

Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities

Alpine and Snowfield Activities Standard Operating Procedures



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

Version 4.0

November 2014

1 Conduct of Activities

1.1 These Standard Operating Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Scouts NSW Adventurous Activity Policy.

1.2 Snowfield Areas are defined as regions of mountain country where snow or blizzard conditions exist or can be reasonably expected to exist.

1.2.1 The RCA may make interim or short-term designations of Snowfield Areas based on local knowledge and prevailing weather conditions and forecasts. A reasonable example of this would be areas around the Blue Mountains when heavy and protracted snowfalls are predicted for a number of days.

1.2.2 Backcountry

- Within the boundaries of the Barrington Tops National Park during the months May to October inclusive. During this time the area is considered an Alpine Walk as defined by the Bushwalking Rules.
- Within the boundaries of the Kosciusko National Park except for those areas defined in Exclusions.

1.3 Exclusions. Activities conducted in the following areas are exempt from this SOP:

1.3.1 Residential

- Within the Municipal or designated boundaries or immediate vicinity of occupied and operating Towns, Villages or Resorts
- Within 500 metres of any public road which is open to conventional vehicular traffic at the time of the activity
- The areas utilised for activities when under the direct control of commercial operators who accept responsibility for the participants. A reasonable example of this would be Ski Resorts.

1.3.2 All bushwalks within the Kosciusko National Park, including day, overnight and multi-day walks, are covered by the Bushwalking Standard Operating Procedures when they occur:

- During the months of November, December, January, February and March and April; and
- Following advice regarding current and expected conditions from Kosciusko National Park.

1.3.3 These Standard Operating Procedures shall not apply to commercially conducted activities. Before participation in any commercially conducted snowfield activity, the policy on Prohibited Activities and the guidelines for participation in Commercially Run Activities should be considered.

- 1.4 The term 'alpine and snowfield activities' describes bushwalks (other than those described in 1.3.2), snow shoe touring, snowboarding, resort telemarking, tobogganing, downhill skiing and cross-country ski touring; where participants go out either intending to stay overnight or not. These Standard Operating Procedures shall apply to other forms of snowfield activity as authorised by the Chief Commissioner (or delegate).
- 1.5 Joey Scouts, Cub Scouts or Scouts are NOT permitted to camp overnight in the areas covered by these Standard Operating Procedures in the months of April to October inclusive.
- 1.6 All backcountry activities must have sufficient equipment for an unplanned overnight stay.
- 1.7 During all downhill activities (excluding tobogganing) in residential snowfield areas, the wearing of an approved snow/ski helmet is mandatory.
- 1.8 The wearing of a helmet whilst engaged in cross-country skiing in backcountry areas is recommended.
- 1.9 Additional information regarding the safe conduct of activities in the Alpine areas can be found at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parksafety/>

2 Equipment

- 2.1 All equipment used for Alpine and Snowfield Activities must be inspected prior to the activity to ensure it meets, and continue to meet, the requirements of the activity.
- 2.2 It is recognised that participants may have considerable personal equipment, usually obtained over many years of experience. While it remains the personal responsibility for participants to ensure their equipment is in good order, the Adventurous Activity Coordinator should ensure that the equipment is suitable for the particular activity.
- 2.3 All equipment is to be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and must meet recognised standards where such standards exist.
- 2.4 Navigation equipment appropriate to the situation must be carried. The Adventurous Activity Coordinator must be competent in the use of topographical maps and compasses. Relying solely on electronic navigation devices is not appropriate.
- 2.5 Participants are to be informed of the type and quality of equipment they are expected to bring. Specific mention should be made of anticipated weather conditions and seasonal factors.
- 2.6 Sufficient food and refreshments suitable for the activity should be carried. Overnight activities should include at least one day's emergency rations.

- 2.7 Individual equipment (including personal protective equipment) must be appropriate for the anticipated conditions.
- 2.8 A suitable first aid kit must be available on every activity. Individual participants are also encouraged to carry a first aid kit that should include personal medications.
- 2.9 An electronic emergency locating device must be available on all activities more than one hour from an emergency response.

3 Leaders to Participant Ratios and Party Sizes

- 3.1 Leader to participant ratios and minimum party size are to be determined by a risk assessment process based on the following considerations:
- Level of difficulty and the skills required
 - Anticipated environmental conditions, remoteness and duration of the activity
 - Weather conditions and future forecasts
 - Prior experience of Leaders and participants
 - Requirements of land owners or managers
 - Availability of communications and access
 - Environmental sustainability
- 3.2 For youth sections the minimum party sizes must be in accordance with sectional award scheme requirements however must not be less than five (5).
- 3.3 The Adventurous Activity Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that maximum numbers do not exceed locality specific requirements.
- 3.4 The minimum party size for the safety of groups undertaking any expedition into backcountry areas for snow related activities shall be five (5).

4 Qualifications

- 4.1 While there are no limitations to how and where a member of the Scout Association receives training in adventurous activity skills, the assessment for accreditation of qualifications remains the responsibility of SAIT.
- 4.2 Where adventurous activity skills are not within the registered scope of SAIT, the responsibility of such skill recognition remains with the State Activity Council.
- 4.3 All required qualifications must be recognized by Scouts NSW and be recorded on the individuals member record.