

## Scouts NSW

# Adventurous Activities Policy



This Policy, and associated Standard Operating Procedures, are issued and updated by the State Activities Council and distributed by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities & Training on behalf of the Chief Commissioner of NSW. They outline the requirements for the conduct of Adventurous Activities within Scouts NSW.

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# ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES POLICY

## 1. PHILOSOPHY

1.1. Our aim is to use industry qualified leaders and reasonable care to provide the highest quality of adventurous activity programs to all members of Scouting. Standard Operating Procedures for the conduct of adventurous activities are required for the following reasons:

- Scouts NSW believes in risk minimisation.
- Specific activities are classified as adventurous activities because there are inherent risks involved when participating.
- Members of Scouting need to be aware of risks, and apply appropriate risk assessment, minimisation and management measures to ensure that these activities are conducted safely.
- To ensure the safety of all people involved in adventurous activities, members of Scouts NSW need to be trained and qualified to appropriate standards that meet community expectations.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Adventurous Activity** – An outdoor pursuit requiring a wide variety of skills and equipment to engage in an activity that has inherent risks and uncontrolled hazards, usually in a natural environment. The range of activities that are covered by the Standard Operating Procedures may vary from time to time and are based on industry best practice.

**Adventurous Activity Coordinator (AAC)** – A suitably qualified person who applies technical skills and knowledge to conduct, (via direct or indirect supervision) an adventurous activity for dependant participants. This person may be an Adult Leader, a Venturer, or Rover who has obtained recognised industry skills and qualifications in outdoor recreation appropriate for the conduct of the activity and have them recognized by Scouts NSW. See 3.10 for detailed information.

**Activity Leader** --- An adult member of the Scout Association whose primary appointment is that of an Activity Leader. This person will hold, or is in the process of gaining, recognised industry skills and qualifications in outdoor recreation.

**Commercially Run Activities** – Activities run by persons or organisations outside the Scout Association, and where the activity or event is provided for a fee, and where there is a measurable risk to the participant. Refer to Commercial Activity Policy for further information.

**Independent Participant** – A person who possesses current skills and knowledge and qualification to safely participate in an Adventurous Activity without dependence on a Leader and has had them recognized by Scouts NSW. This person acknowledges the inherent risk and assumes responsibility for their own safety and welfare.

**Dependant Participant** – A person who depends upon an Adventurous Activity Coordinator for supervision, guidance or instruction to support supervised participation in an Adventurous Activity.

**Novice** – Any person with little or no current experience in the skill. Novices can only participate in activities if under the supervision of a suitably qualified Adventurous Activity Coordinator.

**Logbook** – A record providing details of involvement in adventurous activities. A logbook is used to demonstrate currency in one or more adventurous activity skill area. The logbook can be in a variety of formats but must contain:

- Date/s
- Type of activity and participant's role
- List of other participants, with contact details for at least one
- Short description of activity, including weather and location with or without photos
- Is a personal log book and may include activities outside Scouting
- May be divided into the relevant skill areas

**Prohibited Activities** – Scouts Australia Policy & Rules grants authority to each State at its sole discretion to define Prohibited Activities, which are binding on all members of that State. Refer to the Prohibited Activities Policy for further information.

**Regional Activity Leader (RAL)** – Where appointed, is responsible for assisting the Regional Commissioner Activities in the safe management of activities.

**Regional Commissioner Activities (RCA)** – The RCA provides advice and support to the Region regarding the safe conduct of activities and has overall responsibility, on behalf of the Region Commissioner, for the delivery of Adventurous Activities within a Region. The RCA is a member of the State Activities Council.

**Scouts Australia Institute of Training (SAIT)** – The training arm of Scouts Australia, responsible for the delivery, assessment and management of accredited training for the Scout Association.

**State Activities Council** – The State Activities Council is chaired by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities & Training and includes Assistant State Commissioners Activities, RCAs,

selected SME's and any other person as invited by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities & Training. The State Activities Council provides advice to the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities on the safe conduct of adventurous activities involving members of the Scout Association.

**Subject Matter Expert (SME)** – Must be approved by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities & Training or their delegate. They may or may not be a member of Scouts, but are considered an adventurous activities subject expert, based on experience and skills. They would hold the relevant Guide activity units where applicable and have had them recognized by Scouts NSW. They work under the supervision of a suitably qualified Adventurous Activity Coordinator. Subject Matter Experts are a valuable resource and should be considered when Youth Section Leaders need advice for the youth award scheme, in particular as badge examiners.

**Supervising Sectional Leader** – An adult with a Certificate of Adult Leadership who provides ancillary supervision for novice and dependant participants, exercises a duty of care and assists the Adventurous Activity Coordinator with emergency responses (appropriate to their skills and experience). The Supervising Sectional Leader may /or may not have relevant adventurous activity skills. See 3.11 for detailed information.

**Activity Guide** – A member who meets all of the Guide requirements and is appointed by Scouts NSW as a Guide.

**Activity Instructor** – A member who meets all of the Instructor requirements as set out by S.A.I.T. and has been appointed as an Instructor by Scouts Australia as recommended by the Chief Commissioner. They assist and deliver training of SIS units of competency as set out by S.A.I.T.

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1. Control of all adventurous activities described in these Standard Operating Procedures is vested in the Chief Commissioner.
- 3.2. Authority for the control of these adventurous activities shall normally be delegated to the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities.
- 3.3. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant Adventurous Activity Standard Operating Procedures.
- 3.4. Compliance with the Adventurous Activities Standard Operating Procedures is mandatory for all members of Scouts NSW unless individually, and specifically, exempted in writing by the Chief Commissioner or authorised delegate.
- 3.5. No person shall amend or adjust the requirements of appointments and

- qualifications without written permission from their RCA and the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities.
- 3.6. Within a Region, the promotion and administration of Adventurous Activities is the responsibility of the RCA or the Region Commissioner if no RCA is appointed. This responsibility can be delegated to one or more RAC(s).
  - 3.7. Where appointed, the RAL is to assist the RCA by:
    - 3.7.1. Promoting and administering the Adventurous Activity Standard Operating Procedures within their Region.
    - 3.7.2. Delivering Adventurous Activities to the membership.
    - 3.7.3. Recommending to the RCA the suspension of any member's qualification/s if practices are being conducted in an unsafe manner or contrary to the Adventurous Activity Standard Operating Procedures.
  - 3.8. While there are no limitations to how and where a member of the Association receives training in adventurous activity skills, the assessment for accreditation of qualifications remains the responsibility of SAIT.
  - 3.9. Where adventurous activity skills are not within the registered scope of SAIT, the responsibility of such skill recognition remains with the State Activity Council.
  - 3.10. The Adventurous Activity Coordinator has the following specific responsibilities:
    - 3.10.1. Applies technical skills and knowledge to conduct the activity for novice and dependent participants.
    - 3.10.2. Provides a reasonable level of supervision for participants during the activity. At times this may be by indirect supervision.
    - 3.10.3. Exercises a duty of care to participants.
    - 3.10.4. Establishes and maintains a rapport with participants; maintains the well-being of participants and others in the group.
    - 3.10.5. Conducts a risk assessment and applies risk management strategies.
    - 3.10.6. Conducts a pre-activity safety briefing appropriate to the activity and applies group management practices appropriate to the situation.
    - 3.10.7. Checks weather forecasts and warnings prior to the activity, monitors environmental conditions during the activity and takes action to manage/respond to hazardous or extreme weather conditions.
    - 3.10.8. Confirms that all equipment is in an appropriate condition; uses equipment in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and/or Standard Operating Procedures.

- 3.10.9. Handles situations where judgement is required to address non-routine situations and solve problems.
- 3.10.10. Delegates responsibilities and tasks to Supervising Leaders, SME, other Leaders and participants as appropriate.
- 3.10.11. Responds to an emergency using an Emergency Response Plan and applies First Aid as required, at times in a remote situation.
- 3.11. The Supervising Sectional Leader has the following specific responsibilities:
  - 3.11.1. Provides a reasonable level of supervision to participants during activities.
  - 3.11.2. Exercises a duty of care to participants.
  - 3.11.3. Initiates an emergency response as required, appropriate to skills and experience.
  - 3.11.4. Works in conjunction with an Adventurous Activity Coordinator and does not assume responsibility for technical aspects of the activity.
- 3.12. Scout Activity Centres that operate as commercial enterprises comply with site specific Standard Operating Procedures which may vary from those contained in this document. This includes non-commercial use by members of the Scout Association whilst in attendance at these centres.
- 3.13. Activity and Activity Centre SOP's can be varied with the approval of the Chief Commissioner.

## 4. CONDUCT OF ACTIVITIES

- 4.1. At all times the Laws of State and Australia must be followed. Nothing in these policies can override a legal obligation. It remains the responsibility of participants and organisers of activities to ensure that they are familiar with the appropriate legislation and regulatory requirements including NSW Adventurous Activity Standards (AAS).
- 4.2. All activities must be conducted in a safe manner and be appropriate to the skills, age and experience of the participants.
- 4.3. All activities should be conducted in accordance with the Adventurous Activities Standard Operating Procedures, Australian Scout Environmental Charter and Minimal Impact Practices.
- 4.4. A suitably qualified member of the Scout Association must be in charge of the activity.

- 4.5. Management of youth member's participation in the sectional award scheme remains the responsibility of the relevant Sectional Leader. Where specific adventurous activity skills are required, the Sectional Leader must seek the support of Adventurous Activity Coordinators or Subject Matter Experts through the RCA or RALs.
- 4.6. The Section Leader remains responsible for ensuring direct, or indirect supervision is provided for youth members participating in adventurous activities.



## 5. QUALIFICATIONS and SKILL CURRENCY

- 5.1. Qualifications in adventurous activity skills are gained in accordance with paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 and are in accordance with outdoor recreation industry standards as appropriate.
- 5.2. Ongoing currency in an adventurous activity skill is based on logbook evidence and a current Vocational Education Training (VET) first aid qualification.
- 5.3. In certain circumstances the RCA may recommend to the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities & Training to place specific limitations on an individual's qualification/s. Such limitations should be reviewed at least every six (6) months.
- 5.4. Competencies gained with other organisations that offer the same skill qualifications will be recognised by Scouts NSW. Holders of these qualifications will need to demonstrate any additional requirements of SAIT and/or Scouts NSW. These competencies must be recorded and acknowledged by Scouts NSW.

## 6. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

- 6.1. For complaints regarding the gaining of adventurous activity qualifications within the registered scope of SAIT the applicant will follow the SAIT appeals procedure.
- 6.2. All complaints shall follow the Scouts NSW grievance procedures.

## 7. LEADER TO PARTICIPANT RATIOS AND PARTY SIZES

7.1. Unless specifically identified in a particular adventurous activity, ratios and party size are to be determined by a risk assessment process based on the following considerations:

- 7.1.1. Level of difficulty and the skills required
- 7.1.2. Anticipated environmental conditions, remoteness and duration
- 7.1.3. Weather conditions and future forecasts
- 7.1.4. Prior experience of leaders and participants
- 7.1.5. Requirements of land owners or managers
- 7.1.6. Availability of communications and access
- 7.1.7. Environmental sustainability

## 8. ACTIVITY PLANNING

8.1. All activities must have a plan. An effective plan will allow all participants to enjoy themselves while meeting personal and group goals and challenges. The activity plan needs to take into account a number of considerations, including but not limited to:

- Scouts NSW E1 (Activity Notification Form) must be used for all activities
- Focus on the purpose of the activity, i.e. what is the desired outcome for the participants
- The number of participants
- Capabilities, age, experience and skill of participants
- Experience of the person in charge of the activity
- Transport arrangements
- Permission of land managers
- Notification of local safety authorities
- Availability and suitability of equipment, food and clothing
- Appropriate communication equipment
- First aid requirements
- Emergency evacuation plan
- Fitness and known medical conditions of participants

- Documented risk assessment
- Route plan including escape routes
- Suitable maps
- Adequate communication of activity details to participants

## 9. EXCLUSION FROM ACTIVITIES

- 9.1. There may be occasions when a participant must be excluded from joining in an activity. The decision to exclude someone (youth or adult), regardless of his or her skill level, lies with the AAC. Any sectional leaders who are present at the activity MUST support and assist this decision, especially in those instances where the AAC is a suitably qualified youth member. The Responsible Section Leader also has the obligation under their duty of care to follow standard exclusion procedures.
- 9.2. Reasons for exclusion include (but are not limited to):
- Drug / alcohol influence
  - Injury or illness (especially if contagious)
  - Inability or unwillingness to follow safety directions
  - Behaving in a reckless manner
  - Endangering others
  - Lack of suitable personal equipment
  - Lack of adequate fitness / physical ability
- 9.3. Care must be taken not to exclude a participant based on a perception of their fitness or physical ability. If an Adventurous Activity Coordinator has concerns about the fitness or ability of a youth member to participate in a particular activity they should consult with the relevant Section Leader and/or the primary carers of the youth member.
- 9.4. The final decision is one for the Adventurous Activity Coordinator who, if necessary, may cancel the activity.

## 10. SAFETY and FIRST AID

- 10.1. To lead any activity, a leader of a group (or a delegated other) must have a level of first aid training that is appropriate to the situation. The factors that determine the level of first aid training and support include the:
- Size of the group
  - Age and characteristics of the participants

- Remoteness of the activity
  - Ease with which the emergency services can be contacted
  - Likely time for emergency services to reach an injured person
  - Nature and severity of likely injuries
- 10.2. Individual participants who require medication are responsible for bringing sufficient quantities for the duration of the activity.
- 10.3. Unless otherwise stated in specific Standard Operating Procedures the following common approach should be used. The time limits listed below are guidelines only and the Adventurous Activity Coordinator needs to make a judgment, based on the circumstances of each activity and the level of first aid training required. If in doubt advice should be sought from the Regional Commissioner Activities.
- 10.3.1. **Urban:** This applies in parks and urban areas supported by professional medical care (ambulance). Distance from roads should be no more than 15 – 30 minutes. No formal first aid qualification may be necessary but a leader should at least be able to care for someone who is unconscious or who is choking, treat for shock, manage severe bleeding and provide CPR.
- 10.3.2. **Standard:** This applies to any situation where access to professional medical care is less than 1 hour from roads. While it is recommended that leaders should have an accredited first aid qualification a leader should at least be able to care for someone who is unconscious or who is choking, treat for shock, manage severe bleeding and provide CPR.
- 10.3.3. **Remote:** This applies to any situation where access to professional medical care is greater than 1 hour from roads. At least one person, preferably two, (Venturers, Rovers or Leaders) must have an accredited first aid qualification.

## 11. REFERENCES

NSW Adventurous Activity Standards (AAS)

VIC Adventurous Activity Standards

Field book for Australian Scouts

Outdoor Recreation Industry Council (ORIC)

VET Outdoor Recreation Training Package

NSW State Activities Council