Core

Australian

Adventure Activity

Good Practice Guide

Guidance for common good practice for all adventure activities

Outdoor Council of Australia
Representing the Outdoor Sector Nationally

Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the *Traditional Owners* of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.

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Version details

Version	Date	Details
V1.0		23 Sept 2019
V2.0	2026	

Foreword

"When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening."

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practice Guides are designed to ensure effective, responsible, sustainable and safe delivery of adventure activities to *dependent participants*. They can help people across the outdoor sector to develop appropriately managed adventure activities which enhance individuals and our communities, while protecting the environment and culturally significant places. In doing this, these documents can help ensure that people will continue to enjoy the benefits of adventure activities well into the future.

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee.
Outdoor Council of Australia

Creation

The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and accompanying Good Practice Guides (GPGs) were developed through a national project and launched in 2019. They drew together, and built upon, the various state and territory-specific adventure activity standards that had previously operated across Australia, replacing a fragmented set of arrangements with a single, nationally consistent voluntary framework. The original development drew on the input of a wide range of outdoor and adventure activity experts with extensive experience, supported by expert advisory groups and informed by open consultation across *activity providers*, education authorities and other stakeholders.

The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges the members of the various focus groups, industry consultation, working groups and expert advisors for their work and contributions, and thanks the State and Territory Governments for funding the original development.

The AAAS and GPGs are now maintained by the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA). They are subject to comprehensive review at least every five years, with targeted reviews undertaken in response to serious incidents, fatalities, relevant court decisions, or material changes in regulation or practice. Reviews are overseen by the Steering Committee and conducted in accordance with the AAAS Review and Update Methodology — a pragmatic, mixed-methods process combining legislative and regulatory analysis, currency checking of cited standards and instruments, stakeholder consultation, data-informed *risk assessment*, and structured expert input through the Expert Advisory Group, followed by open public consultation before endorsement.

The first comprehensive review under this methodology was undertaken in 2025–26. The review was facilitated, and the Standard and Good Practice Guides drafted, by The OREAS Group Dr David Marsden for and on behalf of the Outdoor Council of Australia. The Outdoor Council of Australia gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all who took part in the review:

- Dr David Marsden (PhD), Lead Consultant (The OREAS GROUP)
- Lori Modde, Project Sponsor (OCA Chair)
- the members of the AAAS Steering Committee, who provided governance, direction and endorsement of the reviewed documents;
  - Lori Modde, OCA Chair, Outdoors NSW, ACT
  - David Marsden, Lead Consultant, The OREAS Group
  - Andrew Atfield, Tasmania Government
  - Andrew Knight, Outdoors Victoria
  - Dom Courtney, Outdoors Queensland
  - Jodie Freund, South Australian Government
  - Katie Brown, Outdoors WA
  - Mitchell Hardy, NT Government
  - Neil Le Febvre, Outdoors WA
- the members of the Expert Advisory Groups, who contributed specialist knowledge and reviewed drafts across the Core and activity Good Practice Guides; and
- the *activity providers*, education authorities, peak bodies and individuals who contributed through public consultation, focus groups, and submissions.

Further details of the creation and review of the AAAS and GPGs can be found at www.australianaas.org.au, where updates are also published.

Funders

The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges and thanks the State and Territory Governments for funding the original development and 2026 review.

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Interpretation of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The following words and phrases are used in all documents and have specific meanings:

- Must: used where a provision is mandatory, if the provider is to operate fully in accordance with AAAS or GPGs. (This is equivalent to the keyword “shall used in other voluntary standards e.g. Standards Australia, other International Standards Organisations (ISOs) etc.)
- Should: used where a provision is recommended, not mandatory. It indicates that the provider needs to consider their specific situation and decide for themselves whether it applies or is relevant. A “should” statement describes good practice. Departure from a “should” statement does not of itself establish a breach of duty — a provider may meet its obligations by other means appropriate to its context — but providers should be able to explain the basis for a different approach.
- Can/cannot: indicates a possibility and capability.
- May/need not: indicates a permission or existence of an option.
- But are/is not limited to: used to indicate that a list is not definitive and additional items may need to be considered depending on the context.
- The following formatting is used throughout:
- Defined words are in italics. They are defined in the Glossary.
- Examples are in smaller italic 9-point font.
- In document references are underlined. References are to section heading titles.
- External web or Australian AAS & GPG document links are dotted underline italic.

1 Introduction

1.1 About these documents

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS) and related Good Practice Guides (GPGs) are an industry good-practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of outdoor adventure activities with *dependent participants*.

The AAAS and related GPGs provide guidance on responsible activity delivery, including safety and respect for the environment, cultural heritage and other users. They are not a full legal compliance framework.

Activity *providers* are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice in relation to their obligations and duties in delivering adventure activities and should reference the relevant laws to the area in which they intend to undertake the adventure activity.

1.2 Does the Standard and Good Practice Guides apply to me?

The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and associated Good Practice Guides (GPGs) are primarily designed to support activity *providers* conducting lead or supported adventure activities involving *dependent participants* with the aim of delivering safe, responsible and well-managed experiences. Each *provider* must determine, based on their specific circumstances, whether the participants they work with are dependent and/or their level of dependency on the provider's systems and operations. Providers should use the AAAS and relevant GPGs to ensure that the activities they lead are planned and delivered in accordance with the Standard.

Australian *providers* operating internationally can use the AAAS and GPGs as a benchmark for safe practice, while complying with the laws and relevant standards of the jurisdiction in which the activity is conducted. Legal advice should be obtained where activities cross jurisdictions.

Activity providers include outdoor education and adventure businesses, schools, universities, TAFEs, camps, clubs and organised "meet-up" groups, youth organisations, not-for-profits, and community-based organisations that deliver adventure activities to *dependent participants*. An individual may also be an *activity provider* where they hold the ultimate legal *duty of care* to participants. "The Standard" and the GPGs apply to a provider as a "whole organisation" rather than to "specific roles" within it.

Some providers may have their own standards or guidelines appropriate to their *duty of care*. These should be reviewed periodically to ensure current *duty of care* expectations are met, and "the Standard" and the GPGs may assist with such reviews.

1.3 Dependent Participants

A *dependent participant* is a person who is owed a *duty of care* by the *activity provider* and who wholly or partially on the provider's systems, processes and operational practices for the support, supervision, guidance or instruction needed to take part in an activity. In most cases this means a participant who reasonably relies on the provider for their safety. The degree of dependence may vary over the course of an activity.

Considerations for determining whether a person is a *dependent participant* may include, but are not limited to:

- whether the organisation is providing a service or product to the person
- whether the organisation owes the person a *duty of care* in the circumstances
- whether the person reasonably relies on the provider for the support, supervision, guidance or instruction needed to participate safely.

Considerations for determining the **level of dependence** may include, but are not limited to:

- the foreseeable level of competence of the participant in the activity, and the degree of reliance this creates on the provider’s work system, including reliance on *activity leaders*
- the foreseeable level of self-reliance of the participant to reasonably manage their own safety
- the variation, or possible variation, in the degree of dependence or self-reliance throughout the activity
- the individual context, nature and circumstances of the activity
- the relevant circumstances and particular facts relating to the responsibilities assumed by the provider.

1.4 Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The guidance for adventure activities comprises several related documents. For any activity, the AAAS (the Standard), the Core GPG, the relevant activity GPG, and any applicable Explanatory Notes issued by the Outdoor Council of Australia, from time to time, should be consulted.

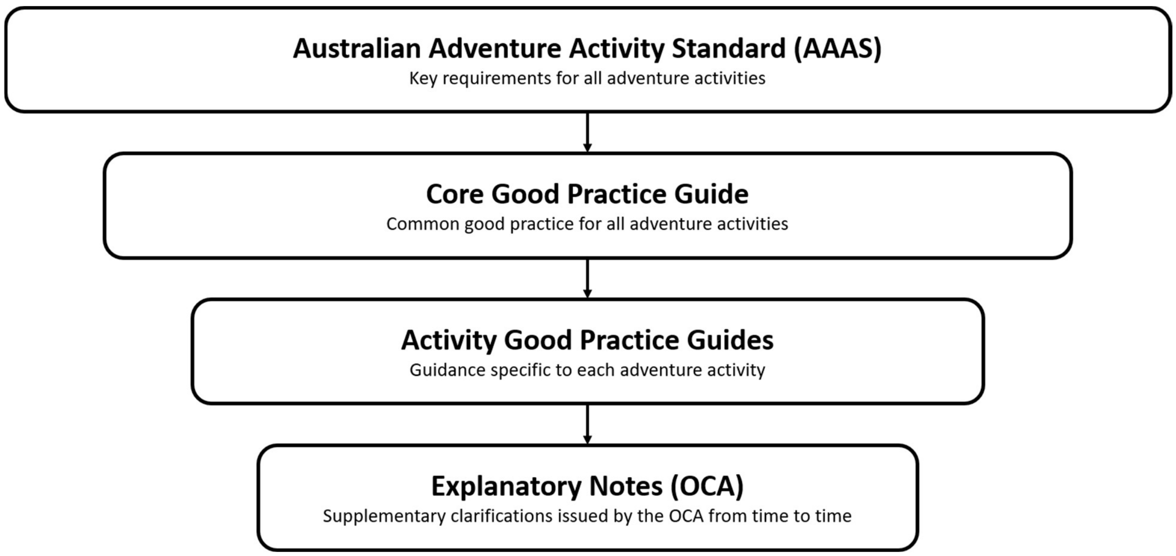


Figure 1.1: Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The documents present cumulatively more specific information. Providers should determine how they use the AAAS and GPGs based on their context and need, and are encouraged to draw on them when developing and reviewing their standard operating procedures. Activity providers are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice on their obligations and to reference the laws relevant to the area in which they operate.

1.5 Are they legally binding?

The AAAS and GPGs are not legal requirements. However, they may refer to specific laws and regulations which may be legally binding on activity *providers*. Some *land manager*s and other organisations may require compliance. This may be as a condition of obtaining a licence, permit or other permission, or some other condition (e.g. a contract).

Under Australian common law and relevant legislation, *providers* have a legal *duty of care* towards *dependent participants* in some circumstances. In broad terms, the legal duty requires *providers* to take reasonable care that their actions and omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury to *dependent participants*.

It is important to be aware that adventure activities in Australia operate within a complex legal landscape. *Activity providers* must understand the obligations that apply to them and seek independent professional and legal advice where any obligation is unclear.

The following obligations include, but are not limited to, those set out in detail in Appendix A — Principal legal obligations, grouped by the function each obligation performs:

- Work health and safety — the foundational legal duty for the majority of providers, including the primary *duty of care*, officers' due-diligence duty, consultation, safe systems of work, and notifiable-incident reporting.
- *Duty of care*, negligence and consumer protection — the common law *duty of care*, the Civil Liability Act (or equivalent) of each state and territory, and the Australian Consumer Law.
- Protection of children and vulnerable persons — Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People schemes, Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Schemes.
- Transport of participants — land, water and air — heavy vehicle, road transport, domestic commercial vessel, recreational marine and civil aviation obligations.
- Land access, environment and cultural heritage — park, Crown land and reserve licensing, the EPBC Act, Aboriginal cultural heritage law(s) and/or regulation(s), and biosecurity duties.
- Information privacy, equity and employment — the Privacy Act and Australian Privacy Principles, anti-discrimination law(s) and/or regulation(s), and the Fair Work Act and relevant award.
- Substances, food and licensed items — medicines and poisons, food safety, liquor and tobacco, and firearms obligations.
- Activity-specific licensing — fisheries and recreational fishing licensing, and animal welfare duties.
- Appendix A is an orientation only and is not exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice, and the relevant law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the jurisdiction(s) of operation must in each case be determined and complied with.

2 Management of Risk

Risk management in outdoor and adventure settings is highly context-specific. In natural environments there is an almost infinite range of combinations of participants, purpose, weather and local conditions, and every provider differs in structure, size, philosophy and operating environment. *Risk management* therefore cannot be a 'tick-the-box' exercise or a 'one size fits all' approach; risk systems should be flexible, adaptive and highly responsive to the circumstances of each activity, drawing on recognised frameworks such as AS ISO 31000:2018 *Risk Management* Guidelines and AS ISO 4980:2023 Benefit-*risk assessment* for sports and recreational facilities, activities and equipment.

The section guides providers to build a risk system that fits their own structure and operating environment rather than copying another organisation's. A volunteer-led club might apply it as a lightweight but documented plan with strong dynamic assessment in the field; a commercial operator might use it to underpin a formal, audited *risk management* system. In every case it directs the provider to make risk thinking flexible, adaptive and responsive to the actual circumstances of each activity.

For a discussion on *Risk Management* refer Appendix B Management of risk

2.1 Context Matters

Effective *risk management* in outdoors and adventure settings is highly *context*-specific. In natural environments, there are an infinite range of possible combinations of *participants*, purpose, weather, local environmental factors, and many other parameters. Some of these factors, such as weather, can change rapidly, necessitating rapid and dynamic responses.

Further, each *provider* will have a unique structure, purpose, size, philosophy, *activity leader* requirements and operating environments.

Because of this, *risk management* cannot be a ‘tick the box’ exercise, nor can it take a ‘one size fits all’ approach across all *providers*. Instead, *risk management* systems should be flexible, adaptive and highly responsive to the specific circumstances of the individual *activity.*

Each *provider* will need to consider how to apply the AAAS and GPGs to their own unique *context*. This may mean that individual *providers* should address areas not identified in these documents, depending on their specific *context***.**

Benefit-*risk assessment* frameworks, such as AS ISO 4980:2023 *Benefit-risk assessment for sports and recreational facilities, activities and equipment*, may complement the risk-management framework described in this GPG by considering the context including benefits of an activity alongside its risks. Benefit-*risk assessment* does not replace the risk-management framework described in 2.2.

For a discussion on Benefit-*Risk Management* Assessment refer Appendix H Benefit–*Risk Assessment*

2.2 Risk management framework and process

There must be a *risk management framework* — including an agreed risk-appetite statement — and a risk-management *process* suitable for the *context* in which they are being used.

The *risk management framework* and *process* must be documented.

Communication between all relevant stakeholders should occur throughout the *risk management process*.

The *risk management framework* and *process* must be periodically reviewed to ensure it remains relevant for the *context* in which it is being used.

This Guide draws on two adopted Australian Standards for the management of risk in adventure activities. *Activity providers* may apply both in combination: AS ISO 31000:2018 provides the overarching framework and process for all providers, and AS ISO 4980:2023 applies a benefit–risk lens suited to sport and recreation.

For a discussion on *Risk Management Framework* refer to Appendix C Summary of ISO 31000 – *Risk Management*.

For a discussion on Benefit *Risk Management* Assessment refer to Appendix H Benefit–*Risk Assessment*.

For a discussion on *Risk Management* Process refer Appendix D *Risk Management* process.

For a discussion on Risk Analysis refer Appendix E Risk analysis information.

2.3 Risk management plan

A *risk management plan* must be completed for each activity.

The *risk management plan* must be documented.

An on-site *dynamic risk assessment* may identify conditions not captured in the documented plan; such conditions must be managed as they arise (refer to 5.4.1 Health and wellbeing of participants).

The *risk management plan* should be developed or reviewed by a person competent in the activity, who has the knowledge, skill and experience required to develop the plan.

Risk controls must be selected by applying the hierarchy of controls in sequence — elimination, substitution, isolation, engineering controls, administrative controls, personal protective equipment. Where a provider relies on administrative controls or personal protective equipment, the reasons higher-order controls were not reasonably practicable must be documented.

For *Risk Management Plan* Template examples refer Appendix F *Risk management plan* template examples

2.4 Dynamic risk assessment

Risks can change over time and need to be monitored and reviewed. Dynamic risk assessment is the process of assessing newly identified risks and changes in previously identified risks, and the modification of management arrangements accordingly. Refer to Appendix G *Dynamic risk assessment process for additional information.*

Dynamic risk assessment must be completed before, during and after *activities*.

The use of *dynamic risk assessment* is not meant to enable a greater level of *risk* to be accepted than what was the original level of *risk*, as documented in a *risk management plan*.

Actions taken and/or the accepted *risk* derived from *dynamic risk assessment* must not:

- negate or reduce the effectiveness of *risk treatment* measures identified in a *risk management plan*
- increase the level of risk previously identified in a *risk management plan*
- increase the level of risk that participants, legal guardians or client organisations were informed of and/or consented to.

2.5 Incident reporting

The reporting of incidents and near misses helps to identify *risks* and improve future risk-management practice, both within a particular *provider* and across the community generally.

This includes any case where an event or set of circumstances occurred during an activity that led to, or could foreseeably have led to, death, injury, illness, psychological harm, significant loss of property, harm to the environment or damage to cultural heritage values. Incidents and near misses should be reported regardless of whether the *provider* and/or any individuals were 'at fault' in the incident or near miss.

There must be a *process* for reporting incidents and near misses.

Reported incidents and near misses should each be reviewed as soon as practicable to determine whether an immediate *risk treatment* is required. A periodic review of collected incidents and near misses should be undertaken to determine whether changes to *risk treatments* or likelihoods are required.

Some incidents are required to be reported to relevant government authorities. Refer to 3.5.4 Reporting notifiable incidents for details.

Consideration should be given to reporting de-identified incidents and near misses to relevant national databases, such as the UPLOADS project (*www.uploadsproject.org*).

3 Planning

Sound planning is what turns intent into safe and consistent delivery. Clear management and approval processes help a provider manage risk, with the people responsible for approving processes, plans and procedures varying according to the organisation's context. Good planning considers the purpose of the activity, the people involved, group size, the cultural and environmental values of the place, and what to do when conditions change or things go wrong.

Here the guidance helps a provider translate intent into a repeatable, defensible process. Approval roles can be scaled to context — a single coordinator in a small operation, or a tiered sign-off structure in a larger one. The material can shape activity-plan templates, prompt early engagement with *Traditional Owners* and *land managers*, and ensure emergency planning and field documentation are in place and reviewed before participants arrive.

3.1 Management and approval of activities

Clear management and approval *processes* help a *provider* manage risk effectively and consistently. The person(s) responsible for managing and approving *processes*, *procedures* and plans will vary based on the organisation's *context*.

Processes must be established to approve:

- the *risk management* process
- the emergency management process
- activity plans
- leaders, *assistant leaders* and *support persons* to undertake the various roles and activities in activity plans, based on their competencies
- the involvement of *dependent participants* who are minors and/or vulnerable *dependent participants*.

Supervision and management of activities should include but are not limited to the following components:

- ensuring safety systems are implemented
- correcting known problems or issues as quickly as possible
- ensuring systems and *processes* are followed
- ensuring that allocated *leaders* have the required and appropriate *competence* for their role and responsibilities
- adequately screening *participants* to ensure suitability for the *activity*
- ensuring program or activity design is suitable for the *context* in which it is being used
- planning for everyday *activities* as well as contingencies.
- Where part or all of an adventure *activity* is provided by a third party:
- the responsibility for *participants* cannot be entirely delegated to the third party
- reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the third party:
- has a suitable activity plan
- has a suitable *risk management plan*
- has a suitable emergency management plan
- employs *activity leaders* with the appropriate *competence* to supervise the *activity*
- complies with the AAAS and the relevant activity Good Practice Guide(s)
- complies with relevant *land owner* and/or manager requirements
- complies with relevant law(s) and/or regulation(s).

3.2 Activity plans

All activities must have an activity plan appropriate to the scale and complexity of the activity. The activity plan must be documented.

A *process* for developing activity plans should be implemented.

3.2.1 Activity plan framework

The following activity plan *framework* should be used, with the components adapted to suit specific needs:

- Purpose and benefits of the activity (aims, learning outcomes, expected benefits)
- *Risk management*
- Planning (framework, plan, modification or cancellation)
- Leadership
- Participants
- Diversity, equity and inclusion considerations
- Environment
- Equipment and logistics (bookings, route plan, cultural and sustainability considerations)
- Emergency management plan
- Preparation of participants (*pre-activity briefings* and communications)
- Documentation (medical information, consents, records)

All activity plans must address communications and first aid requirements. Refer to 7.3 First aid equipment and medication and 7.4 Communications equipment.

3.2.2 Purpose of activity

An *activity plan* must specify the primary and any secondary purpose(s) of the activity.

The purpose of the *activity* frames the risk-management approach and provides a reference point for decisions before and during the *activity*.

The purpose of an activity may include but is not limited to enjoyment or pleasure, educational outcomes and benefits, personal development, skill development, contact with nature and/or health and wellbeing.

3.2.3 Modification or cancellation of activities

Modifications to or cancellation of the *activity* may occur before or during the activity for a variety of reasons.

Any modification should remain at or below the level of *risk* of the original planned *activity.* If the level of *risk* is greater than originally planned, then informed consent should be obtained again.

Factors which may influence decisions to modify or cancel an *activity* include:

- participants
- environment and weather conditions
- equipment and logistics
- leadership and leaders
- access conditions, including changes in land-owner or manager requirements or cultural-heritage considerations.

3.3 Group size

The maximum and minimum *group* size must be determined by the provider through the risk-management process. When determining *group* size, the following should be considered:

- the safety of the *group* and individuals, including the *activity leaders* and *participants*' level of experience and competence
- the objectives for the *activity* and the ability of the whole *group* to take part and complete the *activity* in the time available
- *land owner*(s) or manager(s) specific restrictions or requirements, and the expected environmental impact of the *activity*
- the *activity leaders*' training, competence and any associated restrictions
- participant(s) expected dispositions (e.g. behaviours, additional needs) and the potential impact on other users
- expected and foreseeable conditions (e.g. environment, remoteness, weather) and equipment suitability and availability

Group size and the number of *activity leaders* available are interrelated. Changes to one must prompt reassessment of the other.

3.4 Cultural, environmental and historical values

Adventure activities occur in a range of built and natural environments, and these may have significant cultural, environmental, spiritual or historical values. These values should be considered during planning to minimise impact, demonstrate respect, ensure relevant permissions are obtained and to enable appropriate behaviours.

Some adventure activities may not be suitable in some locations.

3.4.1 Cultural and historical considerations

Respect should be given to the special status that *custodians*, owners or communities apply to natural areas and/or human-built structures, symbols, monuments.

Providers should seek prior and informed consent from appropriate *custodians* before planning access to sensitive areas.

Adventure activities should be culturally sensitive and respectful of the value systems of c*ustodians* or relevant communities.

Appropriate planning of adventure activities should include consideration of:

- the cultural and environmental significance of areas
- permit requirements
- sensitivity to others' perspectives and beliefs
- bio-cultural diversity
- group size
- the potential for, and impact of, abrasion or degradation through touching or photographing site features (e.g. aboriginal art, historical artefacts or ruins, sensitive flora etc)
- appropriate dress and behavioural standards. This may include the need to cover the head/ dress appropriately in some religious or spiritual sites (e.g. gender specific sites, church, mosque)
- the need for silence or minimal noise (e.g. breeding grounds, burial places etc).

3.4.2 Traditional Owners and cultural heritage

For *Traditional Owners* connections to land and sea Country are integral to cultural values, identity, traditions and heritage.

Adventure *activity providers* have a responsibility to recognise and respect native title rights, land rights and interests, and to ensure activities accord with the cultural and natural values of these areas.

This must include for any area of known or potential cultural significance:

- identifying the *Traditional Owners* and other Indigenous people with rights and interests in the area

- inquiring about the cultural significance of places and sites
- obtaining consent before entering areas of spiritual, cultural or ceremonial significance. A permit from a *land owner* or manager does not of itself satisfy these obligations.

This should include:

- respecting traditional lore and customs as they align with Commonwealth and State law
- acknowledging the traditional *custodians* of the land or sea country
- complying with all reasonable requests from recognised *Traditional Owners* and other I*ndigenous people with interests.*

3.4.3 Environmental sustainability principles

Environmental sustainable practices are important as they help protect Australia's natural and cultural heritage. They also respect the rights of others to enjoy the environment during and after an *activity.*

Activity planning must identify any threatened species, ecological communities, sensitive habitats or other matters of national or state environmental significance relevant to the activity area, and any approval, referral or permit requirement that follows — including referral under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) where a significant impact is possible.

Providers and *participants* should comply with the seven principles of Leave No Trace (refer *www.lnt.org* for detailed guidance).

- plan ahead and prepare
- travel and camp on durable surfaces
- dispose of waste properly
- leave what you find
- minimise the impact of fire
- respect wildlife
- be considerate of your hosts and other visitors.

Any sustainability *policies* and/or *procedures* should link to one or more of the seven sustainability *principles*.

When selecting a sustainability *policy* or *procedure*, it should be the best method that suits the particular *context* in which it will be used.

Participants must be made aware of their responsibilities relating to relevant sustainability requirements and *procedures*.

For environmental sustainability procedures refer to Appendix L Environmental sustainability procedures.

3.5 Emergency management planning

Even with appropriate *processes*, practices and *procedure*s in place, accidents and emergencies can still occur. Emergencies may include but are not limited to injury, illness or death, or a situation that significantly increases the risk of these events, such as a natural disaster. These are often sudden and unexpected, can significantly affect groups and individuals, and require an immediate response. Having a pre-existing plan assists in providing a timely and effective emergency response.

3.5.1 Emergency management framework

An emergency management *framework* complements the *risk management plan* and provides guidance on the *processes* and *procedures* that may be required in an emergency.

An emergency management framework should consider the following:

- Planning
- Preparation

- Response
- Recovery

Emergency *processes* and *procedures* must be documented in an emergency management plan.

Emergency *processes* and *procedures* must be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure continued relevance.

Providers should also maintain a business continuity plan to address prolonged or systemic disruptions (such as pandemics, extended closures or infrastructure failures) that may affect the delivery of adventure activities. The business continuity plan should link to, but is distinct from, the emergency management plan for an individual activity.

3.5.2 Emergency management plan

The emergency *processes* and *procedures* form an emergency management plan. The purpose of this plan is to provide steps to follow in the event of an emergency.

When developing and/or reviewing emergency *processes* and plans, consideration should be given to previous incidents.

The emergency management plans must be displayed and/or available in accordance with law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) (e.g. plans and signage for emergency exits, mustering points).

Activity leaders must be familiar with, and have immediate access to, the emergency management plan.

When necessary a suitable external, *non-participating contact* should be familiar with, and have immediate access to, the emergency management plan.

A summary of relevant emergency procedures should be one component of the *pre-activity briefing* (refer to 5.1.1 Information provided pre-activity).

Where there is only one *activity leader*, **participants** must be briefed on and have access to the emergency management plan so they may implement it if the *activity leader* is unable to.

For a framework for emergency management refer Appendix I Emergency management planning framework.

Communication with the *non-participating contact* where relevant, should occur as detailed in the emergency management plan to confirm the safety status of a *group*.

On the failure to receive confirmation of the safety of the *group*, the *non-participating contact* should commence the planned *process* or *procedures* to confirm or ensure the safety of the *group*.

3.5.3 Review of emergency management plan

The emergency management plan must be reviewed:

- as often as necessary;
- periodically at set intervals; and
- whenever the plan has been implemented.

3.5.4 Reporting notifiable incidents

A reportable incident must be reported to all relevant authorities in the *jurisdiction* it occurred, in accordance with the requirements for the *jurisdiction*.

The emergency management plan must identify every party with a legal or contractual entitlement to notification of an incident — including but not limited to parents or guardians of an involved minor, any client organisation, the *land owner* and/or manager where the incident occurred on managed land, and the relevant environmental authority where harm to the environment or cultural heritage has occurred — together with the timeframe and responsibility for each notification.

An *activity* may occur in what is defined as a workplace under relevant Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation, including for staff, volunteers and *participants*. Most programs meet this definition. The type of incidents required to be reported to the WHS regulator for the *jurisdiction* in which an incident occurred may include but are not limited to:

- a fatality
- a serious injury or illness
- a dangerous incident.

Notifiable incidents under WHS law(s) and/or regulation(s) may relate to any person, including an employee, contractor, volunteer, *participant* or member of the public. This includes consideration of consent regarding the capture, use and storage of images and likenesses of *participants*.

All applicable reporting processes, procedures and requirements must be included in the emergency management plan (refer to 3.4 Emergency management planning).

In the event of a reportable incident, the incident site must be preserved (as far as is reasonably practicable) until the relevant authority attends the site, or directs otherwise. The site may be disturbed to remove a deceased person, assist an injured person, make the site safe, or to take actions associated with a police investigation.

3.6 Activity leader required documentation

Activity leaders may need to have access to certain documentation to help provide the activity. This section does not address other documentation requirements that may apply to *providers*.

The *activity leaders* and, where applicable, an external *non-participating contact* must have access to all relevant documentation for the *activity*.

Documentation that must be available to *activity leaders* includes but is not limited to:

- the activity plan (refer to 3.2 Activity plans) and relevant documents/checklists
- the *risk management plan* (refer to 2.3 *Risk management plan*)
- the emergency management plan (refer to 3.4.2 Emergency management plan)
- names and emergency contact details for all *participants*, *leaders*, *assistant leaders* and *support persons*
- current medical information for all participants, leaders, *assistant leaders* and *support persons* (refer to 5.4 Health and wellbeing)
- licences, approvals or any access permits required (e.g. government departments, land managers, local councils or private landholders).

Documentation that may need to be available to *activity leaders* includes but is not limited to:

- relevant public vehicle driving licence if transporting *participants*, along with vehicle and trailer registrations
- *participants' consent for activity leaders to seek or provide medical assistance if required (refer to* 5.1.2 *Consent)*
- consent by a parent/legal guardian for minors or vulnerable persons to participate (refer to 5.1.2 Consent and 5.3.4 Parental or legal guardian consent)
- consent by a parent/legal guardian for *minors* or *vulnerable persons*, and, where relevant, consent from the *participant* to the capture and use of their likeness or image for marketing, publicity or educational purposes

4 Diversity, equity and inclusion

Adventure *activities* are delivered by, and for, people of diverse identities, abilities, cultures, life experiences and circumstances. Recognising that diversity, and providing equitable opportunities for safe and meaningful participation, is fundamental to safe and effective practice.

In practice this section guides providers to design activities that include rather than exclude, applying across interactions between leaders, participants and others encountered during an activity. A provider can use it to review enrolment and communication practices for barriers, build cultural and psychological safety into leader briefings, and ensure complaint and review mechanisms are visible and accessible. It is intended to be read alongside the Participants and Responsibilities sections rather than in isolation.

The recommendations in this section apply alongside, and inform the application of, the subsequent sections of the Core, including without limitation 5 Participants, 5.3 *Vulnerable participants*, 5.5 Privacy of information, 4.3 Cultural safety, 4.4 Psychological safety and dignity, and 8 Responsibilities and roles. Those sections continue to apply in their own terms; where requirements overlap, the more onerous applies.

4.1 Diversity of participants and leaders

A *provider* should recognise that *participants* and *activity leaders* are diverse, and that this diversity may include but is not limited to:

ability and disability

age

cultural and linguistic background

First Peoples identity and connection to Country

gender identity, sex and sexual orientation

intersex status

neurodivergence

religion or belief

socio-economic circumstances

family or relationship circumstances

prior experience of trauma, marginalisation or discrimination.

The activity *risk management plan* must address the foreseeable implications of this diversity for the safety, wellbeing and effective participation of all involved in the *activity*.

4.2 Inclusive practice

The *provider* should take reasonable steps to ensure *activities* are designed and delivered such that all *participants* and *activity leaders* can engage safely, meaningfully and by informed choice.

Reasonable steps may include but are not limited to:

- identifying foreseeable barriers to participation at the levels of personal practice, *activity* design, program design and organisational systems
- applying practical, proportionate adjustments suited to the *activity* and its *context*
- providing pre-activity information and the *activity briefing* in formats accessible to those receiving them
- considering the gender, cultural and identity composition of the *activity leaders* team in relation to the group being led.

The *risk management plan* should address the matters in 4.2.

Where participants require modified or participant-supplied equipment to enable their participation (for example, adaptive harnesses, prosthetic-compatible gear or mobility aids), the provider should assess the suitability and safety of such equipment as part of the activity *risk management* process, and consult with the participant and, where appropriate, with a relevant technical expert.

4.3 Cultural safety

A *provider* should ensure that planning and delivery of *activities*:

- respects the cultural, religious and dietary requirements of *participants* and *activity leaders* *(also refer to 3.4.2 Traditional Owners and cultural heritage in the Core GPG)*
- considers, where reasonably practicable, the lived experience of culturally and linguistically diverse *participants* and *activity leaders*, and of those with lived experience of marginalisation.

The 'cultural heritage protection' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction(s)* must be determined and complied with.

4.4 Psychological safety and dignity

The *provider* must plan for, and manage, psychological safety. This applies to *participants* and *activity leaders* alike.

The *risk management plan* should identify and address foreseeable psychosocial hazards, including but not limited to bullying, harassment, aggression, hostile group dynamics, exclusion and discrimination.

The 'work health and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction(s)*, including any psychosocial hazard provisions, must be determined and complied with.

The 'sex discrimination' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction(s)*, including any positive duty to prevent unlawful conduct, must be determined and complied with.

The 'disability discrimination' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction(s)* must be determined and complied with.

4.5 Information, communication and consent

Pre-activity information and the *activity briefing* must be clear and able to be understood by the *participants*, parents/legal guardians, *client organisations* and *activity leaders* receiving it.

Where the level of choice available to a *participant* or *activity leader* will foreseeably be limited once they have committed to an *activity* or stage of an *activity*, this must be communicated before that commitment is made.

Consent obtained from a participant or, where applicable, a parent/legal guardian must be informed and able to be revisited where reasonably practicable through the activity (also refer to 5.1 Pre-activity communication and 5.1.2 Consent in the Core GPG).

4.6 Leader competence

The competencies required of *activity leaders* should include the ability to:

- recognise the diversity of *participants* and *activity leaders* present in the *activity*
- apply inclusive facilitation appropriate to the role and *context*
- recognise foreseeable psychosocial hazards and respond appropriately

- recognise and respond to disclosures of harm, including harassment, discrimination, abuse and trauma
- exercise cultural responsiveness appropriate to the *participants*, *activity leaders* and *context*.

Also refer to 8.5 Leader readiness and capability in the Core GPG.

4.7 Concerns, complaints and review

A provider must have a documented, accessible process for receiving and responding to concerns and complaints — including safety concerns, conduct concerns, and concerns about discrimination, exclusion, harassment or cultural safety — that can be used by participants, parents and guardians, staff, volunteers and members of the public. The process must be accessible to children, with age-appropriate means of raising a concern.

5 Participants

Every activity depends on the people taking part, and on the information and support they receive before and during it. Pre-activity information and communication help potential participants, parents or legal guardians and client organisations make an informed decision about taking part, and continue through consent, acknowledgement of risk, and the care of those who may be vulnerable. Supporting participants well — from first enquiry to supervision in the field — is central to safe and respectful practice.

Its purpose is to help a provider ensure people know what they are signing up for and are appropriately supported once they arrive. Pre-activity information can be adapted to the audience and activity, participation restrictions set defensibly, and additional safeguards put in place for *vulnerable participants* and minors. The supervision guidance lets a provider calibrate direct versus *indirect supervision* to the activity, environment and group.

5.1 Pre-activity communication

Pre-activity information and communication assists potential *participant*s, parents/legal guardians and/or *client organisations* make an informed decision regarding participation in an *activity*.

Providers must not misrepresent the nature, demands or risks of an activity. Where a participant or client discloses a particular purpose for participating, the activity offered must be reasonably fit for that purpose. Standard-form booking and consent documents must not contain unfair terms. The ‘consumer protection’ law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

5.1.1 Information provided pre-activity

Providers must communicate the foreseeable material risks of the activity to participants (and, for minors, to their parents or guardians) before participation.

Pre-activity information should provide a comprehensive introduction to the *activity* and its requirements.

Pre-activity information may be communicated in, but is not limited to, the following forms:

- documentation
- verbal discussions
- presentations
- videos.

Pre-activity information must be accurate, relevant and provided at an appropriate time. This information must provide accurate details about the program including the environment, expected conditions (e.g. weather, temperature, remoteness), and the required level of fitness and skills, as well as foreseeable circumstances in which the activity will still take place.

Pre-activity information should clearly communicate the following:

- the objectives, type, nature and duration of the *activities* and the environments in which they will take place
- *participant*, *activity leader*, *support person* responsibilities
- the fact that *participants* are responsible for their own actions, both in relation to obvious *risks* that may be encountered and also in following the direction(s) and/or instruction(s) of the *activity leader*(s)

This does not apply to minors or other participants who cannot reasonably be expected to assess risk independently; responsibility for managing risk to those participants remains with the provider.

- the need for *participants* to bring concerns about their own safety, health and wellbeing and those of others to the attention of the *activity leader*(s)

- personal equipment and physical ability required to safely participate
- any pre-requisite skills and any required or recommended prior experience
- information regarding the foreseeable risks and benefits associated with participation
- an appropriate summary of the *risk management* and/or emergency response strategies including any specific requirements, response timeframes and associated costs (e.g. an emergency would require a helicopter and the high cost indicating ambulance insurance is recommended, the possible evacuation response time of hours)
- information regarding insurance and liability coverage held
- background, role and contact details of the provider and/or *activity leaders*.

Consideration should be given to the capacity of non-English speakers and those with additional needs (e.g. cognitive, hearing, etc.) to understand pre-activity information and communications.

Also refer to 5.8 *Activity briefing*.

Accurate description is also a condition of the provider's legal protections — where an activity is misrepresented, statutory defences and waivers that depend on the participant's acceptance of obvious risk (including dangerous recreational activity provisions) may be lost.

5.1.2 Consent

Confirmation that consent has been given to "seek and/or provide emergency medical treatment if necessary" must be obtained.

Methods of confirming consent may include but are not limited to:

- completion of a consent form
- Confirmation from the participant, and where relevant from the parent/legal guardian, that the information provided is accurate (see 5.3.4)

Also refer to 5.3.4 Parental or legal guardian consent.

5.1.3 Acknowledgement of risk

An acknowledgement of *risk* ***may*** assist in clarifying and confirming the understanding of the *pre-activity briefing* information.

Where an acknowledgement of *risk* is used, it may include but is not limited to:

- the nature of the inherent *risks*
- the possible consequences of those *risks*.

5.2 Participation restrictions

A *participant*, *activity leader*, supervising staff member or *support person* may not be able to participate in an *activity*, for the safety of themselves, the *provider*, other *participants* or others. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, the *participant*:

- being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, including prescription medication, that may affect performance
- being unable or unwilling to follow instructions
- having inadequate physical ability or experience for the activity
- being ill or injured
- behaving in a manner which is reckless and endangers themselves and/or others
- having a condition that could impact on safety that cannot be appropriately managed
- being fatigued to a level that endangers themselves or others
- not having available the necessary equipment including safety or rescue equipment.

- requiring specific medications to take part safely — requirements must be identified and managed per Section 5.4.

Consideration should be given to possible modification(s) or adjustments that could address the safety concerns.

If an *activity leader* has reasonable cause to believe that alcohol or other drug consumption may impact safety, the *activity leader* must decide whether to decline or suspend participation.

The *risk management plan* should be used to determine what, how and when any restrictions to participate might apply.

An appropriate pre-activity assessment must be completed to ensure *participants* meet the necessary requirements to undertake the activity.

Determination of the ability to participate may occur before and/or during an activity.

Planning for accommodations should include the *participant*, the parent or legal guardian (for minors or vulnerable persons), treating physicians and specialists as required, consistent with the principle of co-design (‘nothing about me, without me’).

5.3 Vulnerable participants

5.3.1 Who might be vulnerable

*Vulnerable participant*s are *dependent participant*s who are or may not be able to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Reasons for a *participant* being considered a *vulnerable participant* may include but are not limited to:

- being a *minor* (under the age of 18)
- being an older person
- living with or experiencing a physical disability, intellectual disability, mental health condition or chronic illness
- experiencing financial hardship or socioeconomic disadvantage
- being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
- having English as a second or additional language, or a low level of literacy.

5.3.2 Vulnerable person related requirements

The ‘vulnerable person safety protection’ law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction*(s) must be determined and complied with.

Legal requirements may include but are not limited to:

- having appropriate vulnerable persons and child-safe policies and procedures
- conducting criminal history and/or ‘working with’ checks for those with child or vulnerable person related roles
- holding appropriate ‘registration’ to work in child or vulnerable person related roles
- ensuring those without appropriate registration, clearance or checks are not engaged in child or vulnerable person related roles
- having appropriate policies and procedures relating to reporting of suspected child or vulnerable person abuse or neglect.

Where a person is a mandatory reporter under the law(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s), the reporting obligation is personal: it rests with the individual and is not discharged by reporting internally or to a supervisor. Provider procedures must support, and must not impede, direct reporting to the relevant authority.

Groups containing *minors* and/or *vulnerable participants* should be supervised by a minimum of two adults either through *direct supervision* or *indirect supervision*. One of these adults may include a *support person*.

The responsibilities of a *support person* for a *dependent participant* may include escorting, supervising or communicating on behalf of the participant. The specific responsibilities should be set out in the activity plan and briefing, consistent with any additional requirements in the relevant activity GPG.

5.3.3 Safety of minors

When *participants* include a *minor* or *minors*, additional care is required to provide a child-safe environment. There is specific law(s), regulation(s) and/or requirements relating to *minors*.

The 'child safety protection' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction*(s) must be determined and complied with.

These obligations — including Child Safe Standards, staff vetting, and Child Safety Code of Conduct induction — apply organisation-wide and travel with minor *participants* when activities cross state or international jurisdictions.

5.3.4 Parental or legal guardian consent

Where *participants* are *minors*, confirmation that consent to participate has been given by their parent or legal guardian must be obtained.

Where a *vulnerable participant* who is not a *minor* is unable to provide informed consent, confirmation that consent to participate has been given by their parent or legal guardian must be obtained.

Pre-activity information should be provided to a parent or legal guardian before gaining their consent.

Also refer to 5.1.2 Consent.

5.4 Health and wellbeing

5.4.1 Health and wellbeing of participants

Health, medical and other personal conditions may present hazards and risks that should be managed.

Participation can be affected by a variety of health, medical and other personal conditions, which may include but are not limited to:

- those directly affecting a participant's or *activity leader*'s ability to perform the activity
- those affecting the participant's or *activity leader*'s health in ways unrelated to performing the activity
- those potentially risking the health and safety of the participant themselves and/or others.

The activity *Risk Management Plan* must address identified hazards and risks posed by health, medical and other personal conditions.

Refer Appendix J Health & wellbeing considerations for *risk management* for Health & Wellbeing Considerations for *Risk Management*.

Reasonable steps must be taken to account for known health, medical and other personal condition requirements (also refer to 5.2 Participant restrictions).

Where a *risk management plan* has identified health, medical and other personal conditions as likely to affect participation in an activity, all relevant information should be provided to *activity leader*/s.

Where the *risk management plan* "or an on site *dynamic risk assessment*" has identified a health, medical or other personal condition as likely to affect a person's ability to participate, then obtaining an appropriately qualified medical practitioner's opinion should be considered.

Where an appropriately qualified medical practitioner's opinion is obtained, it should include opinion on the suitability of a participant to undertake the planned/proposed activity including any medical management strategies being recommended. Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure the medical practitioner is informed of the context, physical nature and relevant risks involved in the proposed activity.

Where considered necessary, reasonable steps must be taken to obtain details about any relevant health, medical or other personal conditions identified in a *risk management plan* from each participant before commencing the activity.

Where appropriate, details of health, medical or other conditions, including medications currently used and any medical management strategies advised by a medical practitioner for individual participants should be documented.

Confirmation should be obtained that medication currently being used and/or prescribed, does not present effects identified in *risk management plan* that could affect the safe performance of the activity.

Providers should determine, through pre-activity screening, whether any participant has a medical condition, medication regime or circumstance (such as pregnancy) that may affect their ability to participate safely or that may require modified supervision or emergency procedures.

5.4.2 Allergies and anaphylaxis

In some *jurisdictions***,** specific laws and regulations concerning minors require *procedures* and actions to be taken in relation to food and other allergies.

The 'allergy and anaphylaxis safety for minors' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction(s)* must be determined and complied with.

Also refer to J.3Allergy and anaphylaxis safety for minors law(s) and/or regulation(s) considerations.

5.4.3 Alcohol, smoking and other drugs

Being under the influence of alcohol, some types of medication and other drugs can affect performance during an activity.

Alcohol, non-prescribed and/or illicit drug consumption should be discouraged during an *activity* or at a time before an activity where it could still have an effect on performance.

Also refer to the considerations regarding medications in Appendix J Health & wellbeing considerations for *risk management*.

The use of tobacco products, vaping devices and e-cigarettes should not permitted during an *activity* (including during breaks) where this would expose *participants* to passive smoking or vapour.

Smoking should be discouraged and/or appropriately managed during an *activity* while:

- in the proximity of others
- during food preparation
- in the proximity of equipment that is liable to be damaged
- on days where there is a high bushfire danger due to the risk of fire starting as a result of inappropriate use or disposal.

Smokers must be required to move to a location that ensures other *participants* are not exposed to the smoke.

An appropriate method for disposing of cigarette butts and vape waste must be provided if smokers may be present.

5.5 Privacy of information

Providers must manage personal and sensitive information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles. Best practice includes:

- collecting only pertinent personal information;
- informing *participants* how information will be used and stored;
- making information available only to those who need it for their role;

- storing information securely with access controls;
- updating and disposing of information as required;
- responding to privacy breaches through a documented process (refer to the OAIC for guidance).

The 'privacy' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction*(s) must be determined and complied with.

Disposal of information must not occur where a longer retention obligation applies — records relating to activities involving minors must be retained for a minimum of 25 years (refer to 8.5.7 Verification and Currency Records).

Also refer to Appendix K Privacy of information.

5.6 Supervision and management during the activity

Supervision should be ongoing throughout the *activity*.

5.6.1 Levels of supervision

The level of supervision required for *participants* may vary or depend on the context.

The levels of supervision framework is:

- *direct supervision*
- *indirect supervision*
- *remote supervision*

The framework can also be used for describing the supervision requirements of *activity leaders*.

5.6.1.1 Direct supervision

Direct supervision means *activity leaders* can see and readily communicate with those *participants* at all times.

An *activity leader* must be present at all times where a *risk assessment* identifies the need for *direct supervision*.

5.6.1.2 Indirect supervision

Indirect supervision is where a nominated *activity leader* responsible for managing *participants* during all or part of the adventure *activity* is in the vicinity but unable to intervene immediately.

Prior to the use of *indirect supervision*, a *risk assessment* of the *activity* must be undertaken to ensure *activity leaders* have the competence and resources to intervene in an appropriate manner if necessary.

Where a *risk assessment* identifies the ability to use *indirect supervision*, the *activity leader* must also be satisfied that the *participants* have the necessary competence for the *activity* before allowing the *participants* to be supervised indirectly.

Full details of responsibilities and how *indirect supervision* functions must be provided to *participants* before the *activity* starts.

Where a *participant* is a minor or vulnerable, details of responsibilities and how *indirect supervision* functions should be provided to the parent and/or guardian prior to obtaining their consent.

When *indirect supervision* is used, the *activity leader* must ensure:

- an appropriate *risk assessment* has been completed
- *participants* are sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of *activity* to be undertaken
- *participants* are competent in safe conduct and any emergency procedures

- *participants* are appropriately equipped
- clear and understandable boundaries are set for all *participants*
- there are clear communication lines between *participants* and *activity leaders*
- progress of each *participant* is monitored
- there is a recognised point at which the *activity* is completed
- when the *activity* cannot be safely completed, there are clear arrangements to adjust the level of supervision, or adjust or terminate the *activity*

5.6.1.3 Remote supervision

Remote supervision is where a nominated *activity leader* responsible for managing *participants* during all or part of the adventure *activity*, is not involved in direct or *indirect supervision*.

Prior to the use of *remote supervision*, a *risk assessment* of the *activity* must be undertaken to ensure the *activity leader* has the competence and resources to intervene in an appropriate manner if necessary.

Where a *risk assessment* identifies the ability to use *remote supervision*, those providing the *remote supervision* must also be satisfied that those being supervised, have the necessary competence for the *activity* before allowing the *participants* to be supervised remotely.

Full details of responsibilities and how *remote supervision* functions must be provided to those being supervised before the *activity* starts.

Where a *participant* is a minor or vulnerable, details of responsibilities and how *remote supervision* functions should be provided to the parent and/or legal guardian prior to obtaining their consent.

When *remote supervision* is used, the *activity leader* must ensure:

- an appropriate *risk assessment* has been completed
- *participants* are sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of *activity* to be undertaken
- *participants* are competent in safe conduct and any emergency procedures
- *participants* are appropriately equipped
- clear and understandable boundaries are set for all
- *participants* are given guidance as to the level of *activity* difficulty their current pre-activity or existing training is suitable for (e.g. white water river grade, walking trails classification)
- there are clear communication lines between the remote supervisor and those being supervised
- progress of each person is monitored
- there is a recognised point at which the *activity* is completed
- when the *activity* cannot be safely completed, there are clear arrangements to adjust the level of supervision, or adjust or terminate the *activity*

Remote supervision of the *activity* may include but is not limited to:

- the use of communications technology (e.g. scheduled radio or phone calls)
- using GPS tracking devices
- visits or other checks (e.g. log books at specific locations)
- checking-out when commencing and checking-in on completion.

5.6.2 Indirect and remote supervision instruction considerations

Considerations for the instructions given in indirect and *remote supervision* situations may include but are not limited to:

- start and finish times and locations
- clear geographical boundaries
- required or prohibited activities
- explanation of additional responsibilities placed on those being supervised in this manner
- where and how the remote supervisor can contact the group

- where and how the group can contact the remote supervisor
- whether there will be active monitoring of the group's progress
- any arrangements to pause indirect or *remote supervision* should this become necessary
- whether details of intentions need to be reported and/or recorded for all or part of the activity
- requirements for reporting when starting and finishing.

5.6.3 Leadership of training activities

There are situations in which to achieve training and/or development outcomes, some activities may be conducted without direct or *indirect supervision* of a leader.

For example, parts of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, youth programs such as Scouts and outdoor leadership training programs through education providers.

Where *participants* are to undertake an *activity* without direct or *indirect supervision*, *remote supervision* should be considered.

In these situations, a leader should ensure where possible that:

- the *participants* understand the planned outcome(s) from involvement
- the *participants* have undertaken all necessary pre-activity training
- the *participants* are appropriately equipped
- all necessary logistical and organisational arrangements have been made
- an appropriate *risk assessment* has been completed
- an appropriate emergency response plan is in place
- the *participants* are given guidance as to the level of *activity* difficulty their current pre-activity or existing training is suitable for (e.g. white water river grade, walking trails classification).

5.6.4 Medication and other drugs

Alcohol and other drug consumption should be discouraged during an *activity* or at a time prior to an *activity* where they could still influence performance.

The effects of medication currently being used and/or prescribed to *activity leaders* should be considered to ensure they do not affect performance and lead to safety concerns (e.g. do not cause drowsiness or dizziness).

5.6.5 Fatigue

Physical and/or mental fatigue can cause *risk management* and safety issues.

Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the appropriate resources and processes to manage the risks associated with fatigue are in place and are used.

Management of the risks associated with fatigue may include but are not limited to:

- appropriate allocation of roles and responsibilities
- appropriate scheduling and planning of activity times
- appropriate travel arrangements both before and after the adventure activity
- control measures for specific tasks, jobs and operations
- self-assessment checklists
- procedures for reporting fatigue hazards and risks
- procedures for managing those who are fatigued
- providing information, instruction, training and supervision
- monitoring and reviewing procedures and control measures.

5.7 Activity leader to participants ratios

Ratios must be:

- determined through the risk-management process
- appropriate to the *participants*, environment and *activity*
- maintained throughout the *activity*
- reassessed and communicated to the provider if an *activity leader* becomes unavailable.

The ratio of competent *activity leader*(s) to participants is a tool used to ensure appropriate supervision of participants. Also refer to 8.1 Framework for leadership roles, 8.3 Leader role, 8.4 *Assistant leader* role and 8.5 *Support person* role.

The ratio used should be determined and justified by the *risk management* process.

The ratio used should be set by a competent person with knowledge of the *activity* and its context.

When determining ratios, factors that should be considered include but are not limited to:

- outcomes of the *risk management* process
- the safety of the *group* and individuals
- the objectives for the *activity*
- *land owner*(s) or manager(s) specific restrictions or requirements
- the *activity leaders*' level of experience
- the *activity leaders*' training or competence and associated restrictions
- participant(s) expected dispositions (e.g. behaviours, additional needs)
- equipment available
- available access to support
- *participants*' expected capabilities (e.g. experience, competence, fitness)
- the type of *activity* undertaken
- expected and possible environmental conditions (e.g. weather, terrain)
- planned *activity* duration
- recommended *group* size (refer to 3.3 Group size and the relevant activity GPG)
- location remoteness
- availability of communications
- equipment suitability and availability.

An accompanying *support person* (refer to 8.1 Framework for leadership roles and 8.4 *Assistant leader* role) without the relevant activity competencies must not be considered an *activity leader* for determining ratios.

A *support person* may be responsible for the welfare and general supervision of participant(s), including but not limited to:

- while participants are waiting to undertake the *activity*
- acting as the legal guardian of participant(s)
- providing gender balance for the purposes of resolving gender consideration requirements (refer to 4.6 Gender considerations).

Support person(s) must be included in the *activity leader* to *participant* ratio calculation where they are a *dependent participant* in the *activity*. For example, an accompanying teacher with 10 students undertaking a canoe journey makes 11 participants.

There may be as many *activity leaders* as is deemed necessary.

Activity leaders supervising the same *participants* may not need to have the same competencies.

A minimum number of *activity leaders* may be required which is independent to the *activity leader* to *participant* ratio. For example, the leader to participant ratio is 1:8 and a group has only seven participants but still requires a minimum of two *activity leaders* to adequately ensure the safety of the group.

The minimum number of *activity leaders* should be determined by the *risk management* process.

Reasons for considering a minimum number of *activity leaders* include but are not limited to ensuring the safety of the *group*:

- in the event that an *activity leader* is incapacitated
- to enable appropriate emergency response (e.g. rescue) and *group* management (e.g. maintain the safety of other *participants*) at the same time.

5.7.1 Land owners, land managers and other authorities activity leader ratios

Land owners, *land managers* or other relevant authorities (e.g. education departments) may require *activity leader* ratios that differ from those suggested by an *activity* GPG or a provider's *risk assessment*.

The *activity leader* ratio required by *land owners*, *land managers* or other relevant authority must be regarded as the highest allowable within their jurisdiction. For example, if the provider determines a ratio based on their *risk management* process of 1:8, and the *land manager*'s ratio allowable is 1:5, the *land manager*'s ratio of 1:5 must be considered the required ratio.

Where a *risk assessment* indicates the *activity leader* ratio is lower than that determined by the *land owners*, *land managers* or other relevant authority, the ratio indicated by the *risk assessment* should be used. For example, the *land manager*'s allowable ratio is 1:12 and the *risk assessment* suggests 1:8, then the provider should use the 1:8 ratio.

Where a relevant authority requires a specific type of supervision, the arrangement for the person providing this supervision must be:

- they are considered a *support person* unless they have the competence to be an *activity leader* for the purposes of calculating the *activity leader* to *participant* ratio; and
- steps are taken to ensure that both the specific type of supervision ratio and the *activity leader* to *participant* ratio are implemented and maintained.

For example:

- if supervision of students must include a registered teacher to meet education department requirements; and
- the teacher is not capable of acting as an *activity leader* for the *activity*; then
- the teacher is treated as a *support person* for the purpose of determining ratios.

Arrangements are also to be made to ensure the registered teacher provides student supervision at the required education department ratio, in addition to ensuring the appropriate *activity leader* to *participant* ratio is met.

5.7.2 Recommended ratios

Suggested *activity leader* to *participant* supervision ratio(s), along with the suggested minimum number of *activity leaders*, are detailed in the specific GPG for each *activity*.

5.8 Activity briefing

Activity leaders must deliver a briefing to *participants* prior to the *activity* that is appropriate to the group's age, language and experience.

This may be distinct from and contain more specific information than the pre-activity information (refer to 5.1 Pre-activity communication) which might have occurred sometime before the activity.

Before undertaking an *activity*, the information and requirements to be communicated may include but are not limited to:

- what will happen
- what *participants* will need to do
- revision of relevant information provided in any *pre-activity briefing* where provided

- safety requirements for the *activity* or part of the *activity* that is about to be undertaken
- how to respond to incidents or emergencies
- communications systems, calls and/or terminology used.

Necessary information about an *activity* must be clearly communicated. The method of delivery and content of the *activity* briefing can depend on the context of the *activity*.

Sufficient time for potential *participants* to make an informed decision about their participation should be provided where appropriate.

The same communication systems, calls and terminology should be agreed to and used for all those undertaking the *activity*.

The briefing may include but is not limited to:

- the identity and role of *activity leaders* and *support persons*
- *activity* objectives
- the *activity*’s nature
- inherent risks and mitigation strategies
- current and anticipated conditions (e.g. environment, remoteness, weather)
- the *land managers*’ requirements (e.g. specific conditions that apply to the site)
- how the session will be managed (e.g. timings, procedures)
- agreed methods of communication within the *group* (e.g. signals and calls)
- essential equipment and clothing
- the correct use and fit of equipment
- the *group* management process
- the type of food, the amount of food and water needed and water availability
- the system for safe food handling, hand washing, toileting, and personal hygiene
- emergency procedures so *participants* behave appropriately in an incident or emergency, including emergency communication methods
- the *activity leader*’s expectations of *participants* and their responsibility to behave as requested (e.g. conduct, safety zones, equipment use) along with any restrictions to participation
- the duration, plan and specific landmarks or locations
- how to avoid becoming lost or separated from the *group* and what to do if you are lost or separated
- conservation strategies, including protecting flora and fauna, removing rubbish and sanitation
- appropriate respect for the cultural heritage of the area and/or particular sites
- obligations of *participants* to be responsible for their own actions, both in relation to obvious risks that may be encountered and also in following the directions/instructions.

A check that enables *participants* to voice concerns about their capabilities should be conducted.

Consideration of alternative briefing methods should be undertaken for *participants* living with a communication impairment.

Delivery of the briefing must be documented. A separate leader-team briefing should be conducted prior to the *activity*.

6 Environment

Environmental conditions can directly affect the safety of an activity, and everyone involved shares responsibility for protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the places they visit. Weather, fire, water, terrain, wildlife and the requirements of *land owners* and managers all shape what can be done safely and respectfully. Providers must actively identify, reduce and manage both the risks the environment poses and the impact an activity has upon it.

For providers, the guidance encourages planning around the localised, in-situ conditions at the specific time and place of an activity, rather than relying on general assumptions. The trigger-point approach can set clear go/no-go and modification thresholds, fire and severe-weather planning can be aligned with the relevant guidance material, and *land manager* requirements confirmed. Activity-specific detail is expected to come from the relevant activity GPG, with this section providing the common baseline.

6.1 Environmental conditions, safety and impact management

Planning must consider the localised conditions being experienced in situ at the time of the activity, at the specific location of the activity.

Environmental conditions that should be considered include but are not limited to:

- weather forecasts, warnings and associated conditions (e.g. fire weather, heat, cold, rain, wind or tides) at the location and for the duration of the activity
- climatic conditions (e.g. drought, rain saturation, humidity)
- knowledge of the landscape of the activity area and how it relates to environmental conditions (e.g. local topography or site features impacting on conditions)
- the prevailing conditions of the area and what implications this has for environmental conditions (e.g. a long period of drought could affect the bushfire potential or the stability of trees during a strong wind event, during a wet period this can affect the likelihood of rivers and streams rising quickly)
- the potential access and egress routes, including for evacuation if this is required (e.g. are there river crossings, potential road closures, alternative routes)
- the capacity and ability of *activity leaders* and *participants* to respond to the identified conditions
- any recommended or required actions outlined by authorities (including mandated closures by *land managers* or local government during catastrophic or extreme fire-danger ratings)

6.1.1 Trigger points

A *trigger point* is a particular circumstance or situation that causes an action to occur.

*Trigger points and the corresponding actions to be taken must be developed as part of the risk-management planning process (*Section 2*) and referenced in the emergency-management plan.*

A *trigger point* may be based on but is not limited to:

- a quantifiable or forecasted measure of particular weather or environmental conditions occurring (e.g. wind speed, temperature, river level)
- a specific or forecasted event occurring (e.g. lightning, strong winds)
- an index or rating reaching or forecasted to reach a specified level (e.g. fire danger rating).

Weather-related *trigger points* can be based on forecast and/or actual conditions. Consideration should be given to the possibility that actual conditions can be better or worse than forecast.

Reaching a *trigger point* sets in motion a responsive action, which may include but is not limited to:

- monitoring the conditions more regularly
- modifying the activity
- ceasing the activity
- evacuating the area.

When developing *trigger points* and actions or events the following must be considered:

- *trigger points* and recommended actions of the authorities
- *trigger points* and recommended or required actions of *land managers* or *land owners*
- the *context* of the activity being undertaken.

Examples of possible *trigger points* and actions are:

- a total fire ban is announced triggering alteration of the activity
- winds of 25 knots are predicted triggering changes to a canoeing journey on a large lake
- the fire danger rating reaches 'catastrophic' triggering evacuation of a high bushfire or flood conditions risk zone.
- lightning in the region triggering activity modification, suspension or sheltering.

6.1.2 Climate and weather

Climate is the long-term pattern of weather in a particular area. Weather is the current meteorological conditions in a particular area.

Weather guidance, including Bureau of Meteorology warnings and national trigger frameworks, is set out in this Core GPG. Activity-specific weather triggers — including those related to activity-specific environmental hazards such as cave flooding — remain in the relevant activity Good Practice Guide, which should be consulted alongside this section.

Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and associated *trigger points* are set out in Appendix R. Activity

Adverse weather that can affect activities includes but is not limited to:

- strong winds
- extreme heat or cold
- extreme bushfire weather conditions
- lightning
- rain, hail or snow.

Seasonal and other climatic changes that can affect activities include but are not limited to:

- reduced or increased rainfall (e.g. high rain increasing potential for flash flooding; drought increasing potential for falling trees or branches)
- increased snowfall (e.g. high snowfall increasing avalanche risk).

A system should be in place to inform *leaders* in a timely manner if a *severe weather* warning has been issued for the area in which the activity is taking place.

Weather forecasts and alerts must be reviewed as part of the *risk assessment* before commencing an activity.

Monitoring of field conditions must be undertaken during an activity.

Updated weather forecasts and warnings should be accessed or monitored during the activity.

Where communicating or receiving weather warnings may not be possible, then particular attention should be paid to:

- the likelihood and potential consequences of the *severe weather* hazards and risks
- *Activity leaders* must be able to read weather locally because communications may be limited (battery preservation, out-of-range environments, deliberate comms-off schedules) and external extraction may not be possible in the timeframe required.

Adverse climate and weather conditions may require action, including but not limited to:

- consideration of an alternative venue
- cancellation, mid-activity extraction, and adjustments to programming, logistics or equipment.

In all weather *activity leaders* should:

- encourage appropriate fluid intake to help avoid dehydration.

In hot weather *activity leaders* should:

- conduct physically demanding activities in the cooler part of the day
- *monitor for heat-related illness (e.g. heatstroke).*

In cold weather *activity leaders* should:

- *monitor for cold-related illness (e.g. hypothermia).*

6.1.3 Sun safety

Sun exposure is a year-round risk and *providers* should implement sun-safety measures regardless of season.

Measures may include but are not limited to:

- wearing activity and weather appropriate sun protective clothing
- wearing activity and weather appropriate hats
- wearing appropriate eye protection
- having available and encouraging the use of sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- *using shaded areas whenever appropriate (e.g. while taking breaks).*
- modelling sun-safe behaviour by *activity leaders* (broad-brim hats, sunscreen, protective clothing)
- where practical, scheduling outdoor work outside the hottest part of the day (noting acclimatisation and context)
- referring to current Cancer Council guidance.

6.1.4 Severe weather sites

A *severe weather* site is a location that provides shelter or protection from the hazards associated with *severe weather* conditions.

Severe weather sites should be predetermined during the activity planning and/or *risk management* process (refer to 3.2 Activity plans and 2.3 *Risk management plan*).

In determining *severe weather* sites, consideration should be given to:

- how safe movement to the site is — prior to or during a *severe weather* event
- how practical it is to reach and use the site.
- ability to shelter away from falling trees, branches and other potential projectiles.

Activity leaders should read and respond to localised cues and forecast severe-weather conditions associated with specific regions (e.g. East Coast Lows in Victoria and southern NSW). *Activity leaders* should be able to interpret relevant weather information, including synoptic charts, and respond to conditions such as hail and lightning. Refer to ORC 'Management of Outdoor Activities for *Severe Weather* Conditions' (Section 5.2 high winds, Section 5.3 lightning/hail).

6.2 Bushfires, prescribed fire and fire danger

Bushfires in natural environments can be caused by both natural (e.g. lightning strikes) and human (e.g. accidental, deliberate/arson, or prescribed fire) ignition sources.

Prescribed fire is a planned burning operation of vegetation by *land owners* or managers to meet management objectives.

Bushfire is a natural hazard that is related to *severe weather*, but can still occur without the weather meeting the *severe weather* definition. A *fire danger period* is a designated time of the year when there is a heightened bushfire risk. *Prescribed fire* operations are most likely to occur outside or on 'the shoulders' of *fire danger periods*, so that natural areas may be impacted by one or the other for longer periods of the year.

Bushfire-related risks may be influenced by but are not limited to:

- the type of environment the activity is conducted in
- climate
- seasonal conditions
- current weather conditions
- type, amount and moisture content of the fuel in the area
- likelihood of accidental ignition
- time elapsed since a fire last occurred in the area
- ease of entry to and exit from the area
- topography of the area.

The 'bushfire and fire danger' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction(s)* must be determined and complied with.

Authorities (e.g. fire services), land owners and land managers may have restrictions and conditions relating to activities conducted during fire danger periods and/or in areas affected by bushfires or prescribed fire.

Any restrictions, conditions and closures imposed by *land owners*, *land managers* or appropriate public safety authorities must be complied with.

The risk(s), likelihood(s) and types of impact(s) due to bushfire conditions and *prescribed fire* should be considered in the activity planning and the *risk management plan*.

Activities affected by planned or actual *prescribed fire* operations should consider use of alternative locations.

Areas affected by bushfire can be closed or have restricted access for extended periods; this should be incorporated into the provider's business continuity plan (Section 3.4.1). Reasons may include but are not limited to:

- increased danger of tree and limbs falling
- increased danger of landslides
- increased danger of flash flooding
- allowing regeneration to occur
- avoiding weed and pest infestation.

Bushfire and *prescribed fire* condition forecasts and alerts must be reviewed as part of the *dynamic risk assessment* prior to commencing an activity.

The monitoring of bushfire conditions should be undertaken regularly and, where practical, updated bushfire condition forecasts, warnings and alerts accessed throughout the activity.

6.2.1 Bushfire trigger points

Trigger points must include the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS).

The *risk management plan* and emergency management plan should include guidance on *trigger points* and associated actions for forecasted bushfire danger ratings of Moderate, High, Extreme and Catastrophic, and when a bushfire event occurs.

6.2.2 Bushfire safety procedures

Procedures to minimise the potential for starting bushfires during activities may include but are not limited to:

- extinguishing cigarette butts and collecting ash in a suitable container
- checking fire and cooking restrictions
- checking before lighting a fire it is safe to do so in the current weather conditions
- provision of meals that can be prepared on Total Fire Ban days (to reduce reliance on heat sources)
- extinguishing fires and ash waste completely using water
- lighting fires in areas with a fuel free perimeter, away from vegetation (both ground and overhanging) and any buildings or equipment (e.g. tents)

6.3 Tree safety

The threat of falling trees and/or branches is a common hazard for adventure activities.

The hazards posed by trees must be assessed and appropriately managed.

The impact of *severe weather* on venue safety must be assessed and appropriately managed.

6.4 Drinking water safety

The 'drinking water safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction*(s) must be determined and complied with.

Procedures used must protect drinking water sources from the possibility of pollution or contamination from human waste, activities and/or rubbish.

During the *activity* there should be access to sufficient water to meet anticipated requirements. This may include but is not limited to:

- accessing water from a water source
- carrying quantities appropriate for the type of *activity*, its anticipated intensity and weather conditions.

An appropriate water purification method should be used when the water quality is unknown

6.5 Food safety

Handling of food intended for sale or the sale of food, can mean compliance with specific food handling laws and/or regulations. The 'sale of food' for the purposes of laws and/or regulations may include but is not limited to supplying food together with accommodation, services or entertainment.

The 'food handling and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction*(s) must be determined and complied with.

Regardless of whether or not compliance with an act or regulation is required, there must be *procedures* to ensure food provided is safe and hygienically prepared and served.

Food safety measures may include but are not limited to:

- appropriate storage of food to avoid it spoiling

- stored securely to prevent it being accessed by wildlife
- appropriate selection of food that can be safely stored for the type, length and location of the *activity*
- appropriate selection of food that meets any specific dietary, medical or allergy requirements
- equipment suitable for the hygienic preparation and serving of food
- equipment for cleaning the food preparation and serving equipment
- *procedures* and equipment to ensure the personal hygiene of those preparing and eating food
- *procedures* and appropriate equipment (including for storage) to prevent cross-contamination of food that may cause an allergic reaction
- appropriate supervision to ensure safety and hygiene procedures are implemented.

Providers preparing food for *participants* and staff should develop a Food Safety Plan in accordance with local-government requirements.

6.6 Wildlife safety

Wildlife safety measures may include but are not limited to:

- observing wildlife from a safe distance
- not feeding wildlife
- avoiding directing white light on nocturnal animals.

Refer to the activity GPGs for specific activity considerations.

6.7 Land owner and/or manager requirements

Land owners or *land managers* have access restrictions. *Land managers* or *land owners* in different *jurisdictions* can have different requirements.

Access restrictions may be due to but not limited to:

- limiting the impact of overuse (e.g. limiting numbers using an area)
- protecting a particular and/or significant natural or cultural heritage site
- stopping inappropriate use
- reducing the likelihood of a hazard (e.g. banning campfires to reduce bushfire risk)
- preventing the possibility of accidents occurring.

The '*land owner* and/or *land manager*' law(s), regulation(s) and/or requirements must be determined and complied with.

When conducting *activities*, the restrictions, regulations, permits or licensing requirements of the *land owner* and/or *land manager* must be followed.

6.8 Water environments

Water environment can pose a significant risk to participants and leaders, *providers* should implement - safety measures prior to and during an activity.

When *activity leaders* identify that a water or river crossing is required or possible during an activity, consideration should be given to but is not limited to:

- whether there is debris floating or flowing in the current
- the clarity of the water and visibility of the crossing base
- the depth and speed of the water
- where the water flows and associated hazards (strainers, rock crevices)
- the base composition of the crossing
- the capability of participants to remain safe in water

- the level of participant dependency and available supervision at the crossing point.

Areas likely to experience flash flooding should be avoided during *severe weather* or thunderstorms.

7 Equipment and logistics

The right equipment, well chosen and well maintained, is fundamental to safe delivery. Equipment requirements differ from one activity and context to another, spanning personal and group gear, first aid and medication, communications and transport. Deciding what is genuinely needed, keeping it fit for purpose, and organising the logistics around it are everyday responsibilities for any provider.

It helps a provider decide what equipment is genuinely needed, who is responsible for it, and how it is kept fit for purpose. The framework can drive equipment checklists matched to each activity, inspection and maintenance schedules appropriate to scale, and communications and first aid provisions matched to the remoteness and risk of the activity. It supports consistent logistics decisions without imposing a single equipment list on every provider.

7.1 Framework for equipment requirements

The following *framework* may assist in determining equipment requirements.

Equipment can be categorised into the following:

- group equipment – equipment that is shared among the whole *group* during the activity
- leader equipment – equipment that the *leader*(s) need to lead the activity
- participant equipment – equipment that *participants* will need to participate in the activity
- emergency and/or rescue equipment – equipment the *leader*(s) or *group* may need to conduct a rescue during the activity or in the event of an emergency.

7.2 Equipment requirements

Details of the equipment requirements for particular *activities* are provided in the relevant activity GPG. Equipment requirements may differ depending on the *context*.

Equipment selected must be suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used, and in good working order.

Activity leaders should be satisfied that all *participants* have access to suitable equipment.

Where *participants* are required to provide specific equipment, a checklist of items should be provided in advance.

Procedures should ensure all *activity leaders* and *participants* have access to the equipment required.

A checklist for the equipment required should be developed and used as part of the *procedure*.

Provision for drinking water must be included in activity equipment and logistics planning. Refer to 6.4 Drinking water safety for guidance on safe water requirements.

Activity equipment requirements should be determined through the *risk management* process and must be appropriate to the activity, the environment and the participant group. Considerations include but are not limited to: first aid kit, communication device, navigation tools, weather protection, food and water, and personal protective equipment.

Where an activity uses plant classified as an amusement device in the relevant jurisdiction (which may include climbing walls, high ropes structures and inflatable devices), the registration, design verification and inspection requirements of the ‘plant and amusement device’ law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

7.3 First aid equipment and medication

As a minimum, the first aid equipment provided must meet any applicable work health and safety laws and/or regulation in the relevant *jurisdiction*(s).

First aid equipment should be selected through a first-aid *risk assessment* consistent with the Safe Work Australia model Code of Practice 'First aid in the workplace' (as adopted in the relevant jurisdiction), having regard to the activity, group size, remoteness and duration.

First aid equipment must be:

- reasonably accessible
- appropriate and adequate for the *activity* and *context*
- maintained in a hygienic, safe and serviceable condition.

The first aid equipment provided must be relevant to the *activity* and the *context*.

Providers must ensure first-aid equipment is available during an activity, appropriate to group size, environment and incident likelihood (for example, snake-bite kits in snake season).

A *process* must be implemented to ensure perishable first aid supplies are within their expiry date.

Medication must be appropriately stored.

*Providers must clearly establish and document which activity leaders have authority to provide or supply medications during an activity, particularly where participants are minors. This should be aligned with the provider's SOPs, first-aid scope of practice (*Appendix M*) and health-and-wellbeing considerations (*Appendix J*).*

The factors that determine the first aid and medication requirements may include but are not limited to:

- the level of first aid or medical training required for its use
- the size of the *group*
- the age of the *participants*
- pre-existing medical conditions within the *group*
- the remoteness of the *activity*
- the ease with which the emergency services can be contacted
- the likely time for emergency services to reach an injured or ill person
- the nature and severity of likely injuries or illnesses
- the ability to transport and/or carry the equipment.

Refer to Appendix M – First aid and medication considerations for a list of first aid and meditation kit items.

7.4 Communications equipment

The requirement for, and type of, communications equipment must be appropriate to the *context* of the *activity*, the potential *hazards* and *risks* involved, and the emergency-response plan in place.

The type of communications system used may include but is not limited to:

- mobile phone
- satellite phone
- two-way satellite texting device
- two-way radio (e.g. UHF radio transceiver)
- trunked radio
- *emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon* (EPIRB)
- *personal locator beacon* (PLB)
- tracking device
- emergency flares.

7.5 Use of equipment

All equipment must be used with reference to the manufacturer's instructions and limitations.

Any required off-label use of equipment should only occur where there is no more suitable alternative available and has been risk-assessed and tested.

Prior to the use of equipment, all relevant people must receive appropriate training.

Equipment must be used with appropriate supervision as dictated by the *context* of its use.

All equipment should be checked for serviceability prior to use.

All appropriate *procedures* should be taken to avoid damage to the equipment.

Appropriate training, instruction, equipment and/or *processes* should be used for the safe manual handling of heavy equipment or materials.

7.6 Transport

The ‘transport’ law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

Appropriate driver and transport *policy* and *procedures* must be established and implemented.

Driver and transport activities and requirements must be considered during activity planning (see 3.2 Activity plans) and *risk management* planning (see 2.3 *Risk management plan*).

Driver and transport *policies* and *procedures* established may include but are not limited to:

- identification of current transport legal requirements
- driver *competence* requirements
- confirmation drivers hold correct licences and periodic licence checking
- driver health and fitness
- drug and alcohol requirements
- fatigue management
- training requirements including ‘defensive driving’ techniques
- 4WD and specific trailer training where operators require staff to drive on unsealed roads
- types of vehicles used (e.g. requirements, appropriateness) and licensing requirements
- vehicle usage and limits (e.g. weight, passengers)
- cargo requirements including types, loading and securing
- vehicle equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, first aid kits, breakdown hazard signs)
- breakdown and roadside assistance service procedures
- other emergencies (e.g. a violent or road rage situation)
- transport authority injury reporting requirements
- maintenance of vehicles and road worthiness checks
- manual handling techniques for loading and unloading
- driver communications and mobile phone use
- parking
- passenger management
- site traffic management (e.g. safety at pick-up and drop-off points)
- speed limits
- use of seat belts
- vehicle security.

7.7 Maintenance of equipment

The care and maintenance of the equipment is the responsibility of the owners and operators.

All appropriate steps should be taken to care for equipment with reference to the manufacturer’s instructions.

A process must be implemented to maintain equipment, with reference to the manufacturer’s instructions.

An equipment maintenance log should be kept.

For equipment where the usage needs to be tracked to ensure it remains within safety guidelines, standards or manufacturer's instructions, an equipment usage log should be kept.

All equipment must be checked, and any damaged or worn items that are no longer fit for use must be appropriately marked and removed from service.

7.8 Storage of equipment

Storage should be with reference to the manufacturer's storage instructions or recommendations.

8 Responsibilities and roles

Safe delivery depends on everyone knowing what they are responsible for. The *activity provider* has primary responsibility for participants and for the overall conduct of an activity — it plans, authorises and resources the activity and is accountable for the systems that make delivery possible. Leaders, *assistant leaders* and *support persons* act under the provider's direction, carrying operational responsibility in the field within the framework, plans and resources supplied to them.

The section guides providers to define roles clearly and to support the people who carry them. Naming conventions can standardize titles across activities, the KSE Framework can verify leader knowledge, skill, experience, first aid and currency, and the verification and currency records called for can be kept. Role descriptions can be scaled — from a single qualified leader to a layered leadership team — while accountability remains with the provider.

8.1 Responsibilities and roles framework

The *activity provider* has primary responsibility for participants and for the overall conduct of an adventure activity. The provider is the entity that plans, authorises and resources the activity and is accountable for the systems that make delivery possible.

All persons involved in delivering the activity must act under the direction of the *provider*. They carry operational responsibilities in the field for the people and tasks placed in their care, but they do so within the framework, plans and resources supplied to them by the provider.

The three operational leadership roles recognised in this Core GPG are:

- Leader — carries operational responsibility in the field for the activity and all participants, acting within the provider's systems. Where more than one leader is involved in an activity, one must be a designated Leader with operational responsibility for the activity as delivered — including appropriate supervision of any other *activity leaders*.
- *Assistant Leader* — carries delegated operational responsibility for defined elements of the activity, operating under the direction of the Leader and within the provider's systems.
- *Support person* — a non-technical supporting role that assists *activity leaders* in managing participants and fulfilling general supervisory and organisational duties. This person may not have the specific adventure activity knowledge and skill of a Leader or *Assistant Leader*, but has the general capability, maturity and judgement to carry out specified tasks under the direction of an *activity leader*. Common examples include a teacher accompanying students on an adventure activity, or a parent or guardian supporting a youth group.

A *support person* may or may not be employed by the *provider*. Common examples include a teacher accompanying students from another organisation, or a parent or guardian supporting a youth group.

These roles are defined by the responsibilities they carry. Providers should identify what responsibilities an activity requires to be covered before assigning persons to roles. The role names describe a bundle of responsibilities — they do not exist independently of those responsibilities.

All persons in a leadership role must have the knowledge, skill and experience appropriate to the responsibilities they carry.

8.2 Naming conventions

The terms Leader and *Assistant Leader* are the standard terms used in the Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS) and this Core GPG. Different providers, activities and jurisdictions use a wide variety of role titles — including instructor, guide, trip leader, teacher, group leader, facilitator and others.

If the *provider* uses their own role titles, the *provider* should ensure:

- Each role used in the activity is clearly mapped to the Leader, *Assistant Leader* or *support person* role as defined in this section; and
- The mapping is documented.

8.3 Provider responsibilities to prepare and support leaders

Primary responsibility for the activity rests with the provider, who prepares and supports every person placed in a leadership role — whether employee, contractor or volunteer. By providing the information, systems and support each role requires, the provider equips leaders to carry their operational responsibilities in the field.

Ensure the leader has the authority to make decisions in relation to activity safety, including the authority to modify, pause or cancel the activity without prior approval.

The provider must, so far as is reasonably practicable, at a minimum:

- Induct the leader into the organisation, including its purpose, policies, procedures, expected standards of conduct, and reporting lines.
- Familiarise the leader with the sites, venues and environments in which activities will be conducted, including access arrangements, known hazards, escape routes, communications coverage and any local protocols.
- Verify the leader's knowledge, skill and experience against the responsibilities of the role (see Section 8.5 and Appendix N or Appendix O as applicable) before assigning them to lead the activity.
- Confirm the leader is physically and mentally fit for the role at the time the activity is delivered, and actively manage fatigue, workload and welfare.
- Provide the leader with a documented activity plan and *risk management plan* for each activity, and confirm the leader understands how to use and, where relevant, adapt them in the field.
- Provide the leader with the relevant emergency management plan, communications arrangements and any emergency contacts applicable to the activity.
- Supply sufficient and serviceable equipment appropriate to the activity, including first aid equipment and any personal protective equipment required, together with clear instructions for its inspection and use.
- Make clear the scope of the leader's authority, including the decisions they may make independently, the boundaries on autonomous decision-making, and the matters that must be escalated to the provider.
- Establish how and when concerns or incidents should be escalated — from participant to leader, and from leader to provider.
- Provide insurance, incident reporting pathways and post-incident support arrangements.
- Provide ongoing supervision, support, feedback and professional development so that the leader's capability is maintained and any gaps are addressed.
- Monitor the wellbeing and performance of all leadership team members, including fatigue and fitness.

A leader is ready to accept operational responsibility for an activity once they have received the preparation and support set out above. The provider must confirm that this preparation and support are in place before the leader is assigned. A leader who identifies a gap should raise it with the provider promptly; raising a gap does not transfer responsibility for the gap to the leader.

In some organisations the person filling the Leader role may also be the provider, or may hold other management or governance roles in the organisation or an affiliated entity. Where that is the case, the responsibilities described in this section still apply. The distinction between the provider's responsibilities and the Leader's operational responsibilities should be documented so it is clear which responsibilities are being exercised in which capacity.

The provider must consult leaders, in accordance with the 'work health and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s), on matters affecting their health and safety, including activity planning and *risk management* decisions that affect activity delivery.

The provider must verify, before assignment, that every person in a leadership or *support person* role holds any clearance required by the 'child safety protection' and 'vulnerable person safety protection' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s), and record the verification (refer to 1.3.3 Protection of children and vulnerable persons).

8.4 Leader responsibilities and role descriptions

This section describes the three leadership roles used under the Core GPG.

8.4.1 Leader — operational responsibility in the field

Leader(s) are responsible to the provider. Leader(s) do not carry primary responsibility for the activity as a whole — that rests with the provider — but do carry responsibility for using the plans, systems and resources supplied by the provider to deliver the activity as intended, and for exercising sound judgement when conditions or circumstances change.

Working within the provider's systems and under the direction of the provider, the leader must:

- Deliver the activity in accordance with the activity plan, *risk management plan* and emergency management plan supplied by the provider.
- Take operational responsibility in the field for the safety and welfare of all participants throughout the activity.
- Contribute to planning and preparation as requested by the provider, including providing input to the activity plan and *risk management plan*.
- Conduct a *dynamic risk assessment* before, during and after the activity, and modify, pause or cancel the activity if conditions or risks exceed acceptable levels or fall outside the provider's authorised scope.
- Provide appropriate and ongoing supervision of participants, selecting the level of supervision (direct, indirect or remote) appropriate to the context and *risk assessment*.
- Deliver a *pre-activity briefing* to participants covering the nature of the activity, safety requirements, emergency procedures, communications and activity expectations.
- Acknowledge and respect *Traditional Owner* protocols, cultural heritage values and any access or use restrictions applicable to the activity site, and brief participants accordingly.
- Direct and supervise *assistant leaders* and *support persons*, delegating tasks as appropriate within each person's knowledge, skill and experience.
- Ensure all *activity leaders* and *support persons* have access to the activity plan, *risk management plan* and emergency management plan.
- Respond to incidents, near misses and emergencies in accordance with the emergency management plan and notify the provider and relevant authorities as required.
- Ensure all equipment used is appropriate, serviceable and used correctly, and report any defects to the provider.
- Monitor the health, fitness and wellbeing of participants and *activity leaders* throughout the activity, including the effects of fatigue and any medications.
- Maintain, document and provide timely access to all required records and participant information, in the form required by the provider.
- Communicate promptly with the provider about anything that affects, or is likely to affect, the safe delivery of the activity.
- Brief *assistant leaders* and *support persons* on the location and instructions for use of the first aid kit and communication devices.
- Carry instruments to measure weather conditions in the field where an applicable activity standard specifies it (for example AS 2316.2.1:2025 for challenge ropes courses); otherwise leaders rely on reliable forecasts and on-site observation.
- Move participants to safety if required.

8.4.2 Assistant Leader — delegated responsibility

The *assistant leader* may carry the following responsibilities, but is not limited to:

- Support the Leader in the safe and effective delivery of the activity.
- Lead or supervise delegated elements or tasks of the activity, as assigned by the Leader and within the scope of their own knowledge, skill and experience.
- Take responsibility for a group of participants or a defined part of the activity, as directed by the Leader and under their direct or *indirect supervision*.
- Participate in *dynamic risk assessment* and communicate observations, hazards or incidents to the Leader promptly.
- Move participants to safety if required.

8.4.3 *Support person*

Support person: a non-technical supporting role that assists *activity leaders* in managing participants and fulfilling general supervisory and organisational duties, operating under the direction of an *activity leader* (refer to 8.4.3 *Support person*).

The *support person* is a non-technical supporting role that assists *activity leaders* in managing participants and fulfilling general supervisory and organisational duties. They may not have the specific adventure activity knowledge and skill of a Leader or *Assistant Leader*, but have the general capability, maturity and judgement to carry out specified tasks under the direction of an *activity leader*. Common examples include a teacher accompanying students on an adventure activity, or a parent or guardian supporting a youth group.

Key Responsibilities

The *support person* may be asked to fulfil the following, but is not limited to:

- Provide general supervision and support to participants as guided by the leader(s), within the scope of their own capability.
- Assist the *activity leader*(s) in directly or indirectly supervising the group, as instructed.
- Provide support and pastoral care to individual participants as required.
- Manage behavioural issues of participants in accordance with the organisation's policies and as directed by the *activity leader*.
- Manage the policies and practices of the participant's organisation where applicable (for example, a teacher overseeing education department behaviour standards or *duty of care* requirements).
- Carry out agreed supervisory duties for minors as arranged between the provider and the participant's parent, guardian or organisation. Nothing in this role transfers or reduces the *duty of care* owed by the provider, or by the *support person*'s own organisation (for example, a teacher's duty to their education authority).
- Assist in meeting gender supervision requirements as directed by the *activity leader*.
- Supervise participants who are waiting to undertake the activity or completing non-technical elements, under direction from the *activity leader*.
- Communicate safety concerns, participant health issues or incidents to the *activity leader* promptly.
- Be familiar with the emergency management plan and support its implementation as directed.
- Comply with the provider's systems, policies and any applicable law(s) and/or regulation(s). The relevant law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.
- Move participants to safety if required.

Important Limitations

A *support person*:

- does not have the activity-specific knowledge and skill of a Leader or *Assistant Leader* and must not be treated as an *activity leader* for the purposes of calculating *activity leader* to participant ratios — unless they also hold the relevant activity knowledge and skill.
- does not assume responsibility for the technical aspects of the activity.
- operates under the direct or *indirect supervision* of an *activity leader* and within the scope of tasks assigned to them.
- When a *support person* is also a *dependent participant* in the activity (for example, an accompanying teacher on a canoe journey), they must be counted as a participant for the purposes of determining the *activity leader* to participant ratio.
- A person engaged solely as a personal aid to a specific participant is not a *support person*: they must be counted as a participant for ratio purposes and must not be assigned supervisory tasks for other participants.

8.4.4 Leader fitness for work

8.4.4.1 Physical and psychosocial fitness

The provider must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that each person assigned to a leader or *assistant leader* role is physically and psychosocially capable of carrying out the demands of the role.

The *provider* should assess physical and psychosocial fitness requirements as part of the pre-activity planning process.

Leaders must self-assess their own physical and psychosocial fitness before accepting a role and should not accept a role for which they are not fit, whether due to physical condition, fatigue, mental health concerns, or the effects of medication or other substances. Psychosocial hazards — including stress, burnout and anxiety — should be actively reported by *leaders* when they affect fitness for work.

Common psychosocial hazards in adventure activity settings include fatigue, isolation, role ambiguity, high-consequence decision-making, exposure to traumatic incidents, and team conflict. The provider must identify and manage these hazards so far as is reasonably practicable.

8.4.4.2 Alcohol, medication and other substances

An *activity leader* must not be impaired by alcohol or any other drug while delivering an activity.

Providers and leaders should consider the effects of any medication currently being used or prescribed to *activity leaders* to ensure it does not affect performance or create safety concerns (for example, causing drowsiness or dizziness). The leader must also carry sufficient medication for the full duration of the activity, and have a contingency plan in place if medication is lost, damaged or otherwise unavailable in the field.

8.4.4.3 *Fatigue*

Physical and mental fatigue can create significant risks to providers and to leaders themselves. The provider must take reasonable steps to ensure the appropriate resources and processes are in place to manage fatigue risk, and that these are actively used. Providers should consider:

- appropriate allocation of roles and responsibilities
- appropriate scheduling and planning of activity times
- appropriate travel arrangements both before and after the activity
- control measures for specific tasks, jobs and operations
- self-assessment checklists
- procedures for reporting fatigue hazards and risks
- procedures for managing people who are fatigued
- providing information, instruction, training and supervision
- monitoring and reviewing procedures and control measures

8.5 Leader readiness and capability

8.5.1 Leadership knowledge, skill and experience

The *provider* must ensure that each person in a leadership role has the knowledge, skill and experience their role requires, considering the context of the activity, the participant group, the environment and any particular conditions. This responsibility requires the *provider* to make an active, deliberate and documented determination that the person can carry the responsibilities of their role in the specific activity context. This responsibility cannot be delegated to a qualification, registration scheme or another third party — it is a non-delegable obligation of the *provider*.

Knowledge, skill and experience must be treated as integrated capability — not as separate items. Knowledge gives the leader the concepts and information their role requires. Skill allows the leader to perform the tasks involved. Experience allows the leader to interpret complexity, recognise patterns, judge timing and respond to uncertainty. Verification of knowledge, skill and experience is addressed in Section 8.5.5.

In some organisations, no single leader holds all of the knowledge, skill and experience required across every domain. Where the provider operates with a leadership team, the knowledge, skill and experience required may be distributed across team members — provided that, taken collectively, the team covers all responsibilities and each person carries only the tasks for which they hold the necessary knowledge, skill and experience. The provider should document how the collective capability of the leadership team covers the responsibilities of each role, and must not assign a task to a person who does not hold the knowledge, skill and experience that task requires.

How the Framework is structured

The AAAS Outdoor Leader KSE Framework describes leader capability across three dimensions:

- Activity Context — what the environment offers in terms of access, communications and external assistance (Highly Supported, Moderately Supported, Limited Support, Self-Reliant).
- Domains — the knowledge, skill and experience required (nine integrated domains).
- Capability levels — the autonomy, complexity and evidence required for the role (Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced).

The provider combines all three to set the leader profile required for the activity, then verifies the person against that profile before assigning them to lead. The diagram below shows how the three dimensions fit together.

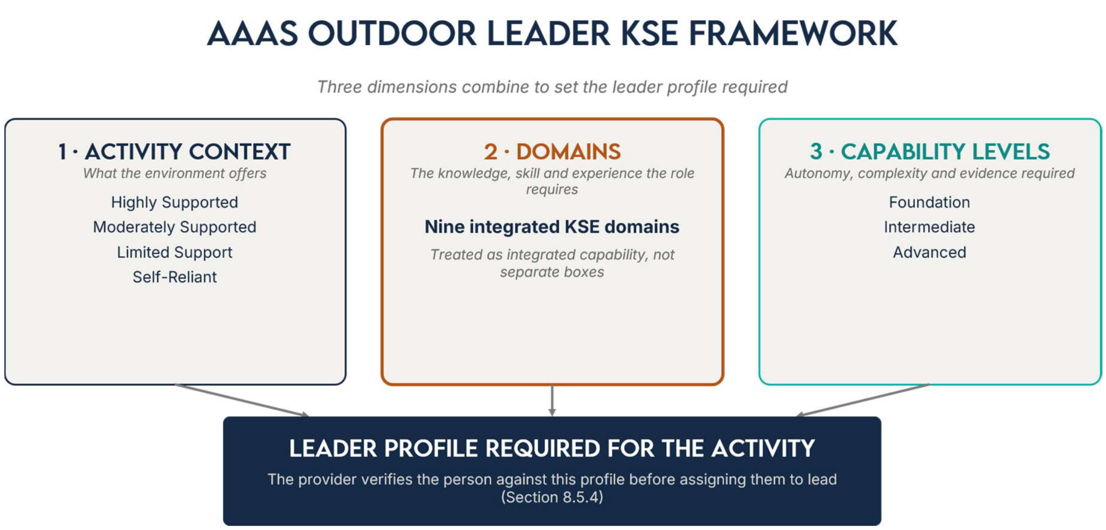


Figure 8.2: The three dimensions of the AAAS Outdoor Leader KSE Framework

Capability across the nine domains must scale with the activity, the participant group and the place. In a controlled or front country setting, some domains may be required at a basic level only. In a remote or wilderness setting, several domains must be held at a higher level, and the leader must be able to anticipate compound risk and respond with limited or no external support.

The detailed knowledge, skill and experience expected of a Leader is set out in Appendix N. The detailed knowledge, skill and experience expected of an *Assistant Leader* is set out in Appendix O.

Dimension 1 — Activity Context

Activity Context describes what the environment offers — support availability, communications, how delayed any external assistance would be.

Table 8.1: Support levels

Support level	Environmental complexity and support availability
Highly Supported (Non-remote)	Centre based or urban setting. At or relatively close to a base, with provider systems support available; emergency services can access the group easily; communications reliable.
Moderately Supported	Activities delivered in semi remote or managed outdoor settings. Some delay in external support possible; communications generally available but variable.
Limited Support (Remote)	Remote or variable environments with limited support; plan for delayed assistance and foreseeable contingencies; communications partial or intermittent.
Self-Reliant (Wilderness)	Highly remote, isolated or extreme environments; external support significantly delayed; self-reliance and advanced contingency planning essential; communications may be absent for extended periods.

Dimension 2 — K&S Domains

The Framework contains nine K&S domains. Providers should treat the domains as an integrated model, not as separate boxes — a leader demonstrates capability when they combine the domains in the field. Each domain scales with activity complexity and with support availability

Table 8.2: Outdoor Leader KSE domains

Domain	Definition	Leader capability question
Safety and risk management	Identifies, assesses, controls and monitors risk before, during and after activities.	Can the leader keep risk within acceptable limits as conditions change?
Technical activity leadership	Applies activity-specific technical skills, equipment use, supervision and rescue capability appropriate to the activity.	Can the leader conduct the activity safely and competently for this group and environment?
Leadership and group management	Supervises participants, manages the group, supports welfare and coordinates assistant leaders or support persons.	Can the leader maintain group safety, cohesion and welfare?

Domain	Definition	Leader capability question
Outdoor living, activity and travel skills (OLATS)	Can participate competently in the activity for the level required and travels safely in outdoor environments. Includes areas such as lightweight travel and camping, bushcraft, minimum-impact practice, food, water and shelter, and the activity-specific skills suited to the environment (mountains, rivers, deserts, coast, lakes).	Can the leader live, travel and operate competently in the environment in which the activity takes place?
Decision-making and judgement	Interprets information, weighs options and makes timely decisions under uncertainty.	Can the leader decide when to continue, modify, pause, retreat or cancel?
Planning and program management	Plans and implements activity logistics, staffing, communication, contingencies and post-activity review.	Can the leader translate organisational systems into field-ready delivery?
Environment and place-based knowledge	Applies local knowledge of terrain, weather, water, access, cultural responsibilities, environmental sensitivities and emergency considerations.	Does the leader know this place well enough to lead here?
Communication and interpersonal skills	Briefs, instructs, listens, gives feedback, manages conflict and communicates with participants, co-leaders, providers and external stakeholders.	Can the leader communicate effectively before, during and after the activity?
Self-management and professional practice	Maintains fitness for work, currency, ethics, legal awareness, reflection, fatigue management and professional standards.	Can the leader remain capable, ethical and reliable while carrying responsibility?

Dimension 3 — Capability levels

The AAAS offers the following capability levels - The Framework uses three indicative capability levels — Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced — to describe the autonomy, complexity and evidence required for a leadership role. These levels do not replace the provider's own judgement, activity-specific guidance or legal obligations. Indicative experience bands aligned to each level appear in Appendix Q.

Table 8.3: Leader capability levels

Level	Capability description	Typical use in for provider decisions
Foundation	Carries operational responsibility in contexts where support is readily accessible. Applies documented procedures, manages routine hazards and makes sound judgements within familiar or bounded settings. The defining characteristic of this level is the operating environment — activity	Suitable for lead delivery roles where support is close at hand, including centre-based activities, school excursions in urban or peri-urban environments, and programs where an Intermediate or Advanced leader provides oversight.

Level	Capability description	Typical use in for provider decisions
	complexity and participant risk are within manageable bounds and external support can respond quickly if needed.	
Intermediate	Carries field responsibility in defined contexts. Leads independently within organisational systems, manages dynamic risk, supervises participants and adapts within the bounds of planned activity.	Suitable for designated leaders in familiar or bounded contexts (recreation- and outdoor-club outings within club operating bounds; warrant-holding scout/guide leaders running adventurous activities under organisational authority).
Advanced	Operates with high autonomy in complex, remote, high-consequence or novel conditions. Leads high-complexity programs, anticipates compound risk, coordinates others and makes defensible decisions when conditions change.	Suitable for remote, wilderness, advanced technical, multi-day, high-consequence or high-autonomy leadership responsibilities (remote school expeditions; outdoor- and recreation-club expeditions to wilderness areas; senior scout, venturer or cadet expeditions; commercial multi-day journeys; volunteer-led extended trips).

8.5.2 Provider responsibilities under the Outdoor Leader KSE Framework

The provider must verify the capability of every person assigned to a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role, using this Framework or an equivalent approach that addresses the same three dimensions.

Using the Framework to make a program or trip decision involves: (a) determining the activity context (see Dimension 1 above); (b) determining the capability level required across each of the nine domains, having regard to the activity, the participant group and the place (see Dimension 3 above); and (c) combining these to set a leader profile for the activity, and verifying each person against that profile before assigning them to lead.

Capability is independent of status — employee or volunteer. Capability is determined by evidence of knowledge, skill and experience and verification requirements apply equally to volunteer and paid leaders.

Verification requirements are set out in Section 8.5.5.

8.5.3 First aid

The 'work health and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with. The provider must determine the appropriate level of first aid for their context and ensure they are current.

The minimum first aid training for any *activity leader* must be a current, nationally recognised first aid qualification. For activities delivered in limited-support or self-reliant contexts, the minimum must be a current, nationally recognised first aid qualification suitable for remote or isolated sites.

8.5.4 Knowledge and skill acquisition

Knowledge, skill and experience may be developed through one or more of the following ways, but are not limited to these. No single way has primacy. Providers should select and apply a combination of the most appropriate methods for the activity context, the person's background, and the responsibilities of the role.

Table 8.4: Knowledge and skill acquisition methods

Method	Brief definition
Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualifications and training courses	AQF-issued qualifications issued by a higher education provider regulated under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, or by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) regulated under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*. First aid competence must be recognised through this pathway.
Industry training	Recognition by an industry body, peak body assessed by a competent person determined by the training organisation. Typically combines knowledge assessment, practical assessment and a currency requirement, and is usually activity specific.
Provider based verification	A provider's own internal training system/verification system aligned to industry benchmarks, assessed by a competent person determined by the provider.

8.5.5 Verification

For each person in a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role, the provider must verify in context:

- Knowledge — that the person understands the technical requirements of the activity, the *risk management framework*, and the emergency procedures applicable to the activity context.
- Skill — that the person can perform the technical skills required for the activity, including any rescue or emergency skills relevant to the role.
- Experience — that the person has sufficient relevant experience to exercise sound judgement and lead effectively in the activity context.
- Currency — that the knowledge, skill and experience are current, not merely historic.

For a *support person*, the provider must verify that the person has the general capability, maturity and judgement to carry the supervisory responsibilities assigned to them.

For every person in a leadership or *support person* role, the provider must verify, before assignment, that the person holds any clearance required by the 'child safety protection' and 'vulnerable person safety protection' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s), and record the verification.

The Leader may confirm, in the field, that a *support person* remains suitable for the supervisory tasks assigned to them, complementing the provider's pre-activity verification.

The detailed knowledge, skill and experience against which Leader and *Assistant Leader* verification should be made is set out in Appendix N and Appendix O.

Further guidance on each pathway, including factors to consider when applying them, is set out inAppendix P.

8.5.6 Currency

Knowledge, skill and experience must be current. A person who was once capable of carrying the responsibilities of a role may no longer be capable if their knowledge, skill or experience has become outdated.

Providers must establish currency using one or more of the following means:

- direct observation of recent leadership performance in the activity
- log books or records of recent participation in relevant activities
- performance reviews against the role's defined responsibilities
- peer verification by a person with equal or greater knowledge and experience
- requalification or reassessment
- technical training or professional development
- upgrading of qualifications to current standards

The recency requirements for currency will depend on the nature of the activity and the role. The provider must decide the timeframe required Refer to the relevant activity-specific Good Practice Guide for minimum currency requirements.

Where a qualification or recognition pathway imposes its own time limitation (for example, first aid requalification periods), that limitation must be treated as the maximum.

8.5.7 Verification and currency records

Providers must maintain records of how verification was conducted for each person in a leadership role. Records must include:

- the basis on which verification was made
- the method or methods used
- the date on which verification was conducted
- the person responsible for verification

Records must be available for inspection and must be retained for a period consistent with the provider's record-keeping obligations. The relevant 'record keeping' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

Records relating to activities involving minors — including participant information, consent, supervision arrangements and incident records — must be retained for a minimum of 25 years.

Glossary

AAAS: Australian Adventure Activity Standard – See Introduction for details.

Activity: an adventure activity.

Activity briefing: informing someone thoroughly, especially in preparation for a task, immediately prior to an *activity* or task (also see *briefing* and *pre-activity briefing*).

Adventure game: a structured group activity using physical, problem-solving or initiative challenges— in which participants work together to achieve defined goals under the supervision of an *activity leader*.

Activity leaders: the collective noun for *leader*(s) and assistant *leader*(s).

Activity provider: see *provider*.

Assistant leader: a currently *competent* person within the role, who takes some responsibility for *participants* and is able to lead or supervise delegated elements or tasks of an *activity*.

Benchmark: a point of reference by which something can be measured or judged.

Briefing: informing someone thoroughly, especially in preparation for a task (also see *activity briefing* and *pre-activity briefing*).

But not limited to: indicates that a list is not definitive and additional items may need to be considered depending on the *context*.

Can/cannot: indicates a possibility and capability.

Client organisation: where the client of the provider is someone other than the participants who undertake the activity (e.g. a school uses a provider to deliver an activity for its students – in this instance the school is the client organisation and the students, while participants, are not the client).

Competence: ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve *expected results*.

Competencies: the plural of *competence*. Having *competence* in more than one ability.

Competent leader/participant/person/assessor: a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.

Context: the group of conditions, circumstances and facts that form the setting for an *activity*.

Currency: from the present or the very recent past. Currency provides assurance that the evidence (e.g. qualifications, certificates, log book experience) provided is recent enough to show that the activity leader is competent at the time of making a decision.

Custodians: those who are responsible for looking after places and sometimes the stories and ceremonies linked to these places. (From Australian Heritage Commission (2002). Ask First – A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values. National Capital Printing; Canberra.)

Dependent group: a group of *dependent participants*.

Dependent Participant: a person owed a *duty of care* by the *activity provider* who is reliant upon the *provider*'s systems, processes and operational practices for the supervision, guidance or instruction required to support their participation in an activity.

Direct supervision: where a nominated person responsible for *supervising others* during all or part of the *activity* is able to intervene immediately (also see *indirect supervision* and *remote supervision*).

Duty of care: a duty to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health and safety of persons who are under the provider's care and charge (including workers and volunteers) while on the activity.

Dynamic risk assessment: a process of assessing newly identified *risks* and changes to previously identified *risks*, and the modification of the management arrangements accordingly.

Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB): tracking transmitter which aids in the detection and location of boats, aircraft and people in distress.

Expected results: results of performing *activities* in the provision of a service.

Fire danger period: a designated time of the year when there is a heightened bushfire *risk*.

Framework: set of components that provide the foundations and organisational arrangements, or basic structure underlying a system or concept. A framework can be adapted to specific needs.

Gender identity: the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person (whether by way of medical intervention or not), with or without regard to the person's designated sex at birth. Refer Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, *Gender Identity* and Intersex Status) Act 2013

GPGs: Good Practice Guide(s) – See Introduction for details.

Group: a number of *participants*, *leaders*, assistant *leaders* and/or *responsible persons* located, gathered or classed together for the purpose of completing a part or whole of an *activity*.

Guide: an outdoor recreation guide advises individuals and *groups* in outdoor recreation *activities*.

Hazards: a potential source of harm. This can be a physical (e.g. cliff edge or moving water), technological (e.g. incorrect white water equipment) or intentional agent (e.g. work practices such as manual handling).

Indirect supervision: where a nominated person responsible for *supervising others* during all or part of the *activity* is in the vicinity but unable to intervene immediately (also see *direct supervision* and *remote supervision*).

Intersex: having natural physical characteristics that are different from conventional ideas about male or female bodies.

Jurisdiction: the territorial range of authority or control. This will generally relate to the state or territory in which the *activity* is being undertaken.

Land manager: the party that has legal responsibility for managing a particular environment. This may include the power to restrict access or place conditions and/or requirements on anyone accessing that particular environment. Includes managers of rivers, waterways and other bodies of water (also see *land owner*).

Land owner: the party that owns and has legal responsibility for managing a particular environment (also see *land manager*).

Leader: a *competent* person who takes responsibility for people involved in, and is able to lead and supervise an *activity*.

Loco Parentis: Latin term with the legal meaning 'in the place of a parent'. Refers to the legal responsibility of a person and/or organisation to take on some and/or all of the responsibilities of a parent.

May/need not: indicates a permission or existence of an option.

Minor: someone under the age of 18 years.

Must/must not: indicates that a statement is mandatory or a requirement. Additional information provided might indicate that the section or statement is mandatory by law.

Non-participating contact: a suitable person not involved in and not located with those conducting the *activity*, who is the nominated person to act on behalf of those undertaking the *activity* in accordance with the emergency management plan. This may include but is not limited to responsibility for alerting authorities on the failure of those undertaking the *activity* to report in as being safe or return on time.

Non-remote: generally a location that is 30 minutes or less from reliable telephone access, 20 minutes or less from vehicle access, and one hour or less from access to professional medical assistance (also see *remote*).

Organisation: a person, group of persons or legal entity organised for a particular purpose that provides an *activity* for either commercial (for profit) or non-commercial (not-for-profit or community group) purposes (also see *provider*).

Other Indigenous people with interests: those people who through their personal or family history of involvement with a particular place have an interest in its heritage values. These people may sometimes be described as *custodians*.

Participant: a person who undertakes an *activity* and is not a *leader* or *assistant leader* for the *activity*.

Peer: a person who has equal standing with another or others in skills, knowledge and experience.

Pit toilet: a temporary toilet constructed by digging a pit in the earth and which is then filled in and covered over after use.

Personal Locator Beacon (PLB): a transmitter that aids in the detection and location of boats, aircraft and people in distress.

Pre-activity briefing: informing someone thoroughly, especially in preparation for a task, sometime prior to actually undertaking the *activity* or task (also see *activity briefing*).

Prescribed fire: is a planned burning operation of vegetation by *land owners* or managers to meet management objectives.

Principle: a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of beliefs or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning.

Procedure: an established or specified way to carry out an *activity* or a process.

Process: a systematic application of management policies, *procedures* and practices, in a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.

Provider: a generic term to indicate the party responsible for the delivery of the *activity*. This may include but is not limited to an entity, organisation, *leader*(s), assistant *leader*(s) or *guide*(s) and for either commercial (for profit) or non-commercial (not-for-profit or community group) purposes.

Support person: a *competent* person who is able to complete delegated elements or tasks during an *activity* that does not require the activity-specific *competence* of a *leader* or assistant *leader*.

Remote: a location that is more than 30 minutes from access to reliable telephone access or more than 20 minutes from vehicle access or greater than one hour from access to professional medical assistance in all foreseeable weather (also see *non-remote*). Note: access to professional medical assistance needs to account for the foreseeable possibility that professional medical assistance via helicopter may not be possible due to terrain and/or weather when determining access times.

Remote supervision: where a nominated person responsible for supervising others during all or part of the *activity* is not involved in *direct* or *indirect supervision* and is unlikely to be in the vicinity, and would therefore take time to respond (also see *direct supervision* and *indirect supervision*).

Risk: the effect of uncertainty on objectives. (AS ISO 31000:2018 *Risk management* — Guidelines)

Risk assessment: an overall *process* of *risk* identification, analysis and evaluation.

Risk factor: an element which can provide a source of *risk*.

Risk management: the coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to *risk*.

Risk management plan: scheme within the *risk management framework* specifying the approach, the management components and resources to be applied to the management of risk

Risk management framework: set of components that provide the foundations and organisational arrangements for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving *risk management* throughout the *organisation*

Risk treatment: a *process* to modify risk.

Severe weather: potentially hazardous or dangerous weather.

Should/should not: indicates a recommendation.

Traditional Owners: those people who, through membership in a descent group or clan, have responsibility for caring for particular country. *Traditional Owners* are authorised to speak for country and its heritage.

Trigger point: a particular circumstance or situation that causes an action to occur.

Vulnerable participant(s): (a) a *minor*; or (b) an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason. (Note: different *jurisdiction*s may have a legal definition for *vulnerable participants* relating to specific law(s) and/or regulation(s).)

Acronyms

The following acronyms are used across the Standard and Good Practice Guides.

AAAS: Australian Adventure Activity Standard

AED: Automated External Defibrillator

AFDRS: Australian Fire Danger Rating System

AMSA: Australian Maritime Safety Authority

AQF: Australian Qualifications Framework

BOM: Bureau of Meteorology

BRA: Benefit–Risk Assessment

CASA: Civil Aviation Safety Authority

EMP: Emergency Management Plan

EPIRB: Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon

GPG: Good Practice Guide

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

OAIC: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

OCA: Outdoor Council of Australia

PFD: Personal Floatation Device

PLB: Personal Locator Beacon

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

RTO: Registered Training Organisation

SWL: Safe Working Load

UV: Ultraviolet

WHS: Work Health and Safety

Appendices

Appendix A — Principal legal obligations

This appendix expands on Section 1.3. It sets out the principal legal obligations regarding delivering adventure activities under the AAAS, including those that apply to a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), grouped by the function each obligation performs. It is an orientation only. It is not exhaustive and does not constitute legal advice. The relevant law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the jurisdiction(s) of operation must in each case be determined and complied with.

A.1 **Work health and safety**

Work health and safety (WHS) law establishes the foundational legal duty for most providers delivering adventure activities. Every provider — regardless of size, structure or legal form — must inform itself of its WHS obligations and ensure those obligations are reflected in its risk management system, its leadership arrangements and its incident response procedures.

The 'work health and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with. In Victoria, the relevant instruments are the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic), the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017* (Vic) and the WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Codes. In all other Australian jurisdictions — the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia — the relevant instruments are the model Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations as adopted in that jurisdiction, supported by Safe Work Australia Codes of Practice.

Some small volunteer associations may be exempt from parts of the model WHS law. However, where a PCBU (person conducting a business or undertaking) relationship exists, the WHS duties apply. Providers should confirm their status with the WHS regulator (SafeWork or WorkSafe) in their jurisdiction.

The WHS obligations that providers must meet include, but are not limited to:

- the primary duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers, participants, volunteers and other persons affected by the activity;
- the personal due-diligence duty owed by officers of the organisation. Due diligence requires an officer to take reasonable steps to: acquire and keep current knowledge of WHS matters; understand the organisation's operations and their hazards; ensure appropriate resources and processes are available and used; ensure incident and hazard information is received, considered and responded to in a timely way; ensure legal compliance processes are in place; and verify that these resources and processes are actually being used;
- the duty to consult workers, contractors and other PCBUs who share the same duty;
- the duty to provide and maintain a safe work environment, safe systems of work, safe plant and structures, and adequate facilities;
- the obligation to provide information, instruction, training and supervision; and
- the obligation to report notifiable incidents to the regulator immediately, and to preserve the incident site until the regulator directs otherwise.

Workers — including volunteer leaders — have the right under the 'work health and safety' law(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) to cease unsafe work where they have a reasonable concern of exposure to a serious risk. A worker must not be subjected to adverse treatment for raising a safety concern, reporting an incident, or ceasing unsafe work.

Notifiable incidents include, but are not limited to, a fatality, a serious injury or illness, and a dangerous incident, as defined in the relevant jurisdiction. Definitions, notification forms and timeframes vary between regulators.

The WHS regulator is not the only authority that may require notification of an event. Depending on the circumstances, other regulators may also need to be notified — for example, the Environment Protection Authority in the case of a fuel or chemical spill, or the relevant health department in the case of a notifiable disease (such as measles or COVID-19). Providers should identify which regulators apply to their operations and incidents.

Refer also to 3.5.4 Reporting notifiable incidents and 3.5.5 Work health and safety.

A.2 **Duty of care, negligence and consumer protection**

A separate body of law(s) and/or regulation(s) establishes the private-law obligations that a provider owes directly to its participants. This framework operates alongside work health and safety duties and is not displaced by them.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- the Australian common law duty of care, which requires providers to take reasonable care to avoid reasonably foreseeable injury to dependent participants. The AAAS and GPGs are designed to assist providers in meeting this duty
- the Civil Liability Act (or equivalent) of each state and territory, which provides the principal statutory framework governing negligence claims by participants. These Acts contain provisions relating to dangerous recreational activities, obvious risks and recreational-services waivers. Compliance with the AAAS and the relevant GPGs is evidence of reasonable care. The relevant Acts are state and territory specific (for example, the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW) Pt 1A; the Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) Pt X; the Civil Liability Act 2003 (Qld) Pt 1 Div 4)
- the Australian Consumer Law (Schedule 2 to the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)), which imposes a non-excludable consumer guarantee that services be supplied with due care and skill, and which regulates misleading or deceptive conduct in marketing. Section 139A of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth), read with the relevant state legislation, governs the use of waivers of liability for personal injury arising out of recreational services.

A.3 **Protection of children and vulnerable persons**

Where activities involve minors or other vulnerable participants, additional legal obligations apply. These obligations operate independently of, and in addition to, the provider's general duty of care.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People schemes in each state and territory, which require workers and volunteers in child-related or vulnerable-person-related roles to hold the relevant clearance and the provider to verify and record it
- Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Schemes, which mandate organisational governance, codes of conduct, complaint handling and the reporting of allegations involving children. Reportable Conduct Schemes are currently legislated in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory; Child Safe Standards are being adopted progressively across the remaining jurisdictions.

The 'vulnerable person safety protection' law(s) and/or regulation(s) and the 'child safety protection' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

Refer also to 5.3 Vulnerable participants.

A.4 **Transport of participants — land, water and air**

The transport of participants by land vehicle, vessel or aircraft attracts a discrete set of legal obligations. These obligations apply in addition to general work health and safety and duty-of-care obligations.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- the Heavy Vehicle National Law (in force in all jurisdictions other than Western Australia and the Northern Territory) and the chain-of-responsibility duties owed by a provider as consignor, operator or employer where buses, mini-buses or trailers above the relevant mass threshold are used
- state and territory road transport and road rules law(s) and/or regulation(s), which apply to all guide and support vehicles and which are largely consistent with the model Australian Road Rules
- the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 (Cth) and Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Marine Orders 503, 504 and 505, which apply to any commercial paddling, snorkelling, angling or charter operating from a domestic commercial vessel and which require a Certificate of Operation, an approved safety management system and crew holding the appropriate Certificate of Competency
- state and territory marine safety law(s) and/or regulation(s), which govern recreational vessel safety, lifejacket carriage and wear, navigation rules, alcohol limits and harbour-master directions (for example, the Marine Safety Act 1998 (NSW); the Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic); the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 (Qld); the Western Australian Marine Act 1982)
- the Civil Aviation Act 1988 (Cth) and the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations Part 101, administered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), which govern any drone use over participants for filming, search or instruction.

The 'transport' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

Where heavy or passenger-carrying vehicles above the prescribed capacity are used, a national driver work diary or log book must be carried and completed accurately in accordance with the relevant heavy-vehicle and transport law(s) and/or regulation(s).

Refer also to 7.6 Transport.

A.5 Land access, environment and cultural heritage

Adventure activities generally take place on land or water managed by a land owner or land manager, and frequently involve sites with environmental, cultural or heritage value. A separate set of obligations governs access to those areas and conduct within them.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- national parks, Crown land and reserve management law(s) and/or regulation(s) in each state and territory, and the licences, leases and permits issued under that legislation. Most commercial adventure activities on Crown or reserved land require a commercial activity licence, tour operator permit or lease, and conditions on group size, route, code of conduct and reporting are typically attached
- the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth), which is triggered by activities affecting matters of national environmental significance, including listed species, Ramsar wetlands, World Heritage Areas and Commonwealth marine parks (including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park)
- Aboriginal cultural heritage law(s) and/or regulation(s) in each state and territory, which create strict-liability offences for harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage and which apply to many cave, climbing and waterway sites (for example, the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic); the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (Qld); the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW) Pt 6; the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)), with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Cth) operating as a Commonwealth backstop
- the Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth) and state and territory biosecurity and plant health law(s) and/or regulation(s), which impose a general biosecurity duty on any person who knows, or ought to know, that they are dealing with biosecurity matter — relevant to bait, mud, weed seeds, frog disease (chytrid) and equine biosecurity.

  the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth), which recognises and protects native title rights and interests independently of any permit or land-management approval, and compliance with any applicable Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

The 'land owner and/or land manager' law(s), regulation(s) and/or requirements must be determined and complied with.

Refer also to 3.3 Cultural, environmental and historical values and 6.7 Land owner and/or manager requirements.

A.6 **Information privacy, equity and employment**

A further set of obligations governs the provider's relationship with its participants as data subjects, as service users and (in the case of paid activity leaders) as employees.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles, which govern the collection, storage, use and disclosure of medical, emergency-contact, photo-consent and incident data on participants. Some small business operators and not-for-profits with annual turnover of less than $3 million may be exempt from the Privacy Act, but a duty of confidence may still apply
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), the Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth), and the equal opportunity and anti-discrimination Acts of each state and territory, which prohibit discrimination in the provision of services and in employment, and which require reasonable adjustments for participants with disability
- the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) and the Amusement, Events and Recreation Award 2020, which govern the engagement, payment and classification of guides, instructors and casual leaders.

  the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth), the NDIS Practice Standards and the NDIS Code of Conduct, which apply where a provider delivers supports or services to NDIS participants — the Code of Conduct applies to all workers delivering such supports whether or not the provider is registered. The ‘disability supports’ law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

The 'privacy' law(s) and/or regulation(s) and the 'sex discrimination' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

Refer also to 5.5 Privacy of information and 4.6 Gender considerations.

A.7 **Substances, food and licensed items**

Where a provider carries, stores, prepares, supplies or administers regulated substances or items as part of an activity, additional licensing and handling obligations apply.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 (Cth) and state and territory drugs and poisons law(s) and/or regulation(s), which regulate the carriage and administration of S2, S3 and S4 medicines, EpiPens, automated external defibrillators and analgesics by activity leaders
- the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (administered by Food Standards Australia New Zealand) and state and territory food law(s) and/or regulation(s), which apply whenever a provider prepares or serves food on multi-day expeditions, camps or hut-based trips
- liquor law(s) and/or regulation(s) and smoke-free environment and tobacco law(s) and/or regulation(s), which apply where alcohol is served or consumed, or where smoking is restricted, on tours and at camps
- firearms law(s) and/or regulation(s) of each state and territory, where guides carry firearms (for example, for crocodile or wildlife protection in northern Australia).

The 'food handling and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s) must be determined and complied with.

Refer also to 5.4.3 Alcohol, smoking and other drugs, 6.5 Food safety and 7.3 First aid equipment and medication.

A.8 **Activity-specific licensing**

Particular activities attract their own discrete licensing or animal-welfare obligations. The relevant activity GPG should be consulted alongside this Core GPG.

The principal instruments include but are not limited to:

- fisheries law(s) and/or regulation(s) and recreational fishing licence schemes in each state and territory, which apply to guided angling activities and which impose bag and size limits, closed seasons and gear restrictions
- prevention of cruelty to animals and animal welfare law(s) and/or regulation(s) in each state and territory, which impose a direct legal duty on horse trail-ride operators and on any provider using working animals.

Appendix B — Management of risk

B.1 Risk in an outdoors context

While “risk” often carries a negative connotation, well-managed risks are essential to many areas of human activity, from business to personal relationships to adventure activities. *Risk* itself – defined as the “effect of uncertainty on objectives” – can be both positive and negative.

Engaging in adventure *activities* that involve some form of managed *risk* provides *participants* with genuine opportunities for enjoyment, education, skill acquisition and/or self-development. Accordingly, risk management should be carefully tailored to the *context* – neither exposing *participants* to unjustified risks, nor taking an excessively risk-averse approach that can discourage *participants* and *providers* alike.

Effective, specific and well communicated *risk management* must support the planning, delivery and review of adventure *activities*.

B.2 A systems approach to risk and safety

The AAAS and GPGs takes a ‘systems approach’ to risk and safety. This means looking at all the factors that contribute to *risk*, instead of focussing only on what occurs during the *activity* itself.

Current research shows that incidents are often the result of a combination of decisions and actions by multiple actors, not just a single root cause. Decisions made long before an *activity* can affect safety outcomes, such as the type of equipment purchased, or the *process* for assessing and training leaders.

These documents offer *providers* a guide to developing systems that are adaptable, responsive and designed with the whole safety system in mind, not just the actions of the individual *activity leader*.

B.3 Risk management requirements

Risk management is a systematic method of identifying, assessing, treating, monitoring and reviewing *risks* that may cause harm. It needs to occur during the design, planning, preparation and conduct of adventure *activities*. The key components of risk management include:

- *Risk management framework.* This is a *provider’s* way of embedding risk management throughout its operations, including by specifying the *provider’s risk management process*.
- *Risk management process.* This is a *provider’s* way of developing risk management plans and managing risks during an activity.
- *Risk management plan. This identifies risks for an activity and how they will be managed. Risk management plans can cover one or more activities, provided each activity has all relevant risks addressed. Refer to* Appendix F – *Risk management plan template examples for examples.*

The international and Australian standard for risk management is AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management — Guidelines (ISO 31000:2018). It includes guidance on developing a *risk management framework* and *risk management process*. The AAAS and GPGs is consistent with ISO 31000:2018, a summary of which is provided below. A copy of ISO 31000:2018 is not required to use the AAAS or GPGs.

Appendix C — Summary of AS ISO 31000 – risk management

Risk management systems should be created, communicated and reviewed in a format consistent with ISO 31000:2018. This international standard outlines *principles*, requirements and recommendations for effective *risk management*. It is not specific to any industry or sector and is intended to be tailored for the needs and *context* of those using it.

ISO 31000:2018 provides a methodology for *providers* to structure their own *risk management* approach. This methodology is summarised in this section.

C.1 Risk management principles

The AS ISO 31000:2018 *principles* refers to the set of underpinning philosophies or values that help guide the design and communication of a *provider's risk management framework, process and plan*.

The risk management *principles* are:

- creates and protects value
- integral part of organisational processes
- part of decision-making
- explicitly addresses uncertainty
- systematic, structured and timely
- based on the best information
- tailored
- takes human and cultural factors into account
- transparent and inclusive
- dynamic, iterative and responsive to change
- facilitates continual improvement of the organisation.

C.2 Risk management principles example

The following is a case study of how an organisation which conducts adventure activities could demonstrate application of the AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management principles discussed in B.1 Risk management principles. The organisation White Cap Snorkelling Centre (White Cap) is fictitious and created solely for the purposes of this example.

Creates and protects value

White Cap Snorkelling Centre's core objective is to facilitate and deliver fun, educational and well-managed snorkelling experiences.

Integral part of organisational processes

White Cap integrates risk management with its other planning and management processes such as advertising, staff recruitment and logistics.

Part of decision-making

White Cap conducts a review of its risk management policies and procedures for snorkelling with school students as part of the annual business plan review. White Cap considers and identifies the multiple stakeholders involved (e.g. participants, parents, White Cap staff, school staff, school principal and insurers).

White Cap also identifies and understands the characteristics of the participant groups that it works with, their specific objectives (e.g. educational aims) and the likely characteristics of these groups (e.g. minors, inexperienced in activity, mix of swimming abilities).

Explicitly addresses uncertainty

White Cap recognises that the activities contain specific risks which need to be identified and managed. The risk assessment is developed with consideration to foreseeable hazards and risks across all the stages of activity design, planning and delivery (e.g. aims of activity, staff/volunteer recruitment and suitability, pre-existing medical conditions, participant prior experience, and potential weather conditions). White Cap's risk assessment is specific and tailored for the context.

Systematic, structured and timely

White Cap has policies and procedures to systematically and consistently apply safety systems. These are communicated to everyone involved in activity design and delivery. Sufficient time is allowed to ensure understanding of the systems before they are used.

Based on the best information

White Cap realises it needs to consider all available information relevant to the activities it conducts. White Cap consults and uses existing guidelines (e.g. Australian AAS) in order to create its own systems, policies and procedures designed for its particular context. White Cap also assess any incident and near miss statistics (e.g. internal reports, external reports such as the www.uploadsproject.org) and consults other practitioners and organisations where necessary.

Tailored

Even with the assistance of the external resources, each *risk management plan* for a specific activity must be designed and implemented within White Cap's own specific internal and external operating environment.

Takes human and cultural factors into account

White Cap understands that accidents (or the potential for accidents) can be the result of multiple interacting factors. Even normal and commonly accepted behaviours can play a role in accidents. These human and cultural factors are therefore specifically considered in White Cap's risk management.

Transparent and inclusive

White Cap's risk management processes are as robust and effective as possible. It achieves this by involving as many stakeholders as possible, both within and external to the organisation, in the risk management process. These stakeholders represent the multiple aspects of activity planning and delivery (e.g. parents, school, activity leaders, participants, office support staff and management).

White Cap communicates and consults often and highly values these steps, as they help to identify, assess and manage potential sources of risk.

Dynamic, iterative and responsive to change

Risk management processes and procedures need to be flexible due to the dynamic nature of the environment in which White Cap conducts activities. White Cap recognises, prepares and allows for the fact that each group is different, conditions are changeable and multiple factors can influence the planning and conduct of activities. White Cap is constantly monitoring for new or emergent risks and evaluating its current risk management strategies against these.

Facilitates continual improvement of the organisation

White Cap has a systematic and documented risk management system which includes mechanisms to monitor, review and improve management of risks. White Cap never considers the task of risk management to be 'completed', instead it views it as an ongoing process to be continually updated and improved.

C.3 Risk management framework — overview

A *risk management framework*:

- assists a *provider* to integrate *risk management* into their overall work
- specifies the *risk management* process
- reflects the *principles* listed in B.1 Risk management principles.

Figure B.1 illustrates how to design a risk management framework.

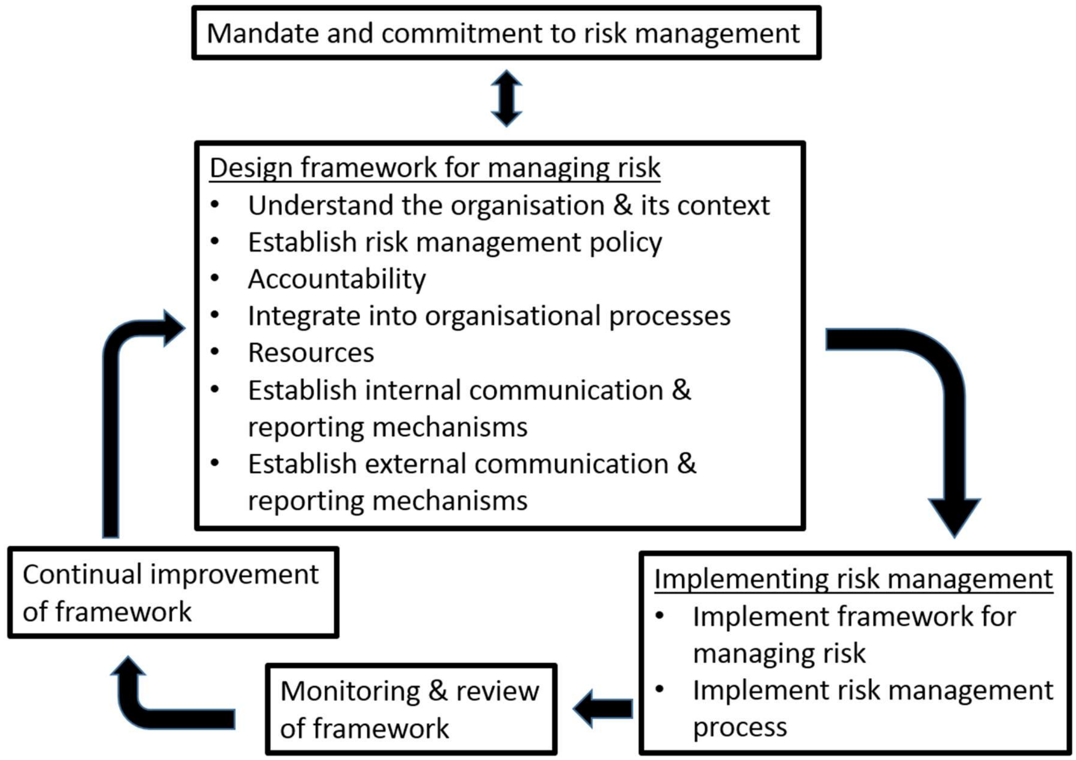


Figure C.3: Risk management framework design process

C.4 Risk management framework — design

The following seven steps are a useful approach for designing a *risk management framework* consistent with ISO 31000:

1. Understand the context

By evaluating and understanding the external and internal *context* in which an *organisation* exists, it is possible to design the *risk management framework* accordingly.

- *What are the specific external requirements (e.g. laws), influences and/or expectations for providing adventure activities?*
- What are the specific requirements, influences and/or expectations of internal stakeholders, governance systems and culture for providing adventure *activities*?

2. Establish a risk management policy

- Write a *risk management policy* for the organisation
- Make and communicate a clear commitment to *risk management* from the leadership of the organisation
- Define and explain the objectives of *risk management*
- Explain how the *risk management policy* will be implemented

3. Establish accountability for risk management

- Identify who has responsibility *risk management* in the *organisation*
- Make those responsible accountable and provide them with the authority to manage *risks*
- Develop *risk management* performance measurement methods and implement *risk management* reporting and review *processes*

4. Integrate risk management with management processes

- Make *risk management* an integral part of management practices, *processes* and decision-making

5. Resources to manage risk

- *Allocate appropriate resources (e.g. human, financial, time, etc.) to support the risk management processes*

6. Establish internal communication mechanisms

- *Establish processes for two-way communication about risk management (e.g. processes, procedures, reports, learnings, etc.) with all relevant people within the organisation.*

7. Establish external communication mechanisms

- Establish *processes* for two-way communication about *risk management* systems, plans and *processes* with external stakeholders. Be considerate by reaching the audience in a way that supports understanding and clarity.

C.5 Risk management framework — implementation

Once the *framework* is developed it needs to be implemented. This involves:

- a *process* to inform all stakeholders of the *framework* and how to use it;
- a *process* to consult with stakeholders on a regular basis; and
- implementation of the risk management process (i.e. the specific ways in which risk is identified and managed). See Appendix D Risk management process below for further details.

C.6 Risk management framework — continuous improvement

A process is required to evaluate the risk management framework and enable continuous improvement. For example, using reporting processes, self-reviews, external reviews/audits, communication, etc.

Appendix D — Risk management process

The risk management process is an outcome of the risk management framework discussed above. The risk management process is used to develop risk management plans (refer to Appendix F Risk management plan template examples for examples).

The *risk management* process involves the 'systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the activities of communicating, consulting, establishing *context*, and identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risk' (ISO 31000:2018, p.3). *Risk assessment* is a part of this process and involves the 'overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation' (ISO 31000:2018, p.4). Figure 2 provides an overview of the *risk management* process.

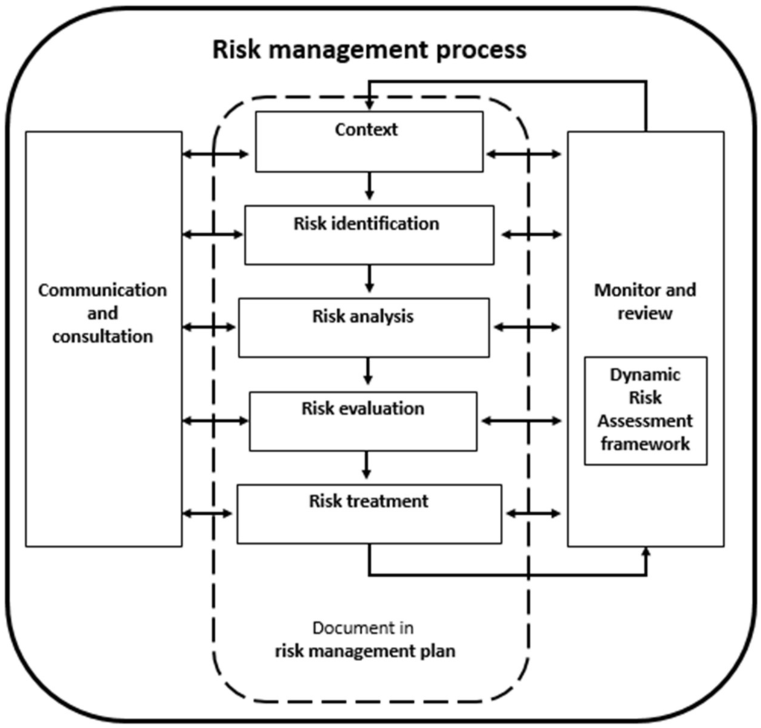


Figure D.4: Risk management process

(i) Communication and consultation

Communication and consultation are fundamental to understanding and seeking input into the risk management process. For example, consulting with land managers, client organisations and/or participants to understand their particular requirements and objectives.

(ii) Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review occurs throughout the risk management process to address new, changing or emerging risks. This is known as dynamic risk assessment (see Appendix G Dynamic risk assessment process for more detail). For example, new laws or regulations, changing environmental conditions or shortcomings with an existing procedure resulting in the identification of new risks previously considered to be appropriately managed.

(iii) Establish the context

In addition to the external and internal organisational context discussed in B.4 Risk management framework - design, the process articulates the specific context of the relevant adventure activities. For example, what are the goals, who are the participants, what is the location, etc.

(iv) Risk identification

- *Risk* identification is a systematic *process* to understand what, how, when and why *risks* could occur. The AAAS and GPGs are designed to assist in identifying factors that affect risks in addition to provider's independent research and professional/legal advice. The framework for risk identification recommended in the AAAS and GPGs covers planning, participants, environment, leadership and logistics and equipment.
- *It is important to identify factors beyond the immediate activity delivery. Systems-related decisions made days, months or years earlier can have an impact on activity delivery risks. For example, what competencies are required for leaders, how are leader shortages or illnesses managed, how does the organisation ensure the purchase of appropriate equipment and what processes are in place to monitor environment changes?*

(v) Risk analysis

- *Risk* analysis is the assessment of the nature and level of *risk* for each identified *risk*. It involves an examination of the likelihood and severity of possible consequences of each *risk*.
- There are multiple options for expressing the consequences, likelihood and findings of a risk analysis. An example of an approach to risk analysis is provided in Appendix E Risk analysis information.

(vi) Risk evaluation

- *Risk* evaluation involves determining what *risks* require treatment (see below) and prioritising the implementation of the treatment. These decisions are based on the level of the *risk* and whether this level is acceptable.

(vii) Risk treatment

- *Risk treatment* involves adopting specific measures to mitigate **risks** that are not acceptable. *Risk treatments* may include but are not limited to:
    - *avoiding or removing the source of risk (e.g. changing venue due to bushfire)*
    - *changing the likelihood of occurrence (e.g. adding additional supervision)*
    - *changing the potential consequences (e.g. providing protective equipment like a helmet)*
- Where a new or changed *risk treatment* is adopted, the analysis and evaluation phases (see above) should be completed again. This is done to determine whether the *risk treatment* addresses the *risk* in a way that leads to an acceptable outcome.
- New or changed *risk treatments* also require an evaluation of costs and benefits, and of new and emerging *risks* that may result.

The AAAS and GPGs provides guidance on possible *risk treatments* for many common *risks*.

Appendix E — Risk analysis information

This appendix provides more detail about risk analysis discussed in Appendix D Risk management process.

E.1 What is risk analysis?

Risk analysis is about understanding *risk*. What is the likelihood of the *risk* occurring and the expected consequences if it does occur? What are the existing risk treatments or controls to minimise either the likelihood or consequences?

Estimating the likelihood and the expected consequence allows the level of *risk* to be determined and then evaluated.

E.2 Likelihood

The likelihood of occurrence is determined using a scale that reflects aspects of the *risks* being managed.

An example of a likelihood scale is:

- Rare: may only occur in exceptional circumstances
- Unlikely: not expected to occur; and/or no recorded incidents
- Possible: might occur at some time; and/or few, infrequent, random recorded incidents
- Likely: will probably occur in most circumstances; and/or regular recorded incidents
- Almost certain: expected to occur in most circumstances; and/or high level of recorded incidents.

The descriptors and their definition used for the likelihood scale should be defined and can be customised to suit the *context*.

E.3 Consequences

The consequences of an occurrence are determined using a scale that reflects aspects of the *risks* being managed.

An example of a consequences scale based on injury to people is:

- Insignificant: no injury or fatality; first aid not required
- Minor: injury requiring first aid and able to continue
- Moderate: injury requiring medical treatment, possibly some hospitalisation and/or unable to continue
- Major: extensive injuries requiring significant hospitalisation
- Catastrophic: fatality, possible threat to life or severe injuries causing permanent disablement.

The descriptors and their definition used for the consequences scale should be defined and can be customised to suit the *context*.

E.4 Level of risk matrix

The level of risk matrix combines the scales for likelihood and consequence to produce a qualitative description of the level of *risk*. An example of the level of risk descriptors are low, moderate, high and extreme.

There is a direct relationship between the increased likelihood of something occurring, the worse the consequences are and the higher the level of *risk*.

Table D.1 provides an example risk level matrix.

Table E.5: Level of risk matrix

Likelihood	Consequences				
	Insignificant	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Catastrophic**
Almost certain	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Rare	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High

The level of risk descriptors and the position they occur within the matrix can be customised to suit the *context*.

The level of risk descriptor can assist in determining the priority by which risks are managed (e.g. risk levels of high or extreme would be of a higher priority to control or treat than those classified as low or moderate).

Appendix F — Risk management plan template examples

This appendix provides example risk management templates discussed in 2.3 Risk management plan and Appendix D Risk management process

F.1 Template A – Establish the context

Table F.6: Template A — Establish the context

Establish the Context	**Activity**	
	Type	
	Purpose of activity	
	Date & time	
	Participants	
	Participants	
	Experience	
	Restrictions	
	Health & wellbeing	
	Gender considerations	
	Cultural considerations	
	Environment	
	Location	
	Climate & weather	
	Sustainability	
	Land owner/manager requirements	
	Leadership	
	Roles & responsibilities	
	Leadership competencies required	
	Supervision	
	Logistics & equipment	
	Equipment	
	Logistics	
	Communications	

F.2 Template B – Risk identification and management strategy summary

Table F.7: Template B — Risk identification and management strategy summary

Risks **(List possible events where an accident, injury or loss could occur)**	***1 – e.g. falling off ledge***	**7 -**
	2 -	8 -
	3 -	9 -
	4 -	10 -
	5-	11 -
	6 -	12 -
	Risk Factors (What could lead to risks listed above?) **Transfer to template C for analysis**	**Risk Management Strategies** (What will reduce the level of risk?) **Obtain from Template C.**
People (Leaders & participants)	*e.g. 1 –new leaders unaware of ledge*	*e.g. 1 - Inform leaders to directly supervise while negotiating ledge*
	e.g. 1 – participants not warned of ledge	*e.g. 1 - Leaders to directly supervise negotiating ledge*
Environment	*e.g. 1 – only pathway is via ledge*	*e.g. 1 - Inform leaders to directly supervise while negotiating ledge*
Logistics & equipment		

F.3 Template C – Risk analysis and management strategy detail

Table F.8: Template C — Risk analysis and management strategy detail

Obtain from Template B		**Risk analysis**										
Risk	**Risk factor**	**Likelihood**	**Consequences**	**Level of risk**	**Comments on risk**	**Risk management strategy**	**Resources required**	**Responsibility (owner of risk)**	**Completion Due date**	**Communication required**	**Confirmed risk treated**	**Review date**
		e.g. almost certain, likely, possible, unlikely or rare	**e.g. insignificant, minor, moderate, major or catastrophic**	**e.g. low, moderate, high or extreme**		**Transfer the risk management strategies back to template B to summarise them**						
e.g. 1 falling of ledge	*New leaders unaware of ledge*	*likely*	*catastrophic*	*extreme*	*Possible fall if group not appropriately managed*	*Inform leaders to directly supervise while negotiating ledge*	*Note in activity briefing to leaders*	*Program Manager*		*All new leaders*	*Yes, todays date*	*Date - before start of walking season*
e.g. 1 falling of ledge	*participants not warned of ledge*	*possible*	*catastrophic*	*extreme*	*Possible fall if group not appropriately managed*	*Leaders to directly supervise negotiating ledge*	*Note in activity briefing to leaders*	*Leader*		*All participants*	*Yes, todays date*	*Date - before start of walking season*

Obtain from Template B		**Risk analysis**										
e.g. 1 falling of ledge	*only pathway is via ledge*	*possible*	*catastrophic*	*extreme*	*Possible fall if group not appropriately managed*	*Inform leaders to directly supervise while negotiating ledge*	*Standard operating procedures, pre-activity briefing material*	*Program designer*		*Client organisation, Program manager, leaders*	*Yes, todays date*	*Date - before start of walking season*

Appendix G — Dynamic risk assessment process

This appendix provides more detail about dynamic risk assessment discussed in 2.4 Dynamic risk assessment.

Hazards and risks *can* change over time, requiring dynamic management if or when they occur. It is therefore necessary to maintain situational awareness to identify and address hazards and risks using dynamic risk assessment.

Figure F.1 outlines a process of dynamic risk assessment.

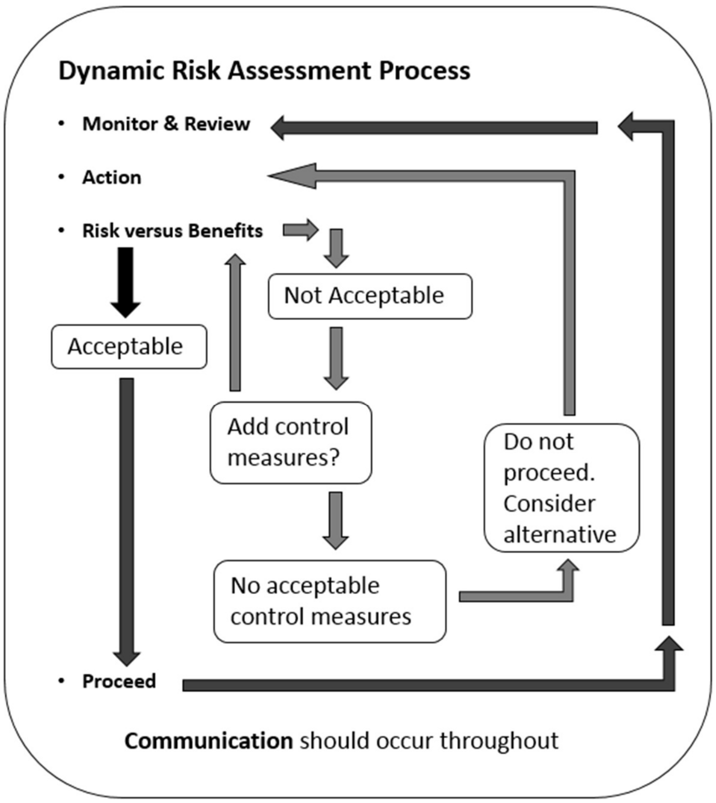


Figure G.5: Dynamic risk assessment process

The steps in the *dynamic risk assessment* process are:

- **Monitor and review**: the activity and all *hazards* and *risks* are dynamically monitored in a continuation of the risk management process
- **Action**: the types of actions necessary for the activity are accessed for *hazards* and *risks*
- **Risk versus benefits assessment**: the assessment considers the benefits and goals of the *activity* against the *risks*
- **Acceptable risk**: the *activity* continues to proceed unchanged or with new control measures if the risk versus benefits assessment indicates it is an acceptable *risk*
- **Not acceptable risk**: where the risk versus benefits assessment indicates the *risk* is unacceptable, additional control measures are considered:
- if the risk versus benefits assessment indicates that additional control measure(s) lead to an acceptable *risk*, then the *activity* proceeds with these additional control measure(s)
- if the risk versus benefits assessment indicates that there are no additional control measure(s) that lead to an acceptable *risk*, then stop the *activity* and consider what new action is required
- any new action is then assessed for risk versus benefits.

The use of *dynamic risk assessment* should not undermine *risk management plans*. This can occur when *dynamic risk assessment* is used:

- as a reason to accept a higher level of *risk* than what was originally intended and outlined in the *risk management plan*
- to eliminate or reduce the effectiveness of risk treatment or control measures that were in the *risk management plan*.

Examples of dynamic risk assessment are:

- *A large tree blocks the track with the easiest route around the obstacle takes participants close to a cliff edge. The dynamic risk assessment indicates that by adding the additional control measures of warning the participants and directly supervising the section, it is acceptable to proceed.*
- *A tree has fallen into the river very close to the path boats paddle to avoid other obstacles. The risk vs benefits assessment is not acceptable and no control measures can be used to mitigate the risks. The alternative to portage around the tree and other obstacles is considered and found to be acceptable. The group carry the boats around the obstacles and then continue paddling the river.*

Appendix H — Benefit–Risk Assessment

This appendix is a reference resource. It sets out the recognised risk management standards that underpin Benefit–Risk Assessment (BRA) and explains how a provider may align a BRA with those standards. It is intended to complement, not repeat, the risk management material elsewhere in this document suite — in particular Appendix D*(Summary of ISO 31000:2018),*Appendix D*(Risk management process) and* Appendix E*(Risk analysis information). Where those appendices already cover a topic, this appendix cross-references rather than restates it.*

H.1 Benefit–Risk Assessment

Benefit–Risk Assessment (BRA) may best understood an integrated way of thinking about risk rather than a single prescriptive method. Conventional risk management, as reflected in workplace health and safety practice, tends to treat risk as a purely negative phenomenon to be eliminated or minimised. BRA broadens that view. It holds that, in many sport, recreation and outdoor settings, exposure to a degree of risk is itself a source of benefit — to the participant, and often to the wider community — and that the assessment should therefore weigh the expected benefits of an activity against its risks, rather than considering risk in isolation (Ball-King, 2022; Eager, 2024).

Understood this way, BRA is not a new or separate discipline that providers must adopt wholesale. Many providers already apply BRA-style thinking, formally or informally, whenever they decide that the developmental, health, educational or social value of an activity justifies retaining a managed hazard rather than removing the challenge altogether. The approach is already embedded in provider-facing tools used internationally — for example the *Risk-Benefit Assessment for Outdoor Play: A Canadian Toolkit* (Gill, Power & Brussoni, 2019) and the risk–benefit assessment templates derived from *Managing Risk in Play Provision* (Ball, Gill & Spiegal) — which guide a provider to document the benefits of an activity alongside its hazards as evidence of due diligence.

Providers may apply BRA at different levels depending on their role. The published review of the Australian Standard distinguishes three broad approaches (Eager, 2024):

- **Generic BRA** — used by product and facility designers to assess a product, surface or item of equipment in general terms;
- **Site-specific BRA** — used by site operators to assess a particular facility or location in its actual context; and
- **Dynamic BRA** — used by activity leaders to make real-time benefit–risk judgements during an activity. This aligns with the dynamic risk assessment process described in Appendix G.

This momentum is continuing in Australia. Eager, Gray, Little, Robbé and Sharwood (2025) have begun to operationalise AS ISO 4980:2023 into a practical, semi-quantitative benefit–risk tool that allows educators, planners, designers, certifiers, manufacturers and inspectors to estimate both the benefit and the risk of outdoor play and learning settings. The tool scores the two dimensions separately — ranking benefit against the five benefit descriptors in AS ISO 4980:2023 and assessing risk with the likelihood/consequence matrix from IEC 31010:2019, *Risk management — Risk assessment techniques* — and then weighs them together, giving providers a repeatable, defensible way to apply BRA-style thinking in practice (Eager et al., 2025).

Whether a provider already works this way or chooses to adopt it, grounding BRA in recognised risk management standards matters for three reasons. First, **consistency** — a common framework lets different providers, reviewers and auditors interpret a BRA in the same way. Second, **defensibility** — a documented, standards-aligned assessment provides evidence of a considered, reasonable process if a decision is later scrutinised, including in the context of duty of care and the relevant work health and safety law(s) and/or regulation(s). Third, **alignment with best practice** — anchoring BRA to current standards keeps a provider's approach consistent with the wider risk management discipline rather than developing in isolation. The remainder of this appendix sets out the two standards that provide that anchor.

H.2 Summary of AS ISO 4980:2023 – benefit risk assessment

The Australian Standard for benefit–risk assessment is:

AS ISO 4980:2023, *Benefit-risk assessment for sports and recreational facilities, activities and equipment***, Standards Australia, Sydney.**

AS ISO 4980:2023 is the Australian adoption of the international standard ISO 4980:2023, published by Standards Australia in 2023. It is the first standard to deal specifically with benefit–risk assessment in the sport and recreation context (Eager, 2024).

Purpose and scope. The standard specifies methods for, and provides guidance and requirements on, the assessment of both the benefits and the risks of sports and recreational facilities, activities and equipment. Its defining feature is that it does not treat risk only as a negative to be removed; it requires the positive benefits of an activity to be identified and weighed against its risks. It is framed around risk to the *users* of sport and recreational facilities, activities and equipment, rather than to employees and employers — which is the focus of traditional workplace risk management.

Relevance to BRA practice. AS ISO 4980:2023 gives a provider a recognised, purpose-built reference for conducting a BRA in an outdoor, sport or recreation setting. It supplies the vocabulary (benefit, hazard, severity, risk estimation and evaluation, monitoring) and the assessment sequence that a provider can apply or adapt to its own operational context. Importantly, the standard does not displace a provider's workplace health and safety obligations: operators and staff remain subject to the applicable work health and safety law(s) and/or regulation(s), and the BRA sits alongside — not instead of — those obligations.

Note: This appendix summarises the purpose and structure of AS ISO 4980:2023 for orientation only. It is not a substitute for the standard, which should be obtained and read in full before being relied upon (see G.6).

H.3 How AS ISO 4980:2023 works in conjunction with AS ISO 31000:2018

The companion general standard for risk management is:

AS ISO 31000:2018, *Risk management — Guidelines***, Standards Australia, Sydney.**

AS ISO 31000:2018 sets out the high-level **principles**, the **framework** and the **process** for managing risk of any kind, in any organisation. Its principles and framework are summarised in Appendix D, and the generic risk management process — establishing the context, risk identification, risk analysis, risk evaluation and risk treatment, supported by communication, consultation, monitoring and review — is set out in Appendix D, with the analysis of likelihood and consequence covered in Appendix E. That material is not repeated here.

The two standards are complementary and do not conflict (Eager, 2024). The relationship can be summarised as follows:

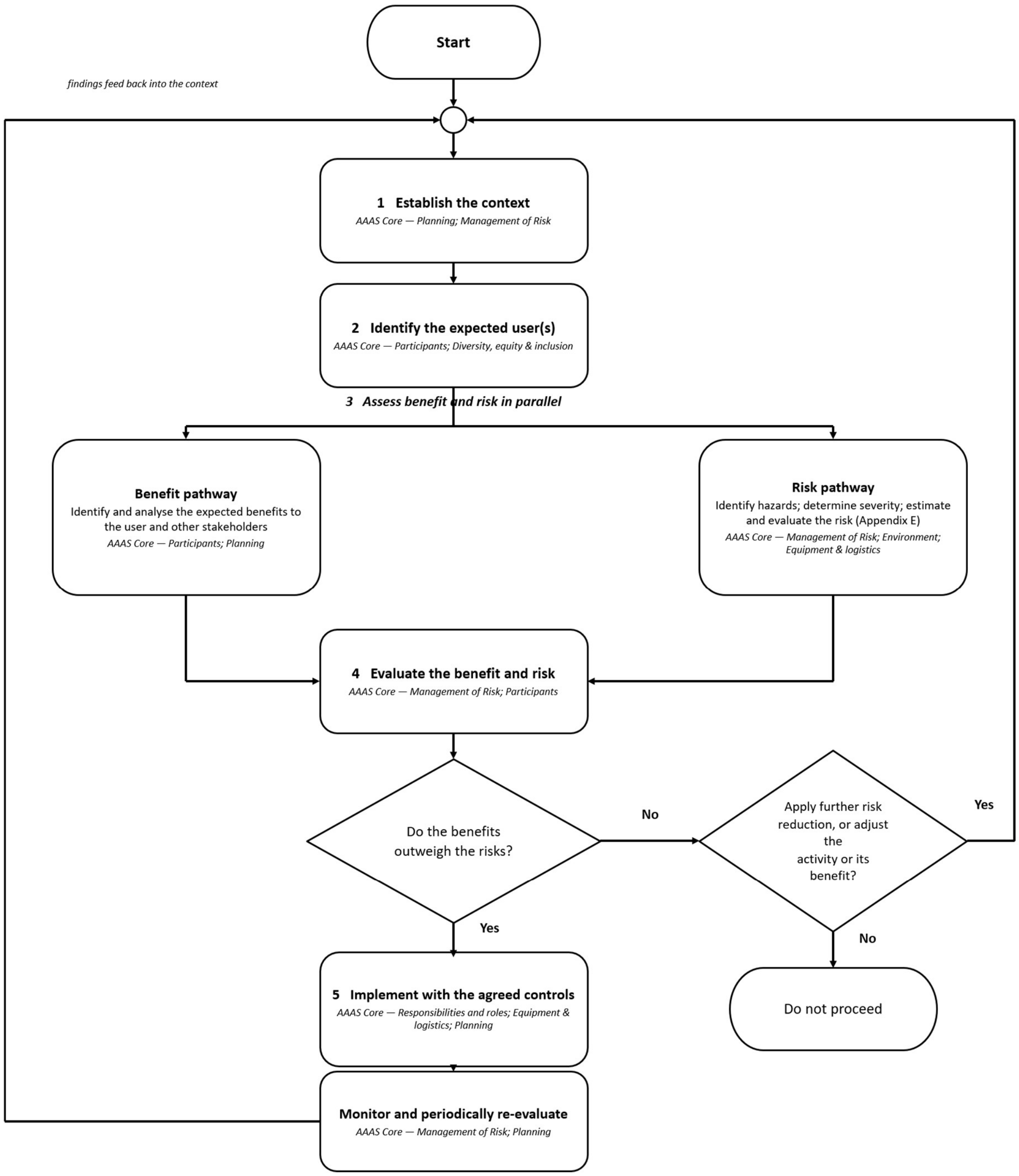
- **AS ISO 31000:2018 is the generic standard** — it provides the overarching principles, framework and process that apply to all risk management.
- **AS ISO 4980:2023 is the context-specific standard** — it operationalises those principles for sport and recreation by adding the benefit dimension. It keeps the familiar 31000 sequence (the assessment still begins by establishing the context and proceeds through identification, analysis and evaluation) but runs a parallel benefit assessment alongside the risk assessment and brings the two together in a single benefit–risk decision.

In practical terms, a provider conducting a BRA can treat AS ISO 31000:2018 as the foundation and AS ISO 4980:2023 as the specialised overlay. The provider designs and governs its risk management system using the 31000 framework (as in Appendix C), applies the 31000 process to identify, analyse and evaluate risk (as in *Appendices C and D*), and uses AS ISO 4980:2023 to add the structured assessment of benefit and the explicit benefit-versus-risk judgement that distinguishes a BRA from a conventional risk assessment. The concept of reducing risk to a level that is *as low as reasonably practicable* (ALARP) — long recognised in Australian risk management guidance — continues to apply, but is balanced against the benefit the activity is intended to deliver (Eager, 2024).

H.4 The benefit–risk assessment planning process

AS ISO 4980:2023 presents the benefit–risk assessment as a staged process. The diagram below represents that process: establishing the context, identifying the expected user, assessing benefit and risk in parallel, weighing the two, implementing, and monitoring with periodic re-evaluation. It is provided as a textual flow representation suitable for insertion in this document.

Figure 6 Benefit Risk Assessment Aligned with Australian Adventure Activity Framework



Note. Eager, D. (2024). Benefit–risk assessment in sport and recreation: Historical development and review of AS ISO 4980:2023. *Standards, 4*(2), 5.

H.5 Notes on the BRA planning process

The following notes orient a reader to each stage. They are deliberately brief and are not a substitute for the requirements and guidance in the standard itself.

1 Establish the context

As in any risk assessment, the first step is to establish the context. This involves communication between the relevant stakeholders and defining precisely what is being assessed — a product, a facility or location, or an activity — and whether it is being assessed before opening or while already operating. The context sets any limits on acceptable risk and should record whether participation is voluntary or mandatory, as this affects how benefit and risk are weighed.

2 Identify the expected user(s)

Determine who is expected to use the activity, product, service or facility, and consider any reasonably foreseeable misuse. Identifying the user is the point at which the benefit assessment begins, because benefits are assessed in relation to the expected user (for example children, novices or experienced participants).

3 Assess benefit and risk in parallel

Benefit pathway — identify the expected benefits to the user and to other stakeholders, then analyse them, drawing on precedents and comparisons. The context can increase or decrease the benefit; the same activity in a different location or for a different group may carry a different benefit.

Risk pathway — identify the hazards, determine the potential severity of injury or specified harm, then estimate and evaluate the risk. Any risk limitations set by the context must be taken into account. The detailed treatment of likelihood, consequence and the level-of-risk matrix is in Appendix E.

4 Evaluate the benefit and risk

Bring the two pathways together and decide whether, on balance, the benefits outweigh the risks. If they do, the activity proceeds to implementation. If they do not, the assessment is re-evaluated — applying further risk reduction (or adjusting the activity or its benefit) — and then reassessed. This is the decision point that distinguishes a BRA from a conventional risk assessment.

5 Implement and monitor

Where the decision is to proceed, implement the activity with the agreed controls in place. Benefit–risk assessment is an ongoing process: monitor and re-evaluate the benefits and risks at appropriate intervals, and feed the findings back into the context and the assessment. This mirrors the monitoring and review element of the AS ISO 31000:2018 process described in Appendix D.

H.6 Further information

The summaries in this appendix are provided for orientation only. Providers intending to rely on these standards should obtain and read them in full.

H.6.1 Primary standard

- **AS ISO 4980:2023,** *Benefit-risk assessment for sports and recreational facilities, activities and equipment*. Available for purchase from Standards Australia (via the official distributor, the Standards Store / Intertek Inform) and from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as ISO 4980:2023 at iso.org.

H.6.2 Companion standard

- **AS ISO 31000:2018,** *Risk management — Guidelines*. Available from Standards Australia / the Standards Store, and from ISO as ISO 31000:2018. Summarised in Appendix C of this document.

Ball, D., Gill, T., & Spiegal, B. (2012). Managing risk in play provision: Implementation guide (2nd ed.). London: National Children's Bureau for Play England (on behalf of the Play Safety Forum). (1st ed. 2008, DCSF/DCMS.)

Ball-King, L. (2022). Benefit-risk assessment: Balancing the benefits and risks of leisure. *World Leisure Journal, 64*(4), 383–398.

Eager, D. (2024). Benefit–risk assessment in sport and recreation: Historical development and review of AS ISO 4980:2023. *Standards, 4*(2), 5.

Eager, D., Gray, T., Little, H., Robbé, F., & Sharwood, L. N. (2025). Risky play is not a dirty word: A tool to measure benefit–risk in outdoor playgrounds and educational settings. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 22(6), 940. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph22060940

Gill, T., Power, M., & Brussoni, M. (2019). *Risk-benefit assessment for outdoor play: A Canadian toolkit.* Child & Nature Alliance of Canada.

Standards Australia. (2018). *AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management — Guidelines.* Sydney: Standards Australia.

Standards Australia. (2023). *AS ISO 4980:2023 Benefit-risk assessment for sports and recreational facilities, activities and equipment.* Sydney: Standards Australia.

Appendix I — Emergency management planning framework

An emergency management plan for an *activity* will vary according to the *context*, however the issues it covers should include but is not limited to:

1. Planning

- emergency response actions, allocated roles and responsibilities
- *closest available professional medical care (e.g. hospital, clinic, doctor)*
- *contingency plans for foreseeable emergencies (e.g. injuries, fire, flood)*
- strategies relevant to the features of the area being visited

2. Preparation

- emergency access and escape routes (where possible)
- assembly points where appropriate
- *details of key organisations (e.g. ambulance, land manager, local police) and how to best contact them in an emergency*
- *communication equipment that will be used, including coverage notes and/or limitations (e.g. mobile phone, satellite phone, radio)*
- *relevant aspects of the land manager's emergency strategy (e.g. gaining assess past locked gates)*

3. Response

- the process or procedures for responding to an emergency
- the *process* or *procedures* to confirm or ensure the safety of a group that fails to return or check-in as planned
- the emergency *trigger* for a *non-participating contact*, to commence the planned process or procedures to confirm the safety of the *group* and/or inform emergency services if the *group* fails to return or check-in
- *a strategy for maintaining appropriate participant supervision if the planned activity changes (e.g. an injured leader is evacuated or escorting participants who are withdrawing from the activity)*
- access to personal contact and medical information

4. Recovery

- reporting requirements for fatalities, serious injuries or illness and dangerous incidents (refer to 3.5.4 Reporting notifiable incidents and 2.5 Incident reporting).

Appendix J — Health & wellbeing considerations for risk management

This appendix provides additional information referred to in 5.4 Health and wellbeing.

J.1 Risk Management Plans

Conditions that should be considered in risk management plans and may affect participation include but are not limited to:

- affected balance
- allergies and/or anaphylaxis
- asthma
- behavioural issues
- blood conditions that may affect bleeding or clotting
- blood pressure
- diabetes
- dietary requirements
- epilepsy
- fainting and dizziness
- fatigue
- heart conditions
- infectious diseases (e.g. Gastroenteritis)
- impaired sight
- impaired hearing
- mental health issues
- migraines
- mood disorders
- muscular/skeletal complaints
- physical disability
- pregnancy
- reactions or side effects to medications
- recent or longstanding injuries
- repetitive strain injuries (RSI).

J.2 Impacts on performance

Some conditions and medications may affect performance during an **activity**, including but not limited to:

- drowsiness
- dizziness
- difficulty concentrating
- loss of balance
- impaired or altered memory
- reduced reaction times
- decreased dexterity
- mood changes
- altered behaviour.

J.3 Allergy and anaphylaxis safety for minors law(s) and/or regulation(s) considerations

Considerations relating to 'allergy and anaphylaxis safety for minors' law(s) and/or regulation(s) may include but is not limited to:

- *exclusion of certain foods that have a high prevalence of allergies in the community (e.g. peanuts)*
- having allergy management plans in place
- having appropriate training to manage allergies and anaphylaxis and provide first aid treatment
- having appropriate medication available to treat allergies and anaphylaxis

J.4 Thinking about reviewing health and wellbeing requirements

The following questions may help when considering developing risk management plans and procedures to address issues relating to participant's health and wellbeing:

- Have you written essential eligibility criteria for your activity/programs?
- Do your participants know what is expected of them physically and mentally? Are participants informed of this, is this in your pre-activity information and how is it portrayed in your marketing?
- Do you have a medical advisor or access to one?

- If a doctor is required to complete a participant health form, do they understand the extent and rigour of the activity/program? Do you provide them with information to improve this understanding?
- If you receive health information, who reviews the information? How do they decide what to do with the information?
- Who makes the ultimate decision about participants – provider, activity leaders, participant's doctor or your medical advisor?
- What tools does the person have, to make these decisions?
- Would a decision-making document that indicates the type of considerations and what level of participation is appropriate be useful? (For example, see table below)
- How and when do you share health information with the activity leaders?
- Is there a mechanism for participants to update you on new or changed medical conditions? Does this ensure that the people that need to know about the change do?

Decision-making document example:

Table J.9: Diabetes decision making matrix

Diabetes decision making matrix	Can do in base activities	Can do easy access locations	Can do remote/backcountry locations
recently diagnosed	Yes if … No if…	Yes if… No if…	No unless…
level interferes with physical activity	Yes if … No if…	Yes if… No if…	Yes if… No if…
recent hospitalisations	Yes if… No if…	Yes if… No if…	No unless…
Continued etc.	Continued etc.	Continued etc.	Continued etc.

Appendix K — Privacy of information

This appendix provides more detail referred to in 5.5 Privacy of information.

The collection, storing and distribution of confidential information in Australia is regulated by the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act).

Personal information collected about *participants* and *activity leader*s may include but is not limited to:

- names
- addresses
- phone numbers
- email address
- medical details that might be relevant to the *activity*.

Some *providers* may not be required to comply with the Privacy Act. This may include small business operators or not-for-profits with annual turnover of less than $3 million.

There may be a 'duty of confidence' regardless of whether the Privacy Act applies.

This duty makes it unlawful to use certain confidential information for unauthorised purposes. This could include providing a *participant*'s personal details to third parties for purposes unrelated to their participation in the relevant *activity*. For instance, selling personal details to a mail-order company or providing personal details to a related organisation that offers *activities* that the *participant* might be interested in, even if this is done in good faith and not for financial gain.

The 'duty of confidence' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant *jurisdiction*(s) must be complied with.

Information about privacy is available from The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).

Work health and safety laws may require *providers* to ensure appropriate assistance is provided in an emergency for all involved in the *activity*, not just the *participants.* This may require *activity leaders* to have access to each other's medical information.

Providers should consider means by which to protect the confidentially of an *activity leader*'s medical records, while still ensuring other *activity leaders* have appropriate access in the event this information is required in an emergency.

Possible ways confidentiality may be addressed include but are not limited to:

- holding the records centrally when they can be accessed immediately in an emergency
- requiring *activity leaders* to carry a copy of their own personal medical form with them in an assessable location
- holding sealed copies to be opened only if required.

Appendix L — Environmental sustainability procedures

The *procedures* may include but are not limited to the following:

L.1 Plan ahead and prepare

- Develop a plan to leave no trace.

L.2 Travel and camp on durable surfaces

Durable surfaces include established tracks and campsites, gravel, rock and dry grass.

Travelling in an area on durable services may include but is not limited to:

- using existing tracks, pathways or roads
- not establishing new tracks
- walking in small parties to minimise the damage
- walking in single file when on narrow paths to avoid widening the track.

Camping on durable surfaces may include but is not limited to:

- using existing campsites when possible
- keeping campsites small
- focussing activity where there is minimal vegetation
- dispersing campsite activity in natural areas to avoid creating focussed areas of impact
- locating campsites so as to avoid negatively impacting any water sources
- avoiding disturbing or modifying vegetation and natural features around campsites
- using floored tents with poles
- not digging trenches around tents
- attempting to leave the campsite in a better condition than which it was found.

L.3 Dispose of waste properly

Rubbish disposal may include but is not limited to:

- carrying out and disposing of all food, organic and general waste appropriately
- separating recyclable waste where possible, and carrying out and disposing of appropriately
- burying or burning food waste only where permitted by the *land owner* or *land manager*
- disposing of waste water (from food preparation or personal hygiene) by scattering a suitable distance from any water source after straining out any food and solid matter (strained food waste is disposed of as described above)
- checking tracks, activity sites and campsites are free of spilled food waste prior to departure
- using only biodegradable detergents and hygiene products, and using only sparingly
- carrying out cigarette waste in a suitable container and disposing of appropriately
- removing any rubbish left by previous users where practicable.

Human waste and hygiene disposal may include but is not limited to:

- using existing established toilets for human waste where possible
- where no toilets are available, either carrying human waste out in a suitable container to be disposed of later or, if allowed in the area, disposing of human waste in a temporary '*pit toilet*'
- *constructing a pit toilet (when appropriate) at a suitable distance from watercourses to avoid contaminating the water and campsites (e.g. dig the pit or hole, 8–15cm deep in the biologically active layer in the soil and refill the hole after toileting)*
- carrying out personal hygiene waste in a suitable container to be disposed of later
- burial or burning of personal hygiene waste only conducted where permitted by the *land owner* or *land manager*.

L.4 Leave what you find

Leaving what you find may include but is not limited to:

- ensuring vegetation, rock formations and natural features are not disturbed, modified or removed
- *ensuring culturally significant sites are afforded appropriate respect (e.g. rock art is not touched, artefacts are not disturbed, sacred sites are visited only with appropriate permission)*
- *avoiding introducing or transporting non-native species of flora and fauna (e.g. avoid transporting firewood between areas)*

- helping prevent the spread of weeds and pathogens by cleaning vehicles, equipment, boots and clothing where appropriate.

L.5 Minimise the impact of fires

Minimising the impact of campfires may include but is not limited to:

- using portable stoves for cooking
- *using alternative night-time light sources (e.g. head torches, lanterns)*
- lighting fires only where and when permitted
- checking with the *land owner* or *land manager* for current requirements and restrictions on lighting fires
- ensuring firewood is collected from fallen dead wood only where firewood collection is permitted by the *land owner* or *land manager* and in accordance with their requirements
- using existing fireplaces where available and avoiding creating new fireplaces
- not placing rocks around a fire where there is no existing fireplace to avoid creating the impression it is an established fireplace.

Also refer to 6.2 Bushfires, prescribed fire and fire danger.

L.6 Respect wildlife

Respecting wildlife may include but not limited to:

- travelling quietly
- educating participants where appropriate about the role a species plays in its environment and the importance of its position within an ecosystem
- not approaching nesting, feeding or breeding sites
- reporting injured wildlife to the *land owner* or *land manager*
- reporting sightings of known feral animal species and locations of invasive plant species to the *land owner* or *land manager*
- *ensuring vehicles and equipment are appropriately cleaned to avoid spreading environmental pathogens (e.g. fungal spores) and invasive plant species*
- checking that vehicles and equipment are free of plant material prior to leaving or entering an area
- ensuring activities are not conducted in quarantine areas
- identifying and avoiding areas that are ecological sensitivity or fragile.

L.7 Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors

Consideration of hosts and other visitors may include but is not limited to:

- securing permits, bookings and suitable permission before visiting
- appropriately acknowledging the traditional inhabitants of the country
- learning about the cultural history of the land
- recognising, acknowledging and respecting local knowledge
- respecting the wishes and regulations of all hosts, including Indigenous and pastoral *land manager*s and locals
- identifying and avoiding areas that are culturally sensitive or require permission
- obtaining permission to enter culturally sensitive areas
- identifying and avoiding impacting sensitive or fragile areas of heritage significance
- affording other users the courtesy of peaceful enjoyment of the area
- applying strategies to avoid overcrowding at popular public areas
- minimising the use of powered generators, amplified sound, music or lighting to reduce disturbance to other users
- managing *activity* sites and *group* congregation areas to reduce disturbance to other users
- *observing the safety of other groups by signalling appropriately to warn of dangers (e.g. falling rocks, snakes).*

Appendix M — First aid and medication considerations

This appendix provides additional information referred to in 7.3 First aid equipment and medication.

Recommendations for a first aid kit contents may include but is not limited to:

Group First Aid Kit

- waterproof storage
- disposable gloves
- resuscitation mask or shield
- conforming bandages
- elastic bandages
- triangular bandages
- non-adhesive sterile dressings
- waterproof sterile dressings
- saline solution
- antiseptic solution
- safety pins
- adhesive strapping tape
- adhesive medical dressings
- blister dressings
- hand sanitiser
- scissors
- notebook &h pencil
- portable splint
- support bandages for knees and elbows
- space blanket
- asthma medication
- asthma spacer
- anaphylaxis medication auto-injector
- antihistamine medication
- cream for chaffing
- pain relief
- rehydration solution
- tweezers
- splinter probes
- booklet/notes on first aid treatment where necessary

Participant First Aid Kit

- personal medications
- strapping tape
- blister dressings
- adhesive medical dressing (small)
- sunscreen
- insect repellent

Appendix N — Knowledge, skill and experience — Leader

This appendix sets out the knowledge, skill and experience expected of a person carrying the Leader role described in Section 8.4.1. It is organised into the nine domains introduced in Section 8.5.1 and reflects how leadership work is performed in the field. Providers should use this appendix, together with any activity-specific requirements, as the basis for verifying a Leader's readiness and capability under Section 8.5.

The Leader must demonstrate capability across all nine domains. The depth of capability required in each domain will vary with the activity, the participant group, and the support available to the Leader, based on the provider's context.

M.1 Safety and risk management

The Leader identifies, assesses, controls and monitors risk before, during and after the activity, and keeps risk within acceptable limits as conditions change.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the provider's safety systems, the risk-management standards and frameworks that apply to outdoor activities, the duties owed to participants and others, and the relevant work-health-and-safety law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s).

This should include but is not limited to: the provider's safety systems, procedures and standards of conduct; duties owed to participants, staff and other users of the environment; hazards encountered in the activity environment and the controls available; risk-management standards (such as AS ISO 31000:2018), the hierarchy of control, likelihood, consequence and residual risk; activity-specific hazards and historical incident data; hazard, incident and near-miss reporting requirements; and the relevant 'work health and safety' law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the relevant jurisdiction(s).

Skills

The Leader must be able to apply practical risk-management skills throughout the activity, identifying hazards, applying controls, monitoring residual risk and adapting to changing conditions.

This should include but is not limited to: identifying hazards in the activity environment; conducting risk assessments in consultation with the provider and team; applying the hierarchy of control to treat risk; producing and adapting risk registers, control plans and safe-work procedures; implementing, monitoring and reviewing risk controls before, during and after the activity; anticipating compound or cascading risk and adjusting plans accordingly; and reporting hazards, incidents and injuries promptly.

Experience recommended

The Leader has applied risk-management practice in the field under a documented provider safety system.

This may include but is not limited to: operating under a documented provider safety system in the relevant environment; building and reviewing real risk assessments, including following incidents or near-miss reviews; and adapting plans in response to real-world constraints.

M.2 Technical activity leadership

The Leader applies activity-specific technical skills, equipment use, supervision and rescue capability appropriate to the activity, the group and the environment.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the technical content of the activity, including how it is structured, the equipment it requires, and the rescue and recovery techniques it relies on.

This should include but is not limited to: activity types, technical progressions and supervision requirements; equipment selection, use, inspection and maintenance for the activity; activity-specific rescue and recovery techniques; and personal protective equipment requirements.

Skills

The Leader must be able to apply the technical skills, equipment use, supervision and rescue capability the activity requires across the conditions in which it is delivered.

This should include but is not limited to: demonstrating and applying activity-specific technical skills competently; selecting and operating equipment appropriate to the activity, group and environment; conducting equipment checks before, during and after the activity; performing rescue and recovery techniques relevant to the activity; and adjusting technique to match conditions, group ability and risk.

Experience recommended

The Leader has practised and applied the activity's technical skills, equipment use and rescue techniques in real conditions.

This may include but is not limited to: applying the activity's technical skills in real conditions across a range of contexts; using and maintaining the activity's equipment in the field; and practising and applying rescue or recovery techniques in scenarios or real incidents.

M.3 Leadership and group management

The Leader supervises participants, manages the group, supports welfare and coordinates assistant leaders and support persons.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand how groups form and develop, the supervision options available, and the pastoral, behavioural and inclusion considerations that arise in outdoor settings.

This should include but is not limited to: stages of group development and group dynamics; group leadership and facilitation approaches; inclusion principles, behaviour-management techniques and conflict-resolution approaches appropriate to outdoor settings; supervision models (direct, indirect and remote) and when each is appropriate; and pastoral-care obligations and welfare considerations.

Skills

The Leader must be able to supervise participants, manage group dynamics, support welfare, and coordinate assistant leaders and support persons through clear briefing, monitoring and delegation.

This should include but is not limited to: establishing rapport, group agreements and clear expectations; briefing groups and demonstrating techniques; selecting the level of supervision appropriate to the context and risk; monitoring participants and adjusting the activity in real time; resolving conflict and supporting inclusive participation; coordinating assistant leaders and support persons through clear delegation; and leading structured debriefs, reviews and reflective practice.

Experience recommended

The Leader has led diverse groups in real outdoor settings, including handling difficult dynamics and changing conditions.

This may include but is not limited to: leading diverse groups in real outdoor settings; handling difficult dynamics, conflict and changing conditions; and working under feedback from supervisors, peers or mentors.

M.4 Decision-making and judgement

The Leader interprets information, weighs options and makes timely decisions under uncertainty, including the decision to continue, modify, pause, retreat or cancel the activity.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the principles of dynamic risk assessment and the decision-making frameworks suited to outdoor leadership, including how bias and authority limits affect field decisions.

This should include but is not limited to: dynamic risk-assessment principles; decision-making frameworks suited to outdoor leadership; common decision biases and how they can manifest in field decisions; and the provider's escalation pathways and authority limits.

Skills

The Leader must be able to make and communicate timely decisions in the field, escalating beyond their authority where required.

This should include but is not limited to: conducting dynamic risk assessment before, during and after the activity; recognising patterns, early warning signs and changing conditions; making and communicating proceed/modify/pause/retreat/cancel decisions; documenting decisions and the reasoning behind them; and escalating decisions outside the Leader's authority to the provider.

Experience recommended

The Leader has made and reviewed real field decisions across a range of conditions, and compared their judgement with outcomes.

This may include but is not limited to: making and reviewing real field decisions across a range of conditions; comparing judgement with outcomes and adjusting future practice; and working through near-miss or incident reviews focussed on decision-making.

M.5 Planning and program management

The Leader translates the provider's plans, systems and resources into field-ready delivery, including logistics, staffing, communications, contingencies and post-activity review.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the planning, logistics, contingency and documentation requirements that translate a provider's plan into a deliverable activity.

This should include but is not limited to: the provider's activity plan, risk-management plan and emergency-management plan; permits, land-access arrangements and notification requirements; equipment, transport, staffing and logistics requirements; contingency planning, emergency response and post-activity review processes; and documentation requirements including activity records, participant information and incident reports.

Skills

The Leader must be able to apply practical planning, logistics, communication and review skills to deliver the activity and contribute to continuous improvement.

This should include but is not limited to: preparing session plans, itineraries, contingencies and emergency arrangements that fit the provider's systems; coordinating equipment, staff and logistics in the field; communicating plans clearly to the provider, staff, participants and stakeholders; conducting post-activity reviews and contributing to continuous improvement; and maintaining accurate, timely records as required by the provider.

Experience recommended

The Leader has planned and delivered outdoor activities in the relevant environments and adjusted plans in response to real-world constraints.

This may include but is not limited to: planning and delivering outdoor activities in the relevant environments; adjusting plans in response to real-world constraints; and contributing to post-activity reviews and continuous improvement.

M.6 Environment and place-based knowledge

The Leader applies local knowledge of terrain, weather, water, access, cultural responsibilities, environmental sensitivities and emergency considerations for the place in which the activity is delivered.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the physical, ecological, cultural and access characteristics of the place in which the activity is delivered.

This should include but is not limited to: local terrain, water, weather patterns and seasonal variation; access points, communication blackspots and evacuation routes; land-management rules, permits, codes of conduct and Traditional Owner protocols; local ecosystems, fauna, flora and environmentally sensitive sites; and site-specific hazards and incident history.

Skills

The Leader must be able to interpret local environmental cues, forecasts and cultural responsibilities and apply them to safe, low-impact activity delivery.

This should include but is not limited to: reading sky, wind and environmental cues in the field; accessing and interpreting forecasts, synoptic charts and warnings for the local area; selecting low-impact campsites, routes and activity areas suited to the place; briefing participants on local conditions, hazards and cultural responsibilities; and modelling and enforcing environmental and cultural practices.

Experience recommended

The Leader has operated in the place across multiple seasons and under land-manager and Traditional Owner requirements.

This may include but is not limited to: operating in the place across multiple seasons and conditions; undertaking place-specific induction or reconnaissance; and working under land-manager requirements and Traditional Owner protocols.

M.7 Communication and interpersonal skills

The Leader briefs, instructs, listens, gives feedback, de-escalates conflict and communicates with participants, co-leaders, providers and external stakeholders before, during and after the activity.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the communication, briefing and de-escalation approaches needed to lead participants and coordinate with the provider, co-leaders and external stakeholders.

This should include but is not limited to: briefing structures and pre-activity communication requirements; active listening, questioning and feedback techniques; conflict de-escalation approaches; and communication equipment and protocols used in the activity context.

Skills

The Leader must be able to brief, listen, give and receive feedback, de-escalate conflict and operate the communication systems used in the activity.

This should include but is not limited to: delivering clear pre-activity briefings to participants; using active listening and effective questioning; giving and receiving feedback constructively; de-escalating conflict and managing difficult conversations; operating communication equipment and following provider communication protocols; and communicating promptly with the provider about anything affecting safe delivery.

Experience recommended

The Leader has applied communication, briefing and conflict-management skills in real settings across the provider's communication systems.

This may include but is not limited to: delivering pre-activity briefings and post-activity debriefs in real settings; handling difficult conversations and conflict in the field; and working across communication systems used by the provider.

M.8 Self-management and professional practice

The Leader maintains fitness for work, currency, ethics, legal awareness, reflection and professional standards while carrying responsibility.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the fitness-for-work, currency, ethical, legal and reflective-practice expectations that apply to a person carrying leadership responsibility.

This should include but is not limited to: fitness-for-work expectations, including fatigue and the effects of medication and other substances; currency expectations for the role and how currency is maintained; ethical and professional standards expected of a Leader; the relevant legal duties owed to participants, staff and other users of the environment; and reflective practice and professional development approaches.

Skills

The Leader must be able to self-assess fitness for work, maintain currency, reflect on performance and operate within ethical and professional boundaries.

This should include but is not limited to: self-assessing fitness for work and recognising fatigue, illness or medication effects; maintaining currency through deliberate practice, training and professional development; reflecting on performance and acting on feedback; and operating within ethical and professional boundaries.

Experience recommended

The Leader has maintained currency over time, undertaken reflective practice and operated under supervision or peer review.

This may include but is not limited to: maintaining currency over time through participation, training and review; undertaking reflective practice and keeping professional development records; and operating under supervision or peer review.

M.9 Outdoor living, activity and travel skills

The Leader lives, conducts activity and travels safely in outdoor environments, including lightweight travel and camping, bushcraft, minimum-impact practice, food, water and shelter, and the activity-specific travel skills suited to the environment.

Knowledge

The Leader must understand the lightweight-travel, camping, bushcraft, minimum-impact, navigation and activity-specific travel skills required for the environment in which the activity is delivered.

This should include but is not limited to: lightweight travel and camping principles for the activity environment; food, water and shelter requirements for short and extended journeys; bushcraft and minimum-impact practice; activity-specific travel skills (mountains, rivers, deserts, coast, lakes) as relevant; and navigation principles, including map-and-compass and supplementary navigation tools.

Skills

The Leader must be able to live, navigate and travel safely in the activity environment and model minimum-impact and culturally respectful practice.

This should include but is not limited to: selecting clothing, equipment and food appropriate to the environment and duration; setting up camp and managing food, water and shelter for self and group; navigating using map, compass and supplementary tools in the activity environment; operating safely in the activity-specific environment over the duration of the activity; and modelling minimum-impact and culturally respectful practice.

Experience recommended

The Leader has lived, travelled and navigated in the activity environment across multiple seasons and durations.

This may include but is not limited to: living and travelling in the activity environment across multiple seasons and durations; navigating independently in the activity environment; and applying the activity's specific travel skills in real conditions.

Appendix O — Knowledge, skill and experience — Assistant Leader

This appendix sets out the knowledge, skill and experience expected of a person carrying the Assistant Leader role described in Section 8.4.2.

The Assistant Leader role is structured against the same nine domains as Appendix N. To avoid duplication, the requirements of Appendix N apply, with the variations set out below.

The Assistant Leader operates under the direction of the Leader and within the provider's systems. The Assistant Leader's knowledge, skill and experience must be sufficient for the delegated tasks and elements of the activity they carry out, with the Leader retaining overall responsibility for the activity. The depth of capability required in each domain will vary with the activity, the delegated tasks and the support available.

N.1 Safety and risk management

— applied at the level of the delegated tasks. The Assistant Leader is not required to lead risk-management planning, but must be able to identify and report hazards, follow the provider's procedures, participate in dynamic risk assessment under the Leader's direction, and report incidents and near-misses promptly.

N.2 Technical activity leadership

— applied to the delegated tasks only. The Assistant Leader is not required to hold the full activity-leader technical capability, but must hold the technical skills, equipment use and rescue or recovery techniques relevant to the delegated tasks, at the level required for the role.

N.3 Leadership and group management

— applied to a sub-group or delegated element of the activity. The Assistant Leader supervises participants or a sub-group as delegated by the Leader, supports inclusive participation and manages routine behavioural issues, but does not carry overall responsibility for the group.

N.4 Decision-making and judgement

— limited to the scope of decisions delegated by the Leader. The Assistant Leader must recognise changing conditions and report them promptly to the Leader, make decisions within the scope delegated, and escalate any matter outside that scope without delay.

N.5 Planning and program management

— limited to supporting the Leader and the provider's plans. The Assistant Leader must be familiar with the activity plan, risk-management plan and emergency-management plan, and must coordinate any delegated logistics and equipment, but is not required to author these plans.

N.6 Environment and place-based knowledge

— sufficient for the delegated tasks. The Assistant Leader must have place-specific knowledge appropriate to the elements of the activity they will carry out, including any cultural responsibilities and land-management requirements, but is not required to hold the full place-based capability of the Leader.

N.7 Communication and interpersonal skills

— applied to delegated communications. The Assistant Leader must be able to brief participants on delegated tasks, communicate promptly with the Leader about anything affecting safe delivery, and operate the provider's communication equipment as required.

N.8 Self-management and professional practice

— applied to the Assistant Leader role. The Assistant Leader must self-assess fitness for work, report concerns to the Leader, maintain currency through deliberate practice and training, and act on feedback.

N.9 Outdoor living, activity and travel skills

— sufficient for the delegated tasks. The Assistant Leader must be able to live, conduct delegated activity elements and travel safely under the Leader’s direction, and to apply the activity-specific travel skills relevant to those tasks

Appendix P — Recognition of competence: pathways to verification

This appendix provides additional guidance on the three methods of knowledge and skill acquisition introduced in Section 8.5.3. No single method is preferred in itself — the test in every case is whether the evidence produced is sufficient and current to confirm that the person holds the knowledge, skill and experience required for the responsibilities they are being asked to fill, in the activity context in which they will operate. Providers may rely on more than one method for a single leader.

P.1 Formal qualifications and training courses

Formal qualifications issued under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) — issued by a higher education provider regulated under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, or by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) regulated under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*. Non-accredited industry training courses may also contribute where they are industry-recognised and accepted. Training-based pathways are typically strong evidence of underpinning knowledge and of assessed practical performance at the time of assessment. First aid competence must be recognised through this method.

Questions to ask:

- Does the qualification assess the knowledge, skill and practical performance relevant to the responsibilities of this role?
- Is the qualification at an appropriate AQF level (where applicable), and is it issued by a higher education provider or RTO?
- Does the scope of the qualification cover this activity type and environment?
- Is the qualification current, and has the person maintained the skills covered by it since it was awarded?
- Where the qualification is dated, what supplementary evidence confirms ongoing capability?

P.2 Industry training

Recognition by an industry body or peak body, assessed by a competent person determined by the training organisation. Industry training schemes typically combine a knowledge assessment, a practical assessment and a currency requirement, and are usually activity-specific. They are particularly relevant where an activity has a recognised industry framework that sits outside the AQF.

Questions to ask:

- Does the industry training assess against benchmarks that cover the knowledge, skill and experience this role requires?
- Is the training specific to this activity type and the environment in which it will be delivered?
- How is currency maintained under the scheme, and is the person currently in good standing?
- Is the assessment process documented and defensible if reviewed?

P.3 Provider-based training / verification

A provider's own internal training/verification system, aligned to industry benchmarks and assessed by a competent person determined by the provider. Provider-based verification is particularly suited to organisations that operate a defined set of activities, sites or programs and maintain their own training and assessment system. It is also the appropriate method where formal qualifications and industry training do not fully cover the specific responsibilities the role requires in that organisation's context.

Questions to ask:

- Does the provider's internal system assess against benchmarks aligned to recognised industry standards for this activity?
- Is the assessor demonstrably competent in the activity and role being verified?
- How is the verification documented, and how often is it refreshed?
- Is the system defensible if subject to external review?

P.4 Combining methods

In practice, providers will often rely on a combination of methods — for example, an AQF qualification to establish underpinning knowledge, industry training to confirm activity-specific competence, and provider-based verification to confirm familiarity with site-specific procedures. The important thing is that, taken together, the evidence covers all of the knowledge, skill and experience required for the role, is current, and is documented in a way that could be defended if reviewed.

Appendix Q — Indicative experience bands and evidence expectations

These experience bands support the provider's judgement under Section 8.5. They are not fixed national thresholds. The provider should adjust them for activity type, remoteness, environmental complexity, supervision model, participant dependency and consequence of error. Indicative bands are expressed in 'activity days' — that is, days on which the person delivered or supported a relevant activity.

Table Q.10: Indicative experience bands and evidence expectations

Capability level	Indicative experience band	Typical contexts	Minimum evidence types	Verification focus
Foundation	0–50 activity days	Controlled or semi-remote (front-country / managed outdoor) environments; direct supervision; known hazards; short-duration activities; routine tasks. Includes school-camp support staff, trainee club leaders and scout / guide adults completing initial leader training.	Supervised logbook; induction record; first-aid evidence where required; basic technical assessment; supervisor or mentor observation.	Can the person follow procedures, identify obvious hazards, communicate concerns and assist within clear boundaries?
Intermediate	50–150 activity days	Defined operating areas; variable but foreseeable conditions; moderate autonomy; direct or indirect organisational support. Includes designated school-camp leaders, warrant-holding outdoor- and recreation-club leaders, and scout, guide or cadet leaders authorised to run adventurous activities at this level.	Verified logbook across multiple conditions; field observation; scenario assessment; activity and risk-planning evidence; current first-aid; relevant AQF evidence where applicable.	Can the person lead independently in this defined context, manage dynamic risk, supervise participants and adapt within bounded systems?

Capability level	Indicative experience band	Typical contexts	Minimum evidence types	Verification focus
Advanced	150-200+ activity days	Remote, wilderness, high-consequence, multi-day or complex environments; delayed assistance; high autonomy; team leadership. Includes designated leaders for remote school expeditions, wilderness club trips, and senior venturer, cadet or youth-organisation expeditions.	Leadership portfolio; advanced scenario assessment; incident or near-miss review; expert verification; evidence of reflective practice; current advanced first-aid (remote / wilderness).	Can the person exercise high-autonomy judgement, anticipate compound risk, coordinate others and make defensible decisions in complex conditions?

Appendix R — Australian Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and trigger points

R.1 Trigger points — definition and framework

R.1.1 Definition

A trigger point is a particular circumstance or situation that causes an action to occur. Weather trigger points are pre-defined conditions at which a leader must take a specified action. Trigger points must be:

- established before the activity commences;
- included in the activity’s risk management plan and Emergency Management Plan (EMP); and
- communicated to all leaders and relevant participants prior to the activity.

R.1.2 Mandatory trigger categories

Activity operators and leaders must establish trigger points for weather conditions. Trigger points must include:

- actual or forecast severe weather warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM);
- actual or forecast severe thunderstorm warnings issued by BOM;
- coastal waters wind warnings (for all activities conducted on or near coastal or inland water bodies);
- actual or forecast tropical cyclone watch or warning (in tropical regions);
- extreme cold conditions;
- extreme heat conditions;
- actual or forecast lightning; and
- actual or forecast flooding or flash flooding.

Trigger points must specify the action to be taken when triggered. Trigger point actions must be documented and rehearsed.

R.2 Bureau of Meteorology warning products

R.2.1 Standard BOM warnings table

The table below summarises the BOM warning products relevant to AAAS activities. All leaders must check BOM forecasts and warnings before and during activities.

Table R.11: Standard Bureau of Meteorology warnings

Warning Type	What it Warns Of	Threshold Conditions	Example Response Actions (including but not limited to)
Severe Weather Warning	High tides Large surf Blizzards Heavy rain and/or flash flooding	Winds > 63 km/h Gusts > 90 km/h	Cease outdoor activity Seek shelter in a substantial structure Monitor BOM forecasts Do not resume until warning cancelled

Warning Type	What it Warns Of	Threshold Conditions	Example Response Actions (including but not limited to)
	Strong winds		
Severe Thunderstorm Warning	Heavy rain and/or flash flooding Strong winds Tornadoes Hail ≥ 2 cm diameter Lightning	Gusts > 90 km/h Hail ≥ 2 cm	Cease all activity immediately Seek shelter — avoid open areas, isolated trees, metal structures Implement lightning procedures (see A.4) Monitor BOM warnings
Marine Wind Warning (Strong Wind Warning)	Strong winds on coastal and/or inland waters	Winds > 48 km/h (> 26 knots)	Do not launch watercraft Return to shore if afloat Seek sheltered mooring Refer to marine wind categories (Table A.6.1)
Tropical Cyclone Advice (Watch or Warning)	Destructive winds in coastal areas	Watch: winds ≥ 62 km/h (≥ 34 kn) possible within 48 hours Warning: winds ≥ 62 km/h (≥ 34 kn) expected within 24 hours	Cease all outdoor activities Follow local emergency management authority advice Evacuate to pre-determined safe location
Fire Weather Warning	Dangerous fire weather conditions	Extreme or Catastrophic AFDRS rating combined with severe weather	Refer to Core GPG Section 6.2 (Bushfires) and AFDRS trigger points Consider postponement of activities in high-risk vegetation areas
Bushwalkers Weather Alert (Tasmania)	Dangerous conditions for bushwalkers in Tasmanian wilderness areas	Issued by BOM Tasmania for specific forecast districts	Postpone or cancel planned activities in the affected area Reassess route and campsite selection
Flood Watch	River flooding possible in affected catchments	Issued when heavy rainfall may cause river flooding within 24–48 hours	Avoid low-lying campsites and river access points Monitor stream and river levels Defer planned water crossings
Tsunami Watch / Tsunami Warning	Risk of tsunami wave impact on coastal areas	Watch: threat possible — be prepared to act Warning: threat imminent or occurring — take action now	Immediately move participants away from the shoreline Move to high ground well above sea level Follow JATWC instructions

Warning Type	What it Warns Of	Threshold Conditions	Example Response Actions (including but not limited to)
Hazardous Surf Warning	Surf conditions hazardous for rock fishers and beachgoers	Significant wave height ≥ 3 m	Cease all activities involving proximity to wave wash Applies to Angling (ocean rock) and Snorkelling — see Part B

R.2.2 BOM information sources

Leaders should access weather forecasts and warnings from the following BOM resources:

Table R.12: Bureau of Meteorology information sources

Resource	URL / Description
BOM Weather Guide — Land	*http://www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/about/WeatherGuideLand.pdf*
BOM Weather Guide — Marine	*http://www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/about/WeatherGuideMarine.pdf*
BOM Warnings — all warning types	*http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/warnings/*
BOM Marine hazards (storm surge, swell, tides)	*http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/hazards.shtml*
BOM Marine wind forecasts	*http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/wind.shtml*
BOM Wave information	*http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/waves.shtml*
BOM Tropical cyclone advice (northern Australia)	*http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/*
JATWC — Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre	*http://www.bom.gov.au/tsunami/*
BOM King/rogue wave information	http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/hazards.shtml (see Rogue Waves section)

R.3 Standard severe weather trigger points

The following trigger points are common across AAAS activity GPGs and must be included in every activity risk and emergency plan. Activity-specific triggers are set out in Part B.

Table R.13: Severe weather triggers

Trigger Category	Trigger Condition
Severe weather	Actual or forecast BOM Severe Weather Warning for the activity area
Severe thunderstorm	Actual or forecast BOM Severe Thunderstorm Warning for the activity area
Coastal/inland waters wind	BOM Coastal or Inland Waters Wind Warning (wind > 26 kn / > 48 km/h)
Tropical cyclone	BOM Tropical Cyclone Watch or Warning for the area
Lightning	Lightning visible or thunder audible
Flash flooding	Actual or forecast heavy rainfall; BOM Flood Watch for the catchment; rapid rise in water level
Extreme cold	Temperature and/or wind chill falls below the threshold identified in the activity EMP for the group
Extreme heat	Ambient temperature and/or sun exposure exceeds the threshold identified in the activity EMP for the group

R.4 Marine wind warning categories

The BOM uses the following categories for marine wind warnings. The Strong Wind Warning threshold (> 26 knots) is the standard trigger for ceasing water-based activity. Higher categories indicate progressively more dangerous conditions.

Table R.14: Marine wind warning categories

Warning Category	Wind Speed (knots)	Wind Speed (km/h)	Notes / Activity Implications
Strong Wind Warning	26–33 kn	48–61 km/h	BOM Marine Wind Warning threshold. All water-based activities must cease. Return to shore.
Gale Warning	> 33–47 kn	> 61–87 km/h	Severe marine conditions. Do not launch watercraft. Seek shelter.
Storm Force Warning	> 47–63 kn	> 87–116 km/h	Dangerous conditions. No outdoor activity. Evacuate exposed locations.
Hurricane Force Warning	> 63 kn	> 116 km/h	Catastrophic marine conditions. Emergency management only.

Note: Marine Wind Warning categories are consistent across all relevant AAAS activity GPGs: Enclosed and Coastal Waters Paddlecraft, Inland Waters Paddlecraft, Snorkelling, and Angling.

R.5 Sun safety and thermal conditions

R.5.1 UV radiation and sun safety

All outdoor activities carry UV radiation exposure risk. Leaders must ensure participants have access to and use broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen applied before going outdoors and reapplied regularly; sun-protective clothing (long sleeves, collared shirts) where practicable; wide-brimmed hats; and sunglasses where appropriate. UV exposure is increased on or near water through surface reflection.

See *https://www.sunsmart.com.au/* for more information

R.5.2 Cold weather and hypothermia risk

All AAAS activities involve potential exposure to cold conditions. Providers must plan for the combination of low temperature, wind, and wet conditions that can rapidly increase hypothermia risk. Clothing systems must be appropriate for the worst forecast conditions, not only the expected conditions.

R.5.3 Heat illness risk

High ambient temperatures, direct solar radiation, high humidity, and physical exertion combine to increase heat illness risk. Leaders must monitor participants for signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, ensure adequate hydration, and adjust activity intensity and scheduling in hot conditions.

R.6 Severe weather sites and forecast sources

The Core GPG requires activity operators to identify and document the appropriate BOM product for obtaining weather forecasts relevant to their specific activity area. This includes:

- the BOM forecast district(s) applicable to the activity area;
- the relevant BOM marine forecast zone (for water-based activities);
- any severe weather history relevant to the site; and
- alternative information sources where BOM coverage is limited (for example, remote cave systems, alpine areas).

Note: For alpine areas, cave systems, and other locations with limited direct BOM coverage, leaders should identify the nearest representative BOM station and use forecasts for the applicable mountain or alpine district

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