



# POLICY

## Adventurous Activities



Issued with the authority of the Chief Commissioner  
and Chief Executive Officer of Scouts Australia NSW

Chief Commissioner signature		Chief Executive Officer signature	
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# Adventurous Activities

## 1 Philosophy

This Policy, and associated Standard Operating Procedures, are issued and updated by the Deputy Chief Commissioner Activities, Training and Fellowships (DCC ATF), or their delegate, on behalf of the Chief Commissioner. They outline the requirements for the conduct of Adventurous Activities within Scouts NSW.

- 1.1 Our aim is to provide high quality adventurous activity programmes to all members of Scouts NSW. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for these types of activities are required for the following reasons:
- a) Scouts NSW believes in the benefits of outdoor, challenging activities to support the Youth Programme. Scouts applies a risk minimisation mindset to these types of activities.
  - b) Specific activities are classed as adventurous because of inherent risks to participants.
  - c) Scouting members need to be risk aware, and apply appropriate risk assessment, minimisation and management techniques to ensure safe conduct.
  - d) To maximise safety, Scouts NSW trains and qualifies members to, at least, meet community expectations and standards.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Adventurous Activity** – an outdoor pursuit requiring a level of skill 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 best practice.
- 2.2 **Commercially run activities** – Activities run by persons or organisations external to Scouts NSW, and provided for a fee, and there is a measurable risk to participants. Refer to the Commercial Activities Policy for more information.
- 2.3 **Prohibited activities** – Refer to the Prohibited Activities policy for more information.
- 2.4 **Personal Activity Log book** – An individual's record detailing involvement in adventurous activities. The log book helps demonstrate currency. It can be a variety of formats but must contain dates, type of activity, participant's role, list other participants, activity descriptions. All experience, including that gained externally to Scouting, should be recorded.

- 2.5 **Skills, qualifications** – where community or industry guidelines exist (for example Australian Adventure Activity Standards, [australianaas.org.au](http://australianaas.org.au)) Scouts NSW shall use these as a base standard.
- 2.6 **Adventurous Activity Coordinator (AAC)** - A optional, local role for a suitably qualified member of Scouts NSW who applies technical skills and knowledge to conduct, (via direct or indirect supervision) and coordinate adventurous activities. This person has recognised skills and qualifications appropriate for the activity.
- 2.7 **Adventurous Activity Leader** – An adult member of Scouts NSW whose primary appointment is that of an Adventurous Activity Leader. This person will hold, or be gaining, recognised adventurous activity skills and qualifications.
- 2.8 **Activity Guide** – a member of Scouts NSW whose secondary state appointment is that of an Activity Guide. The Activity Guide of in charge of the specific activity. Guides are appointed by the ACC Training and/or ACC Activities. This person holds appropriate skills and qualifications in outdoor recreation and supports and provides activity delivery to members across NSW.
- 2.9 **Activity Instructor** – is a member of Scouts NSW holding a secondary National Training appointment as an Instructor. This person holds appropriate skills and qualifications in outdoor recreation and is accountable for the training and development of activity skills across NSW.
- 2.10 **Activity/party Leader** – a member of Scouts NSW conducting an Activity. This is the person ‘in charge’ of organising the *overall* activity (compare with the Activity Guide who is in charge of the *specific* activity).
- 2.11 **Independent Participant** – A person with enough skills and knowledge to safely participate in an adventurous activity without dependence on an Activity Guide or Instructor. This person understands and acknowledges inherent risk and assumes responsibility for their own safety and welfare.
- 2.12 **Novice** – a person who has little or no experience in the activity and therefore depends on the Activity Guide or Instructor for supervision, guidance and instruction to facilitate their participation in the activity. Sometimes called a dependant participant.
- 2.13 **Prohibited Activities** – Refer to the Scouts NSW [POL38 Prohibited Activities Policy](#).
- 2.14 **Regional Activity Coordinator (RAC)** – assists the Region Commissioner Activities in the safe delivery and management of specific adventurous activities.
- 2.15 **Region Commissioner Activities (RCA)** – The RCA is accountable for the support and advice within the Region regarding safe conduct and management of activities. The RCA reports to the Region Commissioner, also liaising with the Assistant Chief Commissioner State Activities.
- 2.16 **Assistant Chief Commissioner State Activities** – (ACC SA) This role is responsible and accountable for the coordination and delivery of activities state-wide. The ACC SA helps facilitate effective distribution of resources to delivery activities to the Youth Programme for all members of Scouts NSW.

- 2.17 **State Activities Council** – An informal stakeholder group whose primary purpose is to provide advice and guidance on the safe conduct of adventurous activities for members of Scouts NSW. Membership normally includes RCAs and any others invited by the ACC SA.
- 2.18 **Subject Matter Expert (SME)** – A person considered to be an expert, based on skills, qualifications, and experience. They need not be members of Scouting and they work under supervision of a qualified Leader.
- 2.19 **Supervising sectional Leader** – An adult with a Certificate of Adult Leadership (COAL) who provides ancillary supervision for novices, and emergency response support. They need not have activity skills. They are responsible for the conduct of Youth members in their care, the Activity Leader is responsible for the delivery of the activity.

### 3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Control of all adventurous activities is vested in the Chief Commissioner.
- 3.2 Authority for the control of these activities is normally delegated to the Deputy Chief Commissioner Activities, Training and Fellowships or their delegates.
- 3.3 This Policy must be followed in addition to the relevant Adventurous Activity SOPs.
- 3.4 Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all members of NSW unless specifically and individually exempted, in writing, by the Chief Commissioner or their authorised delegate.
- 3.5 No amendment or adjustment to SIS qualifications and appointments is permitted without written permission from the relevant RCA or ACC SA.
- 3.6 The Region Commissioner Activities (RCA) is responsible for the promotion, administration and regulation of Adventurous Activities within Regions. This responsibility can be delegated to Region Activity Coordinator) or a Regional Activity Council.
- 3.7 The RCAs and ACC SA work as a team to coordinate and facilitate Adventurous Activities to all members of Scouts NSW, regardless of Region borders.
- 3.8 While there are no limitations to how and where a member can receive training, the assessment for accreditation of qualifications remains the responsibility of Scouts Australia Institute of Training (SAIT).
- 3.9 Where adventurous activity skills are not within the registered scope of SAIT, the responsibility for skill recognition lies with the ACC SA.
- 3.10 A suitably qualified member of the Scout Association must be identified as being 'in charge' of the activity. An exception is commercially-run activities where the operator is in charge of the activity, however a leader will still be 'in charge' of the aspects under the control of Scouts NSW.
- 3.11 The **section leader** is responsible for ensuring direct, or indirect supervision, of youth members participating in adventurous activities.
- 3.12 The **activity leader** is responsible for the coordination of the overall activity. This could include participants, subject matter experts, local authorities and so on. The Activity

Leader is often also the Activity Guide, but could be a coordinator and may also be a youth member.

- 3.13 The **activity guide** is responsible for the safe provision of the specific activity including training to prepare participants, duty of care and the safety of all participants during the activity.
- 3.14 All members delivering adventurous activities in Scouts NSW must:
- a) Apply appropriate technical skills and knowledge
  - b) Provide reasonable levels of supervision for participants during the activity, this could be indirect supervision.
  - c) Exercise a duty of care to participants.
  - d) Establish and maintain rapport with participants, maintains well-being of participants and others in the group.
  - e) Conduct risk assessments and apply risk management strategies.
  - f) Conduct appropriate pre-activity safety briefings and applies sound group management practices. For commercially-run activities, the leader is responsible for confirming that the operator will provide the safety briefing for the activity.
  - g) Assist the relevant leader to check weather forecasts and warning, monitors environmental conditions prior to and during the activity and take action to manage hazardous or extreme conditions. For commercially-run activities, the operator generally will monitor conditions however the relevant leader will still need to monitor conditions for aspects not within the control of the operator eg travel arrangements.
  - h) Handle situations where judgement calls are required to solve situations and problems.
  - i) Delegate responsibility to others as appropriate, particularly considering the principle of 'Youth Leading, Adult Supporting'.
  - j) Respond rapidly and effectively to emergencies, including provision of first aid and where relevant, notification to management.
- 3.15 The **Supervising Sectional Leader** is responsible to:
- a) Provide a reasonable level of supervision to participants during activities.
  - b) Exercise a duty of care towards participants.
  - c) Follow direction from the qualified Activity Leader initiates an emergency response as required, appropriate to skills and experience.
  - d) Work with the Activity Leader and does not assume responsibility for technical aspects of the activity.
- 3.16 Scout Activity Centres that operate as commercial enterprises comply with site specific Standard Operating Procedures which may vary from those in this policy. This includes non-commercial use by members of Scouts NSW whilst in attendance at these centres.

- 3.17 Management of youth members participation in the Award Scheme remains the responsibility of the relevant section Leader, within the Programme. Where specific activity skills are required, the Section Leader will seek the support of appropriately qualified Adventurous Activity personnel.

## 4 Conduct of Activities

The following requirements shall be implemented for to *all* Adventurous Activities:

- 4.1 **Legal and other requirements** - At all times state and federal laws must be followed. Nothing in these policies can override a legal obligation. Participants and organisers are responsible for being familiar with appropriate legislation and regulatory requirements. This includes appropriate application and communication with land owners and managers. For commercial activities, the operator is responsible for following legal requirements related to the activity so the leader should attempt to utilise reputable operators as per [PRO63 Commercial Activities](#).
- 4.2 **Policies, SOP's** - All activities should be conducted in accordance with relevant Scout Policies, SOPs, Scouts Australia Environmental Charter, Minimal impact practice, and Scouts Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- 4.3 **Appropriateness of Activity** - All activities must be conducted in a safe manner and be appropriate to the skills, age, and experience of the participants.
- 4.4 **Planning** - All activities should have a plan. An effective plan allows everyone to enjoy themselves while meeting personal and group goals and challenges. Plans should consider appropriateness of the activity relative to participants' interests, skills and experience; and knowledge gained from previous similar activities; transport and fatigue considerations associated with travel and the activity itself. Obtaining local information and preparing a written risk assessment are two key aspects of the plan - see details for these aspects listed separately this section.
- 4.1 **Obtaining local information** – Prior to the activity, the relevant activity leader (or their delegate), shall make appropriate inquiries about local hazards such as venomous wildlife, climatic characteristics, cultural sensitivities, reliability of mobile phone reception, access, rescue considerations and location of nearest hospital. This information may be obtained through sources such as Scout groups who have visited the location previously, via internet search and contact with local councils etc. Such information will assist with the risk assessment and determining first aid requirements and personal protective equipment.
- 4.2 **Monitoring local conditions prior to the activity** - Prior to the specific activity, the relevant Activity Leader shall monitor local conditions via reputable sources such as the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and Rural Fire Services (RFS). If conditions predicted on the day introduce an unacceptable safety risk, the Activity Leader shall make a decision in relation to cancelling the activity or substituting with a less hazardous activity or safer location.
- 4.3 **Written risk assessments** - Activity Leaders will use a base or example risk assessment to prepare a written risk assessment for the individual occasion. The base risk assessment

must be reviewed / revised to account for the specific conditions. When preparing a risk assessment, one key consideration is the number of participants and their level of experience. The risk assessment must be reviewed as conditions change during the activity, or if an incident occurs.

- 4.4 **Risk assessments for commercial activities** – for requirements for commercial activities, see [PRO63 Commercial activities](#).
- 4.5 For more information about risk management and risk assessments, refer to Scouts NSW [PRO18 WHS Risk Management](#) including Form [H-S 18.2 Risk Assessment Form \(3x3 Leaders of Youth\)](#)
- 4.6 **Personal Data Collection and Availability** – the relevant Scouts NSW procedures for collecting personal data for each participant must be implemented. Medical information and emergency contact information must be available for the duration of the activity, including when the location is remote and internet access is not available. Leaders who use CareMonkey should download the information to their mobile phones prior to commencement of the activity (for instructions, refer to the CareMonkey Guide for Administrators). Leaders using paper based E1's should carry a printout of the E1's for the duration of the activity and destroy these at the conclusion of the activity.
- 4.7 **Monitoring local conditions during the activity** Similar to the above point, the relevant leader should conduct monitoring in relation to the hazards along the route being travelled in order to reach the destination. For instance, there could be floods or bushfires along the route that could present hazards or prevent movement. On some occasions it might be safer to remain in place so if this happens, a communication plan must be initiated with Region Commissioner and affected families.
- 4.8 **Commercial operators** - Where the activity is being led by a commercial operator and the local conditions are hazardous, the operator will normally make the decision about whether to proceed. They might do this in consultation with the relevant Scouts Activity leader.
- 4.9 **Cancellation and changes due to safety concerns** - A reasonable attempt should be made to provide participants with prior notice of any changes or cancellation however there will be occasions where the event must be cancelled at late notice due to unacceptable safety risk. Safety must be considered over any inconveniences or disappointments that arise as a result of cancellation or substitutions.

## 5 Equipment

The following requirements shall be implemented for to all Adventurous Activities:

- 5.1 **Equipment suitability** - Participants are to be informed of the type and quality of equipment they are expected to bring (as per activity notification processes). Specific mention should also be made of anticipated weather conditions and seasonal factors to ensure informed consent occurs.
- 5.2 **Equipment condition** - All Scouts-owned equipment is to be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations and must meet recognised

standards where such standards exist. Where the operating manual is no longer available, seek advice from a competent person regarding appropriate maintenance.

- 5.3 **Equipment owned by participants** - It is recognised that participants may have their own personal equipment. While it remains the personal responsibility for participants to keep their equipment in good order, the Activity Leader is also responsible to check that the participant's equipment is suitable for the particular activity and appears to be reasonably maintained.
- 5.4 **Equipment acquisition and disposal** - For safety requirements regarding acquisition of new and second-hand equipment and disposal, refer to [Scouts NSW WHS Procedure 30 Machinery and Equipment Safety](#).
- 5.5 **Food and drink** - Sufficient food and hydration suitable for the activity should be carried. Overnight activities should consider including extra emergency rations.
- 5.6 **First aid kit and medications**- A suitable first aid kit must be available on the activity. Individual participants must bring any personal medications and individuals are also encouraged to carry a first aid kit if it is practical to do so. See also, [Section 9 First Aid](#).
- 5.7 **Navigation equipment** - Navigation equipment appropriate to the situation must be carried. The activity leader shall carry and be competent in at least one non-electronic means of navigation appropriate to the activity and location.
- 5.8 **Emergency communication equipment** – communication equipment suitable for the location should be available and ready for use (e.g. mobile phone, radio, PLB, etc). An electronic emergency locating device, eg PLB, must be available on all activities more than one hour from emergency response.
- 5.9 **Two deep leadership** – Two deep leadership applies to adventurous activities wherever practicable. In scenarios where it is unavoidable to split individual members of the group into smaller entities; for example, into multiple kayaks or walkers spread out along a nature trail; the principle of two deep leadership applies to the group. The Activity leaders shall then arrange the activity appropriately in such a way that all individuals within the group are within general eye sight of one another as much as possible.

## 6 Ratios and party sizes

- 6.1 The appropriate ratio of leaders to participants varies depending on the situation. Unless specifically identified in a SOP, ratios and party size are determined through the risk assessment process based on considerations such as:
- Level of difficulty and skills required
  - Anticipated environmental conditions, remoteness and duration
  - Weather conditions and forecasts
  - Prior experience of leaders and participants
  - Requirements from land owners and managers
  - Availability of communications and access



- g) Environmental sustainability
- 6.2 for youth sections, the minimum party sizes must be in accordance with sectional award scheme and sectional requirements.
- 6.3 The activity Leader is responsible for ensuring that maximum numbers do not exceed locality specific requirements.
- 6.4 When assessing risks and determining appropriate ratios and party sizes, also consult with local subject matter experts to understand typical ratios which have been implemented previously, in addition to any issues these ratios presented. Each situation is different and the Activity Leaders are the most appropriate person to determine ratios for their specific activity, based on these directions.

## 7 Qualifications and skill currency

- 7.1 Qualifications in adventurous activity areas are gained in accordance with the points related to training and SAIT in *Section 3 Roles and responsibilities* and align to outdoor recreation industry standards as appropriate.
- 7.2 Ongoing currency in an adventurous activity skill is based on log book evidence, and relevant and current First Aid qualifications.
- 7.3 By meeting the requirements for the highest qualification held, there is no need to apply for or renew a lower level of qualification.
- 7.4 In certain circumstances, the RCA, at their discretion, may place limitations on individual's qualifications. Such limitations should be renewed at least every 6 months. This allows for a tailored, and safe, development of an individual's skills and experience.
- 7.5 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 when seeking specific appointment outcomes (eg appointment to Guide or Instructor).
- 7.6 Refer to <https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/about/adult-support/leaders/adventurous-activities/> for information on qualifications for specific adventurous activities.

## 8 Prohibited Activities

- 8.1 For information about prohibited activities, see *POL38 Prohibited Activities Policy*.

## 9 Exclusion from activities

- 9.1 There may be occasions when a participant must be excluded from participation in an activity. The decision to exclude lies with the Activity Leader. Any sectional Leaders present must support and assist this decision, especially if the Activity Leader is a youth member.
- 9.2 Reasons for exclusion include (but are not limited to):

- a) Drug / alcohol influence
  - b) Injury or illness (especially if contagious)
  - c) Inability or unwillingness to follow safety directions
  - d) Behaving in a reckless manner
  - e) Endangering others
  - f) Lack of suitable personal equipment
  - g) Lack of adequate fitness / physical ability
- 9.3 Care must be taken not to exclude a participant based on perception of their ability. If an Activity Leader has concerns they should consult with the relevant section Leader and/or primary carers of the member to identify suitable modifications to the activity to allow for supported participation.
- 9.4 The final decision is one for the Activity Leader, who, if necessary, may cancel the activity.

## 10 First Aid

- 10.1 A suitable first aid kit must be available on the activity. Individual participants must bring any personal medications and individuals are also encouraged to carry a first aid kit if it is practical to do so.
- 10.2 To lead any activity, a Leader (or 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:
- a) Size of group
  - b) Age and characteristics of the participants
  - c) Remoteness of activity
  - d) Ease of contact for emergency services and likely response times
  - e) Nature and severity of likely injuries
- 10.3 Individual participants who require medication are responsible to bring sufficient quantities for the duration of the activity. The Activity Leader should be made aware of any medical issues that could impact on the activity.
- 10.4 Unless otherwise stated in SOPs, the following common approach should be used. The time limits are guidelines only and Activity Leaders need to make their own judgements. If in doubt, seek advice from the RCA or AAC SA.
- 10.4.1. **Urban** – This applies in parks and urban areas easily accessible by ambulance. Distance from roads should be no more than 15 to 30 minutes walking time. No formal first aid qualifications may be necessary, but a Leader should, at least, be able to care for someone who is unconscious or choking, treat for shock, manage bleeding, and provide CPR.

- 10.4.2. **Standard** – Applies to any situation where access to professional medical care is less than 1 hour from roads. It is strongly recommended that Leaders have a first aid qualification.
- 10.4.3. **Remote** – applies to any situation where access to professional medical care is greater than 1 hour from roads. At least one person, preferably more, must have an accredited first aid qualification. A PLB should be carried in remote situations.

## 11 Incidents

- 11.1 All incidents will be reported using the appropriate on-line report available through the Scouts NSW website in line with Scouts NSW *PRO15 Incident Reporting and Analysis*.
- 11.2 The Activity Leader is responsible for making sure incidents are reported, however it is recognised that incidents can arise outside of the leaders' knowledge so anybody may complete an on-line incident report.
- 11.3 Whenever on-line access is not available, for example due to remoteness, the on-line report should be completed as soon as practical once access is available. If a hard copy form is used to report the incident initially, the information on the hard copy report must then be re-entered via the on-line system once access to the on-line report becomes available.
- 11.4 If a serious incident occurs, call your manager or Group Leader/Leader in Charge as soon as possible once the initial situation is under control and the casualty is taken for treatment. This person will escalate the matter to the appropriate senior volunteers or senior employed staff members. Serious incidents typically are those that endanger life or injures that require admission to hospital as an inpatient for immediate treatment or emergency surgery. Cease the activity at least temporarily, to preserve the scene and equipment for possible investigation. If appropriate, ask witnesses to write down what they witnessed. Continue to liaise with management as necessary to plan a course of action.
- 11.5 Scouts NSW Privacy policy and Social Media policy apply to any incidents. Members should seek guidance before making any communication outside of this policy and should avoid speaking with the media.

## 12 Complaints Management

- 12.1 For complaints regarding adventurous activity qualifications within scope for SAIT, refer <https://training.scouts.com.au/Qualifications>.
- 12.2 For complaints regarding all other adventurous activity qualifications, the Region Commissioner Activities should be consulted in the first instance.
- 12.3 The Scouts NSW Grievance policy should be followed for any other issues.