requires its staff to operate when instructing/leading adventurous activities. They also reflect the recommended working practices of the various National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of sport.

Staff Competencies

Staff who hold Instructional or Leadership awards from a recognised NGB may operate within the scope of their award, provided their award is current. In the activity-specific guidance below you will find links to NGBs for details of their various award schemes.

Staff holding technical qualifications **must** ensure that copies of their award certification are kept on their personal profile on EVOLVE.

Any staff wishing to lead or instruct adventurous activities who do not hold relevant NGB awards but who have appropriate experience will require to be assessed and signed off as competent by the Adventurous Activities Consultants (AAC). The AAC manage a number of in-house, employment based training schemes on behalf of the council, details of which may be found in the following sections.

WALKING & HILLWALKING

General Information

As well as being a valid and valuable activity in its own right, walking forms the basis of many other adventurous activities, such as climbing, trail cycling and the Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes. Further reference may be made to the chapters on these activities.

Consideration should be given to:

- the nature of the terrain
- the prevailing conditions
- the needs of the group

Experience and training must relate to the nature of the terrain used and this document distinguishes between 'Low Level', 'Low Hills', and 'High Hills'.

Distinction is also made between summer and winter. Summer conditions are defined as those where there is no snow or ice underfoot or forecast.

NGB AWARDS

More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org

LOW LEVEL ACTIVITIES: UP TO 300M APPROX.

A considerable range of educational activity on foot takes place out of doors at Low Level, much of which is more appropriately considered as "off-site" activity rather than hill walking.

Whilst low level walking is generally considered to be a low risk activity there may be features or terrain encountered which prove to be hazardous, such as beaches, cliffs, ruined buildings, eroded paths, river banks etc., and leaders must be familiar with such hazards and evaluate the risks associated with them.

Walking at Low Level can take place throughout the year, however careful thought should be given to winter walking at this level.

Whilst no formal training is required to enable leaders to operate at low level, the terrain may require navigation and group management skills that would benefit from prior training.

The council's in-house **Leadership on Low Level Terrain** course is considered appropriate training in this context.

HILLWALKING ON LOW HILLS: 300 - 600M APPROX.

Most walking on 'Low Hills' (300 - 600 metres approx.) is reasonably straightforward in summer conditions. However, hills of this height can still be hazardous and challenging at times, and require appropriate skills and leadership. Careful consideration needs to be given to the nature and remoteness of the terrain.

Low Hills Training:

Staff leading parties on Low Hills, whilst not requiring a qualifying National Governing Body award **must** nevertheless be suitably trained. The Moray Council's in-house **Lowhills Training Scheme** is appropriate training and is valid for 5 years.

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_68240.html

Where the level of a planned walk is not clear, further advice should be sought from the AAC.

HILLWALKING ON HIGH HILLS: OVER 600M APPROX.

Parties on High Hills **must** always be supervised by the holder of an appropriate National Governing Body qualifying award.

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Refer to the generic [risk assessment](#) for this activity.

The following are essential:

- All aspects of the planned walk should be appropriate to the needs and abilities of the participants, i.e. terrain, season, weather.
- A detailed weather forecast for the area should be obtained prior to event.
- Details of the planned route, including estimated time of return, **must** be left with an appropriate person.
- Where a route is planned to finish somewhere other than the starting point, transport arrangements should allow for a range of possibilities.
- Contingency plans should be made, including possible alternative routes for part or all of the day.

EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING - GROUP MEMBERS

- The equipment and clothing used should be in good condition and suitable for the event, taking into account terrain and time of year.
- If members of the party arrive inadequately clothed or equipped, plans **must** be re-evaluated to account for this.

EQUIPMENT - THE LEADER

The equipment carried by the leader should anticipate not only unexpected situations but the predictable shortcomings of any party members' own equipment.

In addition to individuals carrying their own equipment, the following items should be present within the group:

- first aid kit (including spares and repairs depending on the circumstances)
- head torch and spare batteries
- map and compass
- mobile phone or alternative method of communication
- group shelter
- survival bag
- spare hat/gloves
- spare fleece or duvet jacket
- spare emergency rations of food and drink
- paper and pencil

The use of mobile phones and radio transceivers is of value; however emergency plans should not rely on their use alone.

Additional equipment may be required depending on the nature of the excursion and for those operating within the scope of a National Governing Body Award. Please refer to the manuals associated with these awards for further information.

For local walks on low level terrain, leaders should select appropriate items from the above list (which may not be exhaustive). Items to be carried should be informed by the risk assessment carried out during the planning stage.

SUPERVISION RATIOS (qualified staff to students)

The following ratios are a maximum and should not be exceeded. In some instances it may be necessary to reduce these ratios further.

Low Level	Max 1:12
Low Hills (summer conditions)	Max 1:8
High Hills (summer conditions)	Max 1:7
High Hills (winter conditions)	Max 1:6

Actual supervision ratios should be informed by the site specific risk assessments made for the activity and consideration **must** be given to the nature of the group, terrain, conditions and experience of the supervising staff, and also to the potential impact on the environment and other users of the area.

The size of any group and the strategies used **must** always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group.

Where organisational constraints require large parties to operate they should be broken into manageable groups operating and staffed independently.

In remote terrain, it is desirable to have a second experienced/qualified adult assisting with groups in order to provide extra security.

A decision to lead a party without a second adult will be based upon the training and experience of the leader, the experience of the party, the terrain, and the prevailing conditions.

INDIRECT SUPERVISION

When young people are to be supervised indirectly, such as during Duke of Edinburgh Award Expeditions or fieldwork activities, the responsibilities of the supervising staff member are no less than for a party being directly led.

See also: <http://www.dofe.org/>

When parties that are indirectly supervised are on open or high ground, the supervisor should ensure that they know the location of the group/s at all times. This will usually require continuous, unobtrusive observation of the group.

The council's in-house Remote Supervisor Module ([hyperlink](#)) is a mandatory addition to Lowhills training for anyone wishing to supervise groups on overnight wild camping trips, unless they hold an equivalent or higher national award.

Unaccompanied parties of young people should contain between 4 and 8 persons.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

- The visit leader **must** maintain an ongoing awareness of the well-being of each individual in the party throughout the day. Particular attention should be given to the preparedness of members of the group at the start of the day, and the suitability of clothing and equipment.
- Party members **must** be briefed on the plan for the day, and should have an appropriate understanding of actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.
- Prior to the activity taking place, the visit leader **must** review the plans and reassure him/herself that they are achievable and appropriate at that time, taking into consideration weather and conditions underfoot, the experience and ability of the group, necessary equipment and daylight hours available.
- Changes in the weather, both forecast and unexpected, should be observed and responded to as appropriate. The possible effects of various types of weather on the health and comfort of members of the party should be considered, e.g. extremes of heat and cold, wind chill, combination of wind and rain.

WATER HAZARDS

Any crossing which requires more than a simple step across a small stream should not be underestimated and should only be contemplated when no significant risks are posed by doing so. When managing risks associated with water hazards, leaders **must** operate within the scope of their training and experience.

The council's in house Lowhills Award does not provide formal training in dealing with water hazards, and leaders who are qualified in this capacity are required to ensure that any water crossings carried out under their supervision are of no more than ankle depth, able to be carried out easily and are inconsequential in the event of a slip. Leaders who have undertaken national awards such as the Summer Mountain Leader Award will be more able to apply a reliable risk benefit analysis when faced with these hazards; however the overriding consideration should be avoidance of such hazards wherever possible. The key to a successful outcome lies in the planning and risk assessment stages. Contingency plans should be drawn up for those situations where water is above ankle level or where the outcome of a crossing is uncertain. These should include alternative routes or waiting until water levels recede.

N.B Leaders who have undertaken training in any relevant capacity **must** lodge a record of that training within their personal profile on EVOLVE.

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

All walking activities must be planned around the known capabilities of all members of the group.

Where ambitious projects are planned, a systematic approach to preparation must be taken to enable the final project to be successfully undertaken. Such preparation must appropriately develop the abilities of all members of the group in terms of their physical fitness, technical abilities, and psychological preparedness.

MOUNTAINEERING ACTIVITIES (SUMMER AND WINTER)

The teaching and instruction of these activities is only within the remit of qualified Mountain Instructors and Mountain Guides.

It is crucial to assess the ability and experience of the group in the planning stages and to operate within the scope of this.

In winter, an avalanche forecast **must** always be obtained along with a relevant weather forecast and an ongoing awareness of snow conditions and avalanche risk should inform the plans for the day.

See: <http://www.sais.gov.uk/>

Qualified staff wishing to lead young people (under 18) in mountaineering activities must discuss their plans at an early stage with the AAC.

See: <http://www.astraining.co.uk/>

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Attention should be drawn to the **SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE**

See: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

Walking activities should be conducted in an environmentally aware manner and the philosophy of minimal impact on the environment and on other users should underpin all planning and activity.

The organisation **Leave No Trace** provides guidelines for adopting a minimum impact approach:

<http://www.lnt.org/>

EXPEDITIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Expeditioning requires the ability to live as comfortably as possible in remote areas and under any weather conditions, with the minimum of equipment that will ensure adequate shelter and feeding. Expeditioning covers a range of activities, from an overnight camp in an official campsite to extended expeditions using lightweight equipment.

In general, efficient camping is safe camping and many aspects of campcraft can be practised before attempting an expedition. The safety and success of many expeditions, on land or water, depend on campcraft skills. Those introducing people to remote and potentially hazardous environments should have been suitably trained and have the necessary skills and experience to operate safely.

A high degree of training is required in order for young people to be able to journey unaccompanied without undue hazard to themselves or detriment to the environment. Considerable emphasis should be placed on environmental awareness and the needs of rural communities.

QUALIFYING AWARDS

Competent leadership is the most important safety factor of all. Special training and experience are essential for anyone leading parties on expeditions into remote and potentially hazardous environments. For clarity, leaders must not lead expeditions on any terrain or in any medium in which they would not ordinarily be qualified to do so.

REMOTE SUPERVISION

When participants are unaccompanied and need to be supervised remotely in order to meet the requirements of the venture, leaders will require specialist training regardless of the height or nature of the terrain.

The council's in-house Remote Supervisor Module ([hyperlink](#)) is a mandatory addition to Lowhills training for anyone wishing to supervise groups on overnight wild camping trips, unless they hold an equivalent or higher national award.

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity.

Refer to the [generic risk assessment](#) for this activity.

The following should be considered to be essential:

- Obtaining information and local knowledge and familiarisation with the area in which the expedition will take place.
- Notifying land managers.
- Arranging and choosing good, safe campsites.
- Arranging food, fuel, equipment and transport.
- Planning safe and suitable routes, including alternative bad weather and escape routes.
- Obtaining a relevant weather forecast.

EQUIPMENT

The following should be considered to be essential:

- The suitability of rucksacks, sleeping bags, camping mats, tents, stoves and other items of lightweight camping gear available.
- Waterproofing, packing and carrying equipment.
- Keeping the weight carried to a minimum.
- First aid and emergency equipment.
- Ensuring the equipment is in good and safe order.
- Carrying headtorches with a spare bulb and batteries

CLOTHING

Consideration should be given to the following:

- The time of year, prevailing weather conditions and altitude.
- Any likely changes in weather.
- The experience and strength of party.
- The nature of the journey and terrain.
- Choice and care of appropriate and sensible clothing.
- Staying warm/keeping cool.
- The waterproof and windproof qualities and durability of any protective clothing.

- Spare clothing for emergencies.
- Adjusting clothing to changing weather conditions.
- Appropriate footwear for the venture.

SUPERVISION RATIOS (qualified staff to students)

Depending on the medium of travel, reference should be made to the relevant activity chapter for rules on maximum supervision ratios. Consideration should be given to reducing these ratios for extended and/or committing journeys in wild terrain.

Supervision ratios should be informed by the site specific risk assessment and consideration must be given to the group, terrain, conditions and experience of the supervising staff, and also to the potential impact on the environment and other users of the area.

The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group.

Where organisational constraints require large parties to operate they must be broken into manageable groups operating and staffed independently.

In remote terrain, it is desirable to have a second experienced/qualified adult assisting with groups in order to provide extra security.

A decision to lead a party without a second adult will be based upon the training and experience of the leader, the experience and nature of the party, the terrain, and the prevailing conditions.

The size of an expedition party should reflect:

- the venue, time of year, prevailing conditions
- the nature of terrain, length of journey and the skill level involved to complete it
- the experience of the leaders
- the requirements and experience of the group

SUPERVISION

The safety of an expedition is dependent on good supervision. There needs to be a sufficient number of leaders to supervise the following:

- Pitching and striking camp under all weather conditions and in the dark.
- Organising and establishing a daily routine for pitching and striking camp.
- Personal camp hygiene: toilet requirements and arrangements for leaving

the site clean and tidy, including the removal of waste and rubbish.

- Food hygiene: the preparation and cooking of food needs to be carefully monitored. Food poisoning or even simple stomach upsets can be debilitating and can seriously undermine the safety of an expedition.
- Using stoves: this may need to be done in poor weather and/or in the dark. The leader and students should be aware of the dangers associated with using stoves.
- Keeping the party together and maintaining group control.
- Coping with bad weather.

Accidents can happen through failure to exercise control. It is essential that in assuming the role of leader, the responsibilities of that position are recognised and accepted.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Wild country offers the opportunity for challenge and adventure and this often implies risk. The element of risk has to be contained to an acceptable level by proper training and by observing safety procedures.

For all expeditions the visit leader must ensure that:

- the nature of the expedition is within the leadership competence of the staff involved
- the visit leader knows the individuals in the group well enough to forecast their reactions to the physically and mentally demanding conditions that are likely to be met
- the leaders and all members have appropriate competence in first aid
- any additional equipment essential to the safe conduct of the party is carried
- the nature, purpose and aims of the expedition are clearly understood by all concerned
- a responsible base contact has been provided with the names and addresses of the party and other relevant details such as the route plan and timings

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Individuals participating in any expedition should have had prior opportunity to practice all the relevant skills.

Pre-expedition training **must** allow each individual to be fully and appropriately prepared for all aspects of their expedition.

See: <http://www.dofe.org/>

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Attention should be drawn to the **SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE**

See: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

Living in, and achieving a harmony with the chosen environment is the essence of camping. Care for the environment should be seen as an integral part of a camping ethic in which the needs of the environment should be considered alongside those of the group.

'Minimum Impact' is the only acceptable approach to travelling and camping.

The organisation **Leave No Trace** provides guidelines for adopting a minimum impact approach:

<http://www.lnt.org/>

ORIENTEERING

GENERAL INFORMATION

Orienteering can be described briefly as a mixture of cross-country running and map reading, largely taking place in accessible forest areas, and sometimes within city parks and gardens.

The objective is to successfully navigate round an ordered series of checkpoints in the shortest possible time. The competitor carries a specially drawn map (usually in 4 or 5 colours) on which the checkpoints or control sites are marked, a description of each control and a 'control card'.

Orienteering at the competitive level is a solo or relay running sport governed by the rules of the British Orienteering Federation for equipment and conditions. The use of orienteering skills at a more elementary level can generally be described as 'Wayfaring' and does not fall within the rules for the sport of orienteering.

NGB AWARDS

More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.britishorienteering.org.uk

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of an activity.

Refer to the [generic risk assessment](#) for this activity.

Specifically the following should be considered:

- The person in charge **must** have the competence and experience relevant to the area that is to be used and to the prevailing conditions.
- Course planning and control sites should give due consideration to safety, particularly in regard to length of course, the terrain involved and the ability of the participants.
- Dangerous areas should be avoided and any dangerous aspects of a competition or training area **must** be clearly marked on all maps. Particular hazards such as quarries, crags, deep ponds or marshes should be marked 'out of bounds' and taped off.
- Due regard should be paid to weather and season.
- Emergency procedure appropriate to the situation should be considered

and participants briefed appropriately.

- A search and rescue procedure for missing participants **must** be in place prior to an event.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

- Individuals should carry a compass and be conversant with the use of safety bearings.
- Individuals or pairs should carry a watch and know the 'course closure' times.
- Individuals must carry a plastic whistle for emergency use only and know how to use it (6 short blasts) and what to do if they hear an emergency signal being given.
- Full body and leg cover should be worn at all times. In winter warm and/or waterproof garments are essential. Footwear should be sturdy with good tread.
- Equipment should not be carried on strings around the neck.

Leaders should ensure that a first aid kit and group shelter are available during all orienteering events and exercises.

SUPERVISION RATIOS (Qualified staff to students)

Orienteering is generally a relatively non-hazardous activity when carried out at low level; however it still requires careful management and supervision and participants will often be supervised remotely. A **maximum ratio of 1:12** should not normally be exceeded since this will reduce both educational outcomes and overall safety. In all situations it is desirable for a second adult to also be present.

Optimum supervision ratios will often be less than 1:12 and will be informed by the site specific risk assessment and consideration must be given to the nature of the group, terrain, conditions and experience of the supervising staff, and also to the potential impact on the environment and other users of the area.

The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in effective control of the entire group.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Orienteering demands properly structured organisation and appropriate briefing of participants with regard to behaviour, area boundaries and potential hazards.

Leaders should ensure that:

- they have considered the level of preparation and fitness of the participants for the course being attempted
- there is a record of all individuals out on the course
- all participants report to the finish whether or not they have completed the course

Leaders should include in their briefings for participants:

- safety instructions
- safety bearings
- course closure times
- emergency procedures
- the importance of handing in control cards at the finish

Orienteering is one of the outdoor activities in which a young person may be entirely alone in the forest or countryside. Inherent in this may be a very slight but possible risk of being assaulted. The problems associated with this need to be recognised and understood. In educational settings young people should initially compete in pairs.

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

For young children, it is particularly important that a sound teaching progression is used to introduce orienteering. Inexperienced children should not be sent straight out into the forest on their own to attempt a course.

For some people forests can be dark, unfamiliar, intimidating places and this should be carefully considered when planning training.

Ideally the initial orienteering areas should have natural boundaries such as fences, roads or rivers which students are instructed not to cross.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Leaders wishing to develop the sport of orienteering should be fully aware of the British Orienteering Federation coaching scheme and of the safety recommendations of that governing body.

Leaders should be encouraged to attend training courses organised by the British Orienteering Federation.

The use of permanent orienteering courses is strongly recommended. Information on these is available through the Scottish Orienteering Association

Groups organising an orienteering event should consider doing so in conjunction with the local affiliated orienteering club of the Scottish Orienteering Association.

See: <http://www.scottish-orienteering.org/>

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Attention should be drawn to the **SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE**

See: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

ROCK CLIMBING

GENERAL INFORMATION

Rock Climbing involves activities carried out on steep rocky ground where security is usually managed with ropes and associated equipment. Movement can be in any direction: climbing up or down, abseiling or traversing. This may be done as an activity in its own right or as a component of other adventurous activities.

Modern rock climbing activities with groups normally consist of single pitch climbs, abseiling and/or some controlled scrambling or bouldering. Rock climbing in an educational setting usually involves the rope passing from the climber below to the top of the cliff.

Even with modern techniques of safety management there is no escaping the exposure and at times isolation the cliff environment and activities of this nature therefore require careful management.

NGB AWARDS

More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

The guidance that follows focuses on single pitch climbing, and is written primarily for SPA holders. MIA and MIC holders operating in other situations will be additionally informed by their respective training.

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity.

Refer to the [generic risk assessment](#) for this activity.

More specifically the following should be considered in relation to the chosen cliff:

- steepness at top and bottom of cliff
- height of the crag
- approach and descent
- ease of management of a group in that location
- suitability of climbs/grades for the needs of the group
- tides
- slippery rocks
- predicted weather conditions
- content of group briefing
- bird (nesting) restrictions, general conservation guidelines for the area
- poor weather alternatives, including cancellation or postponement if
 - conditions are not suitable

EQUIPMENT

Safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude but careful selection and use of equipment will make a considerable contribution to safe practice.

All group equipment must be subject to regular inspection by the AAC and stored in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. See [Equipment Maintenance](#).

It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that all technical equipment (including ropes) is in good condition and appropriate for the planned session prior to use. If there is any doubt about the condition of an item of equipment it should be removed from use.

Instructors should note the following:

- Properly sized equipment **must** be provided for all members of the group.
- Swapping or sharing of items of personal equipment should be avoided.
- When working with very small, large or disabled persons, full body harnesses should be used. Knots in belts, excessively large leg loops and over adjusted helmets are not acceptable.
- Equipment **must** be correctly adjusted and fitted to each participant.
- If for any reason clothes are removed, put on or adjusted after the original fitting, belts, harnesses and helmets **must** be re-checked.
- Helmets **must** be worn when participating in the activity or when in close proximity to the crag.
- Locking karabiners **must** be used for all body attachments and main belay points.

Non-technical Equipment

A first aid kit, survival bag and group shelter should be at the site of the activity. A mobile phone is a worthwhile addition to this list.

CLOTHING

It is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that their group is appropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions. In wet and windy conditions waterproofs and warm clothing are essential. Consideration should also be given to the time of year and weather forecast

General guidelines:

- Clothes should be suitably warm and non-restrictive.
- Individuals should have spare clothes for additional wear or to change into if necessary.
- All individuals should have protective wind and waterproof clothing, hat and gloves and thin hat.
- Full body cover is necessary in strong sunlight.
- Long hair should be tied back.
- Jewellery should be removed.

GROUP ACTIVITY, SECURITY AND GENERAL SAFE PRACTICE

The overall safety of a climbing session is dependent on good instruction and safe practice.

The nature of the environment will demand that close supervision is exercised at all times.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE AND REWARDING SESSION:

- **Knowledge of the group** is important, especially in terms of behavioural, medical or physical problems and any previous experience of the activity.
- **Briefings should be comprehensive**, ensuring the group are aware of who they are taking instructions from and of any potential hazards such as those arising from loose or slippery rock.
- **Personal equipment:** While the instructor has the overall responsibility for individual safety equipment, all users should be familiar with these items and have an awareness of how to use or wear them.
- **Fastening to rope:** When climbing, participants should be tied in to ropes using appropriate knots. Clipping on to a bight of rope using a

locking karabiner is only acceptable in an abseiling context when attaching a participant to a safety line.

- **Bouldering** must only take place when clear guidelines are given and control measures put in place to avoid participants climbing too high and when there is no danger of anyone becoming injured if they slip or fall off. The height at which participants can be allowed to boulder at will be informed by the risk assessments made about the venue but should generally not exceed more than 1 metre in height. Avoid bouldering above an uneven surface.
- **Good communication** is essential and basic instruction in climbing calls should be given so that everybody knows what is happening.
- **General security:** Group members waiting on ledges or near edges should be clipped to security lines. Traverse lines should be used whenever appropriate.
- **Flexibility:** Instructors need to remain responsive to a dynamic environment.
- **Rescue techniques:** the instructor should endeavour to prevent problems before they arise or resolve them using the simplest means possible.

When teaching basic belay techniques to group members instructors should ensure the following:

- Appropriate measures are put in place to deal with differences in weight between climbers.
- There is no slack rope in the system.
- The belayer is no more than two metres from the wall.
- Unless rope is being taken in, the belay plate is in a locked position (a back-up person can help overall security).
- Lowers are slow and controlled.
- Instructors should ensure that ropes are 'tailed' by a second person behind the novice belayer until such time as the instructor is assured of the belayer's competence

N.B Tyrolean traverses or zip lines are outwith the scope of the SPA and should only be managed by someone with appropriate training, such as a Mountain Instructor.

RATIOS (qualified staff to students)

The following ratios are a maximum and should not be exceeded. In some instances it may be necessary to reduce this ratio further.

1 Instructor: max 6 participants

Actual supervision ratios will be informed by the site specific risk assessment and consideration must be given to the nature of the group, terrain, conditions and experience of the supervising staff, and also to the potential impact on the environment and other users of the area.

The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group.

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Basic prior instruction/training in the use and care of personal and key items of equipment is important. It should never be assumed that understanding has taken place until it has been tested in a supervised situation.

For physical and psychological reasons it is recommended that introductory grades should be well within their ability. Challenge should be introduced progressively to match growing confidence.

Any training involving holding the weight of a student on a rope must be tested and practised in a controlled situation.

MULTI-PITCH CLIMBING (including: mountain scrambling, climbing on mountain crags and winter climbing).

The remits of these activities fall outwith the scope of the Single Pitch Award and require a supervisor to hold a Mountain Instructors qualification.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND CLIFF CONSIDERATIONS, RELATED TO TRAINING

Attention should be drawn to the **SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE**

See: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

Basic codes of conduct should be established before the session begins. This includes:

- personal responsibility for behaviour in a hazardous place
- etiquette to other crag users
- awareness of conservation issues e.g. over use, litter, flora and fauna, trees, nesting birds, noise disturbance and graffiti

ROCK WALL CLIMBING

GENERAL INFORMATION

A range of opportunities for creative group work and technical training can be gained from safe and imaginative use of a rock wall.

The arrangements outlined below will apply to all teaching and instructional sessions on rock walls.

Any separate arrangements established in recent years for the management of public use of these facilities will continue.

ROCKWALL TRAINING

The council's in-house Rockwall Award is suitable for those wishing to lead groups on site specified council climbing walls. This award comprises a one day (or 6 hour) training programme followed by an assessment.

Holders of the award can then instruct bottom or top roping sessions at the designated rockwall/s.

NGB AWARDS

More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and successful outcome of any activity. Refer to the [generic risk assessment](#) for this activity.

Specifically, the following should be considered:

- Familiarisation with the wall.
- The area in the vicinity of the wall must be clear of obstructions such as equipment and apparatus.
- Where applicable, nets should be in place to protect wall users from activities carried out by other hall users.
- Bookings by other hall/area users should not conflict with the aims of the wall climbing session.
- Information should be given to group members concerning appropriate clothing and footwear.

EQUIPMENT

Safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude but careful selection and use of equipment will make a considerable contribution to safe practice.

All group equipment must be subject to regular inspection by the Technical Adviser and stored in accordance with manufacturers recommendations.

It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that all technical equipment (including ropes) is in good condition and appropriate for the planned session prior to use. If there is any doubt about the condition of an item of equipment it should be removed from use.

Instructors should note the following:

- Properly sized equipment **must** be provided for all members of the group.
- Swapping or sharing of items of personal equipment should be avoided.
- When working with very small, large or disabled persons, full body harnesses should be used. Knots in belts, excessively large leg loops and over adjusted helmets are not acceptable.
- Equipment **must** be correctly adjusted and fitted to each participant.
- If for any reason clothes are removed, put on or adjusted after the original fitting, belts, harnesses and helmets **must** be re-checked.
- Helmets **must** be worn when participating in the activity or when in close proximity to the crag.
- Locking karabiners **must** be used for all body attachments and main belay points.

Non-technical Equipment

A first aid kit should be at the site of the activity. A mobile phone is a worthwhile addition to this list.

CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR AND ASSOCIATED CONSIDERATIONS

Instructors should note the following:

- Clothing should be non-restrictive.
- Hair should be tied back.
- Jewellery should be removed.
- Appropriate shoes should be worn. Soft soled or specialist climbing shoes are best.

GROUP ACTIVITY, SECURITY AND GENERAL SAFE PRACTICE

The overall safety of a rock wall climbing session is dependent on good instruction and safe practice. Flexibility and the ability to react quickly and effectively to unexpected circumstances should be built into whichever systems the instructor chooses to use.

For safe and effective rock wall climbing sessions, instructors should consider the following:

- **Knowledge of the group** is important - especially in terms of behavioural problems, medical/physical considerations, previous experience.
- **Personal equipment:** While the instructor has the overall responsibility for individual safety equipment, all users should be familiar with these items and have an awareness of how to use or wear them.
- **Fastening to rope:** When climbing, participants should be tied in to ropes using appropriate knots. Clipping on to a bight of rope using a locking karabiner is only acceptable in an abseiling context when attaching a participant to a safety line.
- **Abseil ropes** should be releasable from ground level.
- **A height restriction** should be imposed for un-roped climbing. Generally feet should be no more than a metre above ground level.
- **Rescue techniques:** the instructor should endeavour to prevent problems before they arise or resolve them using the simplest means possible.

When teaching basic belay techniques to group members instructors should ensure the following:

- Appropriate measures are put in place to deal with differences in weight between climbers.
- There is no slack rope in the system.
- The belayer is no more than two metres from the wall.
- Unless rope is being taken in, the belay plate is in a locked position (a back-up person can help overall security).
- Lowers are slow and controlled.
- Ropes are 'tailed' by a second person behind the novice belayer until such time as the instructor is assured of the belayer's competence.

RATIOS (qualified staff to students)

The following ratios are a maximum and should not be exceeded. In some instances it may be necessary to reduce this ratio further.

1 Instructor: max 6 participants

Actual supervision ratios will be informed by the site specific risk assessment and consideration must be given to the nature of the group, terrain, conditions and experience of the supervising staff, and also to the potential impact on the environment and other users of the area.

The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group.

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Basic prior instruction/training in the use and care of personal and key items of equipment cannot be over-emphasised. A systematic progression of teaching of care of equipment and proper use is needed for children and it should never be assumed that understanding has taken place until it has been tested in a supervised situation. The latter is especially relevant in the teaching of the use of a belay plate.

CYCLING, incorporating ROAD CYCLING, TRAIL CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mountain biking, using specially designed and built cycles, is a rapidly developing activity. XC biking and trail cycling are also widely used descriptive terms. Typically mountain bikes are used both as an alternative means to explore countryside and for riding around pre-prepared trails offering varying degrees of technical challenge. There are a number of high quality venues in North East Scotland and the Cairngorms National Park

Cycle touring, using conventional road cycles or mountain bikes on more extended trips is enjoying a revival in popularity amongst all age groups. Many youngsters plan their own cycle tours based on advice and encouragement from parents, schools or clubs and Duke of Edinburgh Silver & Gold expeditions can be undertaken on bicycles in wild country using minor roads, lanes and tracks.

CYCLE RIDE TRAINING SCHEME

This two day in-house training course is mandatory for all council employees planning to lead groups on cycles either on or off road unless they hold a nationally recognised cycling leadership qualification. On successful completion of training, the course tutor will sign off log books to specify the areas and routes where individual staff can operate with groups. These areas will be restricted to terrain that is designated as LOW LEVEL (below 300 metres above sea level), and are likely to include public roads, simple paths and tracks that are close to public roads and possibly some specified forest trails. The standard of riding is technically non challenging but participants should have some experience of using bikes on roads and easy off road trails.

NGB AWARDS

More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.britishcycling.org.uk

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity.

Refer to the [generic risk assessment](#) for this activity.

The following factors affecting the choice of a suitable area or route will include:

- terrain with its resulting technical and physical challenges, remoteness and environmental considerations
- experience and fitness of group
- experience of leader
- time of year
- daylight hours available
- weather

Due consideration should be given to the return element of the journey, whether direct or circular, and sufficient account taken of the terrain, gradient and wind strength or direction to allow the return to be undertaken in reasonable time.

The possibility of mechanical breakdown or accidental damage to cycles should be anticipated and due account of this **must** be taken when planning the route to allow sufficient time for such eventualities.

EQUIPMENT

- **Size of cycle:** care and time should be taken to ensure that each cycle is suited and correctly adjusted to the size of the individual rider. For trail cycling the size of cycle is generally smaller than for touring cycles.
- **Helmets must** be worn and time should be taken to ensure helmets are adjusted and fitted correctly.
- **Gloves and protective eyewear** should be considered, particularly for any routes going off surfaced roads or in wet weather.
- **Reflective bandoliers, vests, anklets and wristbands** add greatly to the safety of all cyclists using public roads and leaders should encourage their use.
- **Panniers or rack-packs** should be used for carrying spare clothing, food and drink. Small daysacks or 'bum bags' are also useful for journeys where bikes may have to be carried.
- **Gloves** are recommended for each member of the party, full-fingered gloves if off-road.

Leaders **must** ensure that each cycle meets the legal requirements when used on the road and that the cycle has been given a thorough safety check to ensure it is in good mechanical order.

EQUIPMENT - LEADER

The following items should normally be carried:

- spare clothing
- food and drink (hot or cold depending on conditions)
- a comprehensive first aid kit
- a group shelter.
- map, compass & spares.
- repair kit appropriate for the cycles being used.
- mobile Phone in waterproof bag or cover

Bicycle Repair Kits typically include increasing amounts of the following as the length of ride increases:

- a spare inner tube appropriate to the size(s) of tyres being used
- a pump with suitable valve adapters
- a puncture repair outfit
- tyre levers
- correct size Allen and torx keys for the bikes being used
- tyre patch
- chain link extractor, 'magic' links
- an adjustable spanner or multi-holed spanner
- a small screw driver and a small Phillips screw driver
- assorted cable ties
- spare kit: consider the following items, brake blocks, nuts and bolts, lights with bulbs and batteries
- spare brake and gear cables
- lubricant for chains

Many of these items are incorporated in bike specific Multi Tools. There are a multitude of these tools on the market, so it is worth checking the bikes which are to be used, and purchasing a tool that offers the most options.

CLOTHING

Specific clothing for leaders and group members needs will be determined by:

- the time of year, prevailing weather conditions and altitude
- likely changes in weather

- the nature of the journey and terrain encountered

Consideration should be given to:

- a multi-layer system
- gloves or cycling mitts
- spare insulative clothing
- relevant footwear which allows for walking as well as riding
- correctly fitting helmets in good condition
- waterproof and windproof 'shell' (waterproof trousers should be guarded against becoming entangled in the chain)

If adequate clothing is not available, plans need to be modified.

RATIOS AND GROUP SUPERVISION

The following ratios are a maximum and should not be exceeded. In some circumstances it may be necessary to reduce this ratio further

1 Instructor: max 8 participants.

Leaders should also take into account the nature of the terrain, group competencies and behaviour when deciding appropriateness of operating at the suggested ratios and reduce where necessary.

A 'back marker' should be appointed and throughout the journey the leader should be in a position to direct each member of the party in order to achieve appropriate control. Consideration should be given to pace and energy expenditure in order that the group remain in contact at all times.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

The leader **must** maintain an awareness of the wellbeing of each group member throughout the cycling activity. Particular attention should be paid to;

- ensuring that the control measures identified in the risk assessment are implemented
- briefing the group on the planned route and advising them of actions in the event of an emergency or becoming separated from the group
- ensuring that the planned route/activity is appropriate for the group in the prevailing conditions
- observation of changes in weather, both expected and unexpected with an appropriate response
- considering, in the event of mechanical breakdown or other delays, the available daylight and a means of prompt communication back to base

- descents, particularly of steep ground. A suitable pace for descent, with a safe distance between individuals, should be considered
- speed and how to keep it under control
- use of public roads. Groups should ride in single or double file depending on the width and nature of the road, and maintain a safe distance apart. The Highway Code **must** be observed
- consideration for other track users. Avoid startling walkers and horse riders

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

When planning a journey it would be unwise to make the assumption that everybody can ride a bicycle. Checks should be made to ensure that riders can steer, balance and stop consistently.

Consider knowledge of:

- road traffic sense and signals
- use of gears and brakes
- how to effect basic repairs e.g. replacement/repair of an inner tube for remotely supervised groups
- how to cycle when carrying a load, either on the bike or on the person
- the problems and environmental impact of bicycles in sensitive areas

Training should be given as needed in:

- basic bike handling
- coping with steep descents and ascents
- packing and load carrying
- individual's responsibility to the group, signals and voice commands being used

CYCLING EXPEDITIONS

Consideration should be given to:

- the need for equipment to be carried on the bike rather than on the person, and the stable safe
- loading of the bike
- the handling characteristics of a fully laden bike (balance, momentum, increased width)
- the choice of terrain, in relation to the above considerations
- the implications for group safety whilst living in and travelling through remote wild areas
- spares equipment which may be needed on longer rides

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The potential impact of bicycles on both the environment and on other land users should be fully considered. Particularly the following should be noted:-

- It is strongly recommended that cycling should be restricted to hard wearing tracks. Cycles should not be used on tracks or paths where ground is soft and prone to damage such as after rainfall.
- High mountain tops and plateau areas covered with thin and fragile vegetation must be avoided.
- Activities should only be undertaken with minimal impact to the environment. Groups should be prepared to dismount and walk for short sections in order to avoid inflicting environmental damage or negatively impacting upon other users.

Attention should be drawn to the **SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE** since access rights extend to cycling.

See: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

The following paragraph is advice from the code

“Cycling on hard surfaces, such as wide paths and tracks, causes few problems. On narrow routes, cycling may cause problems for other people, such as walkers and horse riders. If this occurs, dismount and walk until the path becomes suitable again. Do not endanger walkers and horse riders: give other users advance warning of your presence and give way to them on a narrow path. Take care not to alarm farm animals, horses and wildlife. If you are cycling off-path, particularly in winter, avoid going onto wet, boggy or soft ground, and avoid churning up the surface”.

SNOWSPORTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Alpine skiing, or downhill skiing as it is more commonly known, can be broadly described as skiing using fixed heel bindings and is usually undertaken in lift served areas with ski patrollers.

Nordic skiing for the purposes of this document means using lightweight free heel equipment for travel on relatively low lying prepared pistes and/or forest trails.

Telemarking is a branch of Nordic skiing that has become more popular with the advent of modern equipment designed primarily for downhill skiing on piste or mountain touring.

Ski mountaineering involves travelling in more remote or rugged terrain using both Alpine and Nordic equipment and requires additional winter mountaineering experience.

Snowboarding involves the participant riding on a board using fixed bindings in a diagonal stance.

Adaptive skiing. With a growing awareness and a greater understanding of disabilities, skiing for the disabled (Adaptive Skiing) is a fast growing discipline. Equipment and recent qualifications in this field make it possible for people with physical and developmental disabilities to enjoy snow sports.

NE Scotland is particularly well served by having two of Britain's five alpine ski centres straddling its boundary; the Lecht and Glenshee. Cairngorm, Nevis Range (Aonach Mor) and Glencoe Ski Centres are also within reasonable travelling distance. The Aberdeenshire countryside and climate provides good opportunities for Nordic Skiing when the snow lies. The forests of Clashendarroch and Gartly are particularly suitable venues for track skiing. There are well established artificial Snowsport facilities at Alford and Aberdeen, and an artificial Nordic ski track in Huntly

It is often possible with careful choice of terrain and location to ski from late November till early May.

NGB AWARDS

More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at <http://snowsportscotland.org/courses/courses> and <https://www.basi.org.uk>

IN_HOUSE TRAINING

In house training for staff who are competent skiers or snowboarders wishing to supervise skiing activity at patrolled ski areas is available via the AAC. This training does not qualify staff to teach skiing skills but may be used to supervise 'free skiing' activity outwith formal ski school times.

Training is also available for staff and volunteers who plan to enter and supervise young people in the Scottish Schools Ski Race programme.

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute to the safety and enjoyable outcome of any activity.

Refer to the generic risk assessments for these activities:

[Piste skiing](#)

[Snowboarding](#)

[Nordic skiing](#)

[Ski touring/Off-piste skiing & Snowboarding](#)

Specifically, the following should be considered:

- **Prior knowledge** of the location to be used should preferably be first hand, but if not, then it should be from a reliable source.
- **Flexibility** in planning programmes to allow for last minute modifications or curtailment due to changing conditions and unforeseen circumstances.
- **Prior knowledge** of the group; in particular, their experience and physical capabilities, including any relevant medical problems. Also, ascertaining any disabilities the group may have.
- **A weather forecast** should be obtained before setting out.
- **A ski and access road report** for the area. For all off-piste activity an avalanche report should also be obtained (included with most mountain and ski weather forecasts)
- **Awareness of changing conditions** e.g. weather, snow, daylight hours, group wellbeing.

As in all sports, people learn at different rates and groups should be organised in such a way that an individual can learn at his/her own rate without unduly impeding the progress of others.

EQUIPMENT - GROUP MEMBERS

ALPINE SKIING

- **Skis** should be an appropriate length and in good condition.
- **Ski bindings** should be of the modern step-in type and **must** only be adjusted by a suitably trained technician in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- **Ski boots** should fit well and should be appropriate to the skier's ability level.
- **Ski poles** should be an appropriate length.
- **Ski helmets must** be worn by all participants. Helmets should be properly sized, correctly fastened and conform to current British or European standards.

NORDIC SKIING

- **Skis** should be appropriate for the type of skiing to be undertaken. Skis to be used for ski mountaineering and for touring above the tree line must have steel edges.
- **Bindings** should be appropriate to the form of skiing and the nature of terrain used.
- **Brakes and Safety Straps - On** piste, ski brakes or safety straps must be used. When touring, safety straps should be used according to the terrain.
- **Boots** - For low level touring a lightweight boot can be used, however in icy conditions or when operating at higher levels, a stiff mountaineering type of boot is desirable. Boots should always be comfortable and weatherproof and attention should be paid to guarding the feet against blisters.
- **Poles** should be of an appropriate type and length, and in good condition. Adjustable poles are particularly suitable for touring.
- **Equipment Carried** - Where appropriate, students should carry adequate spare clothing, food, drink, and waterproofs. Refer to Walking & Hillwalking chapters for further guidance.

SNOWBOARDING

- **The Board** should be in good condition and of the appropriate length and design for the ability and stance of the rider.
- **Bindings** should be appropriately adjusted for the skill level of the participants. It is important to provide left foot (regular) and right foot (goofy) forward bindings as appropriate. A retaining leash must be worn. Particular attention should be paid to the condition of bindings on hired equipment.
- **Helmets must** be worn as described for Alpine skiing.

EQUIPMENT - THE INSTRUCTOR

The equipment an instructor chooses to carry or have readily accessible will vary according to a number of factors including:

- the nature of the activity
- the location
- the time of year
- the age and experience of the group
- the aims of the session
- the weather

Instructors should consider selecting from the lists below which are not necessarily exhaustive:

Alpine Skiing in a patrolled area

- spare clothing (including hat, gloves, goggles)
- piste map
- first aid kit
- sun cream
- mobile Phone (containing numbers of Ski Patrol office, group leader etc.)
- wax

For low-level Nordic Skiing in remote locations which are not patrolled:

- spare clothing (including hat, gloves, goggles)
- first aid kit
- sun cream
- map
- compass
- torch
- wax (Grip & Glide)
- survival bag
- hot drink
- sleeping bag.
- repair kit (basket, bale, tip, screws)
- spare high energy food
- group shelter.
- mobile Phone
- GPS

Ski Touring/Off-piste skiing away from patrolled areas:

All of the above PLUS the following **MUST** be used/carried:

- avalanche transceivers for each participant and instructor.
- climbing skins/ Harscheisen
- snow shovel
- avalanche probe.
- retaining straps on bindings.

Appropriate training in the use of the above items **must** be provided prior to embarking on any extended journey.

CLOTHING

It is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that their group is adequately and appropriately clothed for the type of activity and the prevailing conditions. Instructors should make sure that each group member has a windproof and waterproof shell for full body cover, and that they have a warm hat and gloves.

GROUP SIZE

The following ratios are maximums and should not be exceeded. In some instances it may be necessary to reduce this ratio further.

On piste in patrolled areas:

Alpine Skiing 1 instructor: 10 participants

Snowboarding 1 instructor: 8 participants

Off-piste and Ski touring:

1 Instructor: 6 participants

SUPERVISION

Skiing occasionally takes place outwith a recognised patrolled ski area, for example on roadside or school fields. Such activity should be closely supervised and the instructor should remain in contact with the group at all times.

'FREE' SKIING

It is recognised that there is value for students in spending periods of time skiing in small groups without the direct supervision of the instructor. The arrangements for 'free skiing' must ensure that the safety of the students and other skiers is not compromised.

When planning a 'free skiing' session, the following arrangements should be made:

- The ability level and experience of the individuals within the group should be considered.
- Students should be briefed on action to be taken if the group becomes separated.
- The area or pistes to be used are clearly identified and understood by students.
- Students should operate in groups of between 3 and 5 and should be instructed to remain together throughout the session.
- Contact is made with the group at least once in every practice session.
- Report back times are clearly understood.
- Incident procedures are clearly understood by the group.

NB Free skiing may only take place within patrolled ski areas.

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students should be introduced to all snowsport activities through a structured and systematic approach using appropriate teaching techniques and progressions.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- the choice of terrain
- appropriate warm-up sessions
- proper use and care of equipment
- control of speed, including how to fall safely
- appropriate codes of conduct for safe skiing
- proper use of ski tows when appropriate

PADDLESPORTS (CANOEING, KAYAKING AND SUP)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The term 'paddlesport' is used to describe the various forms of canoeing, kayaking, rafting and Stand up Paddleboarding (SUP). All these activities have the common denominator of involving small craft being propelled by paddles, but the activities do have a range of characteristics and as a result have differing recommendations in terms of safety and good practice.

The paddlesport section has therefore been split into four main areas related to the derivation of the craft: kayaking; canoeing; rafting and other paddle boats.

KAYAKING

A kayak can be defined as a craft powered by a sitting paddler using a double-bladed paddle. Typically (but not exclusively) the kayak will have a covered deck, with the cockpit covered by a spraydeck and will be paddled by one person.

CANOEING

A canoe can typically (but not exclusively) be defined as an open decked craft powered by a kneeling paddler using a single-bladed paddle. The traditional open canoe is the form in most common use within the spheres of outdoor learning and general recreation. It is a relatively stable and versatile craft that is normally paddled by two people but can equally be handled solo. Paddling a canoe as a pair requires effective communication and the development of good teamwork between partners.

Note: Although this document makes a clear distinction between 'canoeing' and 'kayaking' as two separate disciplines within paddlesport it also, in line with common usage, frequently refers to 'canoeing' as a generic term to cover both.

Canoeing is an adventurous activity and therefore has an element of attendant risk. Canoeing activities taking place within the scope of this document should only be undertaken under the direct supervision of those qualified to assess and monitor risk, and thus maintain it at an acceptable level.

STAND UP PADDLEBOARDS (SUP)

SUP is a relatively new activity which is growing rapidly in popularity. A hybrid of board surfing and canoeing, it can be enjoyed in a broad spectrum of water conditions and can be enjoyed for general recreation, health and wellbeing, competition and journeying.

OTHER PADDLE CRAFT

In recent years there has been major growth in the use of a variety of smaller inflatable paddle boats by commercial, recreational and education sectors. This provides an activity which is a cross over between traditional canoeing & kayaking and white water rafting. The inflatable crafts come in a variety of different shapes and sizes, allowing paddlers to paddle solo or in pairs and paddle from a sitting or kneeling position. Generally these crafts are known as:

- inflatable kayaks – where paddlers sit and power the boat with double-bladed paddles either solo or in pairs
- duckies – where paddlers sit or kneel and power the boat with single-bladed paddles either solo or in pairs (more usually in pairs)
- sit-on-tops
- stand up paddleboards (SUP's)

These types of paddle boats offer the potential to broaden the scope of paddlesports and those who can participate.

QUALIFYING AWARDS

Currently, paddlesports on natural waters may only be delivered in the context of employment with Moray Council by those who hold appropriate NGB awards.

Kayaking and Canoeing

The Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) is the National Governing Body for Kayaking and Canoeing. It administers within Scotland the British Canoe Union (BCU) scheme of tests and awards for the training and assessment of coaches and leaders.

See: <http://www.canoescotland.com/> and <http://www.bcu.org.uk/>

SUP

There is currently no single NGB for SUP although British Canoeing do offer a Discipline Specific Module (DSM) for existing kayak and canoe coaches to enable them to upgrade their qualification for SUP. A number of other bodies also offer Instructor awards. The following link to a document produced by the AALS as guidance on SUP will be useful reference.

<http://webcommunities.hse.gov.uk/connect.ti/adventureactivitiesnetwork/view?objectId=641317>

OTHER PADDLE CRAFT

At present there is no national governing body for the wide range of inflatable and sit-on-top paddle boats now in use by the commercial, recreational and educational sectors. It is recommended that in most cases it is appropriate to adopt the SCA/BCU coaching scheme for guidance regarding qualification of coach, type of environment and student to coach ratios.

When the craft used involves the paddler(s) sitting on or in the boat, propelling it by a double-bladed paddle, then the SCA scheme regarding kayaks should be followed (e.g. for sit-on-top kayaks, inflatable kayaks, hot dogs or adventure kayaks etc).

When the craft used involves the paddler(s) kneeling or sitting in the boat, propelling it by a single-bladed paddle, then the SCA scheme regarding canoes should be followed (e.g. inflatable canoes, duckies, adventure canoes etc).

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity.

Refer to the generic risk assessments for these activities:

[River kayaking](#)
[Open canoeing](#)
[Sea kayaking](#)
[Surf kayaking](#)
[SUP](#)

Specifically, the following should be considered:

- **Prior Knowledge** of the location to be used should preferably be first hand, but if not then it should be from a reliable source.
- **Flexibility** in planning programmes to allow for last minute modification taking into account changing conditions and unforeseen circumstances.
- **Prior knowledge of the group**, in particular their experience and their physical capabilities, including relevant medical problems.
- **A weather forecast** should be obtained before setting out.
- **Communication**: notify relevant bodies of plans. e.g. Coastguard, Harbour Master, Landowner, Colleagues at base.
- **River Levels**: White water rivers are generally graded at medium levels. By their very nature, such grading systems are to some extent subjective and may change suddenly with fluctuating river levels.
- **River Mouths & Estuaries**: The mouths of rivers often look placid but may be subject to strong rip currents extending a considerable distance out to sea. Local knowledge should be sought and caution exercised. Hazards caused by rapid “drying out” of mud flats may cause difficulties for groups and should be recognised.
- **Other Constraints**: Be aware and take account of any other influencing environmental factors with which you will have to work. e.g. tides, available daylight, rainfall, snowmelt etc.

EQUIPMENT: THE BOAT/CRAFT

The circumstances in which equipment is to be used will determine minimum acceptable standards in terms of its design and state of repair. Whilst safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude, the careful selection of the most suitable equipment will make a significant contribution to safety. All craft **must** be suitable in terms of their design and their condition for the purpose for which they are to be used.

There are certain basic minimum requirements with which all groups and their craft **must** conform before venturing out on any adventurous water activities. These are:

- All Canoes and Kayaks **must** have sufficient inherent or added buoyancy to ensure that they remain afloat if waterlogged (MIN. 25 Kgm) and distributed so as to allow the craft to float horizontally.
- All group members **must** wear an approved buoyancy aid or life jacket that is rated to the appropriate British or European standard.
- All canoes and kayaks **must** have end grabs at bow and stern designed so as not to trap the hand and to which a karabiner can be quickly and easily attached.
- All rafts **must** be fitted with a grab line, securely fixed and extending completely around the boat. Bow and stern lines must be fitted and neatly stowed when not in use. All lines must be of at least 8 mm in

diameter and bow/stern lines should be floating rope.

- All safety equipment **must** conform to current legislative requirements. In addition to the above, when operating on anything other than sheltered water, coaches/guides should consider the following:

KAYAKS

Footrests

A full plate bulkhead footrest or blocked foam are the best systems currently available, and in conjunction a keyhole cockpit and backstrap is recommended for white water and surfing use.

Additional Buoyancy

Airbags fitted in the bow, forward of the footrest and in the stern are recommended, except where kayaks are already fitted with water-tight bulkheads. On the sea and on other open water, the fitting of additional buoyancy makes deep water rescues quicker and easier to perform. On white water it significantly reduces the chances of the boat becoming pinned on an obstacle and of the paddler becoming entrapped.

Spare (Split) Paddles

Sufficient split paddles as spares in case of breakage should be carried.

Spray Decks

A tight fitting and secure spray deck will make a significant contribution to a paddler's safety as well as their comfort.

Helmets

On rivers, for coastal rock-hopping, surfing, and in any other situation where capsize in shallow water is likely, a safety helmet is essential. Helmets are also strongly recommended for experiential sessions involving games and where head injury from paddles and other equipment is a possibility. On open water or sea journeys, a warm hat or sun hat is usually more appropriate. Helmets conforming to the current British or European standard should be used.

CANOES

Additional Buoyancy

Airbags or alternative foam wedges will significantly enhance the buoyancy of the boat when swamped. On open water, the fitting of additional buoyancy makes deep water rescues quicker and easier to perform. On

white water it significantly reduces the chances of the boat becoming pinned on an obstacle and of the paddler(s) becoming entrapped.

Lines/Painters

In situations other than on sheltered water, consideration should be given to fitting 8 - 10 metres of 8 mm+ floating line to each end of the canoe.

If fitted the line should be stowed in such a way as to avoid entanglement in the event of a capsize.

Spare Paddles

Sufficient spare paddles should be carried.

Helmets

In many open canoeing situations a warm hat or a sun hat is the most appropriate headgear. On journeys where moving water is likely to be encountered students **must** be provided with safety helmets. The sound judgement of a Level 3 Coach should be relied upon to determine when the helmet should actually be worn. If worn, helmets conforming to the current British or European standard should be used.

Bailer

Consideration should be given to carrying a bailer in each canoe particularly when operating on open water.

EQUIPMENT: THE COACH / GUIDE

The equipment a coach chooses to take in order to enhance a group's safety and comfort will vary according to:

- the nature of the activity
- the location
- the time of year
- the age range of the group
- the experience of the group
- the Aims of the session

Kayak and Canoe Coaches should carry or have direct access to the following basic items:

- spare clothing including hat and gloves
- survival bag
- first aid kit
- hot drink
- towing system
- throw line
- river knife
- spare paddle
- whistle

Raft Guides should carry about their person the following basic items:

- whistle
- river knife
- flip line

and should have direct access to:

- spare clothing including hat and gloves
- survival bag
- first aid kit
- hot drink
- throw line

Depending on the circumstances, the coach/guide should consider selecting other items to be carried within a group.

The following list is not necessarily exhaustive:

Map; chart; compass; whistle; torch; repair kit; knife; folding saw; slings; karabiners; pulleys; throw line; paddle hook; flares; radio; lighter; matches; mobile phone; emergency food.

CLOTHING

It is the responsibility of the coach/guide to ensure that a group is adequately and appropriately clothed for the type of activity and the prevailing conditions. The coach/guide should take account of the following:

Wind and Water-proof Shell

Most warm clothing will insulate the body even when wet but should be supplemented by a wind and waterproof shell if it is to be effective in preventing heat loss. Due regard should be given to the layering principle in which a number of thin layers are more effective and adaptable than one thick layer.

Wet Suits

Recommended in circumstances where frequent capsizes in cold water are likely. They also afford a level of protection against bumps and grazes, which frequently result from swimming in rapids. Wet suits for paddle sports should not restrict movement of the upper arms and shoulders.

Wet suits are not normally windproof in their own right. It is recommended they be worn in conjunction with a windproof paddle top.

Dry Suits

Beyond the budget of most groups, dry suits are only effective if suitable thermal clothing is worn under them.

Paddle Sports in winter

Paddlesports are no longer seen solely as summer activities. Particular attention should be paid to clothing during the colder seasons. Wet suits, dry suits and other specialised protective clothing must be regarded as essential where risk of capsize exists or where prolonged exposure to cold and wet conditions are anticipated.

Footwear

It is important that paddlers wear suitable footwear. Old trainers with thick woollen socks or wet suit boots with a sturdy sole are good options. For open canoe journeys involving wading and portaging, stronger footwear which provides more protection for ankle and foot may be more appropriate.

GROUP SIZE AND SUPERVISION: Kayaking, Canoeing and SUP

These are MAXIMUM Instructor: Participant ratios that **must not be exceeded**. They assume one NGB qualified instructor in charge of the group and in some cases a '**competent**' adult assistant. It should be recognized that there will often be circumstances in which these ratios should be reduced and that this should be informed by the risk assessment process.

Assistants must be signed off as competent by a technical advisor

Sheltered water.	8 participants or up to 12 with a competent adult assistant. May be increased to 10 participants if the instructor is qualified for Moderate water.
Moderate water	6 participants or up to 10 with a competent adult assistant.
Advanced water	4 participants.
Advanced surf	4 participants

DESIGNATIONS OF WATER:

On Sheltered Waters:

- Small lochs offering a variety of landing options.
- Canals
- Enclosed bays of large lochs or coastal areas, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore and generally operating no more that 200m from a landing point.
- Enclosed harbours, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore.
- Quiet flat pools of rivers at medium level or less.
- The upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving estuaries during neap tides.
- Defined beaches (a short section of beach) with easy landing throughout. No tide races or overfalls. Conditions in which swimmers and beach craft could be happily operating with winds not exceeding force 3 (force 2 if offshore when greatest of caution must be exercised);

Moderate Water

- Large lochs. Operations will normally be within 500m of an easy landing place and in winds that do not exceed Force 4 (Force 2 if blowing offshore).
- Grade 2 white water for open canoes. Grade 2-3 for kayaks.
- Coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with easy landing, not involving fast tidal streams, tidal races, or overfalls, winds not above force 4 (force 2 if offshore).
- The upper reaches of some estuaries.
- Beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips or undertow, tidal streams, rocks or groynes).
- Small to moderate surf waves – 2ft maximum.

Advanced Water

- Any journey on the sea or open inland water where extended crossings may be required.
- Areas of the sea that may be affected by tidal races or overfalls.
- Sections of coastline where landings may not be possible or difficult.
- Difficult sea states and /or stronger winds (force 4 or above).
- Launching and landing through moderate surf.
- Grade 3 white water for canoes or grade 4 for kayaks.

Advanced Surf

- The surfing of reefs, points and offshore features.
- Surfing from beaches where the surf height exceeds 1 metre or where stronger winds, cold conditions, rips, long shore drift, rocks or other potential hazards are involved.

For guidance on the suitability of specific areas of water contact the Technical Adviser.

MINIMUM NUMBERS

For kayaks and canoes there should be at least two craft on the water at all times.

MAXIMUM NUMBERS

The total number of participants in any one group should not exceed twelve.

PREPARATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants should normally be able to swim 50 metres. In the case of non-swimmers, the instructor should be satisfied that the participant has a reasonable level of water confidence when wearing a buoyancy aid. All participants should undergo some basic training on simple water.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Contaminated Water: Careful consideration should be given to the dangers associated with polluted or contaminated water. Coaches / Guides should be aware of the dangers of blue/green algae and the causes and early symptoms of Weil's Disease and Lyme's Disease.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SURFING

- During surfing activities there should always be an appointed shore party in signal contact with the coach. The shore party should act as lookouts to safeguard students on the water. A good way to achieve this is to organise the group in a 'buddy system'.
- One competent paddler should be stationed seaward of the breakline to act as sweeper. They should be in signal contact with the coach and the shore party.
- Coaches should take the greatest care to ensure that conditions are well within their own capabilities and suitable for the ability of their students.

Measurement of surf

The "surfers" measurement is used throughout both this document and the BCU awards in surf.

The surf forecast obtained from telephone surf lines the internet or wave buoys is in feet and refers to the ride-able mid section of the wave, not the peak to trough height.

As a benchmark, "4 feet" is head height for a board surfer and on an average British beach break would provide conditions only suitable for the most experienced and capable kayak surfer.

A swell of 6 inches to 1 foot is both appropriate and more than adequate for any novice group. Intermediate kayak surfers would find 2 feet of surf more than suitable for a learning experience.

Wave Character

The physical height of a wave is only part of the picture. The following factors all individually have a profound effect on a wave (but combined can change swell dramatically):

- wind direction and strength
- beach shape
- type of break
- height/state of tide
- swell character (age, period, speed)

All of these contrive to make 1 foot of swell a potentially serious and dangerous environment to take inexperienced client groups into.

Although the coaching awards give the Level 3 surf coach a remit to operate in up to 3 feet of surf, it would be unwise to take novice groups into such conditions. If appropriate the “reform or secondary break” might prove a suitable site for inexperienced or novice groups to work.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RACING CRAFT

Open cockpit racing kayaks and racing canoes are unsuitable for use on open water in windy conditions (greater than force 3) or on white water, except in the hands of those who are highly experienced in their use.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Attention should be drawn to the **SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE**

See: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

The impact of paddlesport on the environment should be considered.

Particular attention should be given to:

- bank/land erosion at access and egress points
- rights and responsibilities of access
- disturbance to wildlife
- disturbance to other water users
- parking of Vehicles and Trailers
- discreet changing before/after activity

KAYAKING IN SWIMMING POOLS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pool sessions can maximise opportunities for experiencing our sports diversity, overcoming fears of capsizing, learning to paddle, developing water confidence, improving boat handling skills, raising awareness of general safety procedures and also specific rescue practice, all in a safe and controlled environment.

Canoe polo is a popular sport at local, national and international level, for a large part using indoor pools. There are also now a large number of local canoe clubs in the UK many of which use regular pool sessions as a focal point for club meets, particularly during the winter months.

QUALIFYING AWARDS

To supervise a pool canoeing session, a Coach must be 18 years of age or over and EITHER.

- Be at least “new” UKCC Level 1 Coach or “old” BCU Level 2 coach trainee
- Hold a current Canoe/Kayak Safety Test Award, Foundation Safety & Rescue Award or other lifesaving award which conforms to local requirements.
- Hold a current First Aid qualification.
- Conform to the requirements of the pool management regarding conduct of sessions and poolside supervision.

OR be trained and signed off as competent by the AAC.

In house training is available via the AAC for competent kayakers who wish to supervise kayaking activity and teach basic kayaking skills in the context of their employment with Moray Council in swimming pools.

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and successful outcome of any activity.

Specifically the following should be considered:

- Communication with pool management and staff regarding local requirements, particularly for an exceptional session in a pool which is not normally used for canoeing.
- Facilities for storing equipment.
- Adequate information to group regarding appropriate behaviour and clothing etc.
- Facilities for cleaning canoes and equipment if transported from elsewhere.

EQUIPMENT

- Canoes currently used in pools are normally of a type with rounded ends to prevent injury to participants and damage to the pool. Where other types of craft are used appropriate precautions (such as padding the ends of the boat) should be taken to prevent injury or damage.
- Paddles with metal edged blades must not be used.
- Canoes based at a pool should not normally be transported to other venues.
- Canoes which have been used outside or transported from other venues must be cleaned thoroughly (specific advice should be taken from local pool management).
- Any outside equipment e.g. paddles, buoyancy aids etc. should be cleaned before use in a pool.
- Canoes and equipment should regularly be checked for damage (in particular any sharp edges around cockpit or footrests).

CLOTHING

- Consideration should be given to participants wearing appropriate body covering to prevent small scratches and abrasions which are common even with well maintained canoes.
- Coaches may decide whether to ask participants to wear buoyancy aids (B/As) or not, however, the wearing of these is to great advantage when coaching for long-term learning with the transfer of skills to outdoor environments where B/As are essential.
- Buoyancy Aids and helmets must be used for canoe polo sessions.

GROUP ACTIVITY AND SUPERVISION

A canoe session in a pool should be an enjoyable and positive experience for participants. To achieve this, the coach should take account of the following:

- Participants should normally be able to swim. In the case of non-swimmers the coach must be satisfied that the participant has reasonable water confidence when wearing a buoyancy aid. Non-swimmers must always wear a buoyancy aid.
- Casual swimming must not be permitted while the canoe session is in progress unless an area is roped off specifically for swimming. Appropriate supervision must be provided for this as a separate activity.
- Where possible the session should be organised on a 'buddy system' basis i.e. one canoeist supported by a group member in the water or on the poolside. Where a 'buddy' system is not possible one member of the group must remain on the poolside as a 'second pair of eyes'

GROUP SIZE

Group size and supervision ratios should generally be applied as for sheltered water but will also be influenced by local pool policy. Some pools may require a qualified pool lifeguard to be present in addition to the kayak coach. Pools are also likely to have rules on the maximum number of boats allowed in the pool at one time.

WORKING AT WATER MARGINS AND SWIMMING IN NATURAL WATERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Outdoor learning activities often take place at water margins where the potential for accidental immersion exists. These might include coastal walks, riverside walks and field studies including water sampling.

It is recognised that on occasions, groups taking part in an adventurous activity or visiting the seashore or countryside may wish to go for a swim. Swimming in natural waters is fun but it is important for leaders to understand the potentially serious nature of this activity.

Natural waters can broadly be categorised as:

- still water lochs/lochans
- rivers
- sea

QUALIFYING AWARDS

For activities involving working near water but with **no intention to enter the water** beyond welly height it is recommended that staff attend a **water safety and awareness** course such as those offered by the National Water Safety Management Programme (NWSMP) or by the AAC.

All swimming activities **must** be supervised by a **competent and experienced** leader who is confident that their fitness and skills are such that they can affect a rescue if a swimmer gets into difficulty. The leader **must** hold a current and appropriate lifesaving or water safety and rescue award.

Examples of bodies offering such awards are:

Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) <http://www.rlss.org.uk/>

Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB) <http://www.slsgb.org.uk/>

Rescue 3 Europe. <http://www.rescue3europe.com/>

Holders of current National Governing Body coaching awards in other recognised watersports in which lifesaving techniques and water safety and rescue training form an integral part of the training syllabus may also supervise swimming activities in natural waters. **Holders of these awards should check with the AAC regarding the validity of their training for their planned swimming activity.**

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

PLANNING

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. All swimming in natural waters **MUST** be planned for in advance ensuring that a site specific risk assessment has been completed, the activity has been notified, parents of young people have been informed and consents given.

The following should be considered essential:

- Potential danger from polluted water.
- Restrictions placed on swimming by landowners, local authority, or water authority.
- If swimming in the sea, the area should be free from strong tides, rip currents, or undertows and obstacles such as rocks. Swimmers should be restricted to swimming in one specific area only.
- The current weather with particular attention to wind strength and direction.
- If swimming in a river, attention should be given to the rate of flow of water and the potential for a rapid fluctuations in level as a result of recent rainfall, power generation activities or similar. Lifeguard cover should be organised to provide close supervision of the designated swimming site whilst also taking account of the potential for floating objects from upstream into the site and for swimmers to be flushed downstream out of the site.
- Potential danger from obstacles, or problems likely to be caused by other water users.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE SWIMMING:

- Double check the area to ensure there are no obstacles or obvious dangers.
- Restrict the swimming area so that control can be kept to an easily managed area.
- Ensure that the entry and exit points from the shore or bank into the water are safe.
- Only allow those who can swim into the water and ensure that those who cannot swim remain on dry land and are adequately supervised.
- Ensure that the group are briefed thoroughly.

DURING SWIMMING

- Only allow jumping into clear water where the depth is KNOWN and when the area has been checked for underwater obstacles.
- Diving head first should not be permitted.
- The qualified lifesaver **must** remain on the bank keeping constant watch.
- If the lifesaver is required to enter the water for any reason, he/she **must** be replaced by a responsible person over the age of 16 who will act as a second pair of eyes and alert them to any emergency situation.

GROUP SIZE

The following ratios are maximums and **must** not be exceeded. In some instances it may be necessary to reduce this ratio further.

1 qualified Lifesaver: 6 participants

With another responsible adult available to assist, the group number can total up to 10.

The qualified lifesaver should be particularly aware of the possible effects on swimmers of long periods in cold water.

N.B Natural waters can be extremely cold even in summer and leaders should be aware of the dangers of sudden immersion in cold water.

ANGLING AND FISHING

Boat Angling can take place in any craft from a small dinghy to a large charter boat. Fishing can take place from close inshore to many miles offshore. Safety precautions will vary for each area, type of craft, type of fishing, weather, tides and other factors.

Shore Angling can take place anywhere from a sandy beach to rocky cliffs. Safety precautions will vary for each venue, casting style, day/night, type of fishing, weather, tides and other factors.

The guidelines below apply to shore and bank fishing and fishing from rowing boats or similar on inland waters. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the previous chapter on Working at Water Margins.

QUALIFYING AWARDS

The leader in charge of bank and shore fishing will be an experienced angler familiar with local water and safe access routes. They should also have a knowledge of life-saving and resuscitation techniques and be aware of the dangers of hypothermia.

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

Where fishing takes place from small boats (craft under 6 metres in length with or without an engine) on open inland water, the leader should have particular expertise in boat handling. In most cases it is advisable to obtain the services of a professional boatman.

The following should be considered to be essential:

- **Prior Knowledge** of the location to be used should be obtained. This should preferably be first hand, but if not, then it should be from a reliable source.
- **Flexibility** should be incorporated into planned programmes to allow for last minute modification or curtailment, to take account of changing conditions and the unforeseen.
- **Knowledge of the Group**, in particular, their experience and their physical capabilities, including any relevant medical problems or behavioural issues.
- **Weather** forecasts should be obtained before setting out.
- **Other Constraints** such as changing conditions e.g. daylight hours, rate of flow of water, group wellbeing.

LIMITATIONS

- Leaders must brief participants on good practice in the particular environment to be visited.
- Participants should not be allowed to fish alone and should ideally remain in sight of the leader at all times.
- Where this is impractical each person must remain in sight of at least two participants, and the party must all be within hailing distance of the leader.
- Seasonal as well as other limitations placed on certain fishing and angling activities must be observed.
- Solo fishing from boats should not be permitted.

EQUIPMENT

- A buoyancy aid or other flotation aid which conforms to current British or European norms should be worn when fishing from rocks, wading and when fishing from a rowing boat.
- A rescue or throwing line should be available for all fishing activities and the leader trained in its use.

CLOTHING

Personal clothing appropriate for the environment should be worn. Clothing must be warm, wind and waterproof.

Spare clothing, if not carried by each participant, should be readily available within the group.

GROUP SIZE AND SUPERVISION

For bank and shore fishing, a ratio of **1 leader:6 participants** is recommended as a maximum but circumstances may demand smaller ratios if students are spread over a wider area.

When fishing from a rowing boat, ratios will be determined by the size of craft and should not normally exceed **1 leader:3 participants**, with no more than 2 individuals fishing at any one time.

HAZARDS

Participants should be made aware of any potential hazard in the area where they are fishing such as:

- crumbling or steep-sided banks
- overhead power cables
- tides, currents, rate of flow, larger waves and potential for rapidly rising water
- shingle, mudflats and soft sand
- slippery terrain and weed strewn rocks

Local information should be sought regarding any hazards likely to be encountered in a particular area.

Consideration should be given to water borne infections.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

GENERAL

The leader must ensure that a thorough and detailed briefing is given before activities commence.

The leader must make regular close contact with each member of the group throughout the session.

Wading

With young people, wading should be treated with considerable caution and should only be permitted under the following conditions:

- The leader is satisfied that the participant is competent, and that the waters to be fished are suitable.
- Participants must be taught the correct use of a wading staff.

Fly Fishing

Eye protection is important for those being introduced to fly fishing (safety glasses, sunglasses or similar). A hat should also be worn to protect the head and ears.

TRAINING

Instruction in recovery techniques from deep, fast water when wearing waders and the use of a wading staff should be given prior to allowing participants to fish from faster moving water.

Training in casting techniques must be provided and carefully supervised prior to participants being allowed to fish on their own.

Advice should be provided on the action to take if a hook becomes embedded in flesh.

OTHER ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

GENERAL INFORMATION

Within the category, “Other Adventurous Activities”, are included a wide range of technical and non-technical activities. Such activities cannot be classified as particular adventurous activities, but will certainly have a relevance to outdoor education.

Other Adventurous Activities may be used to build a free standing programme of activity for a group or they may be used as an integral part of a broader outdoor learning programme.

Such forms of activity will fall into two categories:

‘Simple, low key activities’:

- take place in close proximity to habitation where access to emergency services is readily available
- do not require the use of specialist technical equipment, specialist instruction or leadership
- are routine in nature and are a part of the normal establishment curriculum or programme

Examples include: team building games and projects, wayfaring, urban studies, visits to parks and playing fields, short walks near habitation and environmental studies.

‘More adventurous activities’:

- take place in remote and potentially hazardous sites
- require the use of specialist technical equipment, specialist instruction and trained leadership
- are not normally a part of the curriculum but are more an extra curricular activity.

Examples include: ropes courses, raft building, scrambling and gorge walking.

New Activities

New activities are often emerging. Some recent examples include Kite Surfing, Paragliding and Zorbing. Where activities are NOT dealt with in this document, advice should always be sought from the AAC.

The boundary between simple low key and more adventurous activities should be determined by the Head Teacher/Programme Manager and this is best done by undertaking a risk assessment.

If the Head Teacher/Programme Manager is in any way unsure of the position then **advice must be sought from the AAC.**

QUALIFYING AWARDS

For **'Simple Low Key Activities'**, leaders should consider both the objective dangers involved in the activity itself, and in addition, any hazards implicit in the environment in which the activity takes place. This is best achieved by undertaking a risk assessment.

Leaders should ensure that they have the relevant experience appropriate to the planned activity and to the environment in which they intend to operate.

For **'More Adventurous Activities'** elements of the competence required may be contained within various qualifying awards and advice on this should be sought from the Technical Adviser.

For many situations site specific training to complement awards will be essential. Such activities are often included in the itineraries of external activity providers. All approved external providers who offer 'adventurous activities' as part of their programmes will have met The Moray Council's requirements in terms of their safety management procedures.

All leaders taking charge of adventurous activities out of doors should hold a current first aid qualification.

IMPROVISED RAFT BUILDING

The leader overseeing the building and use of an improvised raft must hold appropriate lifesaving or paddlesport awards to effectively and safely manage any capsizes, entrapments or break-ups. This must take account of the nature of the water being used.

GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

The guidance below is directed mainly to leaders undertaking simple activities but will also form the basis for the evaluation of more adventurous activities.

Safety considerations will generally be concerned with:

1. GROUP CONTROL

Young people may be operating alone or in pairs, out of immediate contact with leaders. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate briefings and to emergency procedures.

Examples of such activities may include; wayfaring, treasure hunts and other activities involving the gathering of information.

2. GROUP SIZE AND SUPERVISION

Where activities are of a technical nature, the ratios for group size and supervision within the relevant activity chapter will apply.

For non-technical activities, leaders should consider the nature of the activity, the environment, and the quality of the experience to be provided when deciding on appropriate ratios.

3. HEIGHTS OFF THE GROUND

Activities which involve young people being a significant height (**more than 1 metre**) from the ground will require particular consideration. Such activities include:

- High ropes courses
- Tyrolean and other rope-aided traverses
- Artificial rock wall climbing.

Leaders should ensure that they have the appropriate training, experience, and equipment to adequately safeguard individuals in such situations.

Any activities that involve the use of a rope to safeguard a fall will require an appropriate rock climbing or mountaineering qualification or specific approval for that event or form of activity.

4. WATER

Where activities take place on or near water, leaders should ensure that they have the appropriate training and experience for the safe supervision of water-based activities. Such activities may include; raft building, river crossings, and Tyrolean traverses over water.

Specifically, the following should be considered:

- Relevant rescue and lifesaving techniques and the administration of Expired Air Resuscitation.
- The provision of a rescue boat where appropriate, the driver of which must hold RYA National Powerboat Certificate Level 2. In addition there should normally be a second competent adult aboard.

Buoyancy aids which conform to current British or European norms should be worn when afloat or where unexpected immersion is possible.

Reference should be made to Paddlesport pages, Swimming in Natural Waters pages.

Any staff unsure of their expertise and the scope of their training with regard to the supervision of simple activities within this category should consult the Technical Adviser.