

Bushwalking

Adventure Activity Standards (AAS)

for
Organisations, Guides & Leaders
Conducting Adventurous
Activities for Participants
(Commercial or Non-Commercial)



Government of South Australia
Office for Recreation and Sport



Introduction to AAS

The South Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) have been developed to assist organisations, guides and leaders to plan and undertake outdoor adventure activities with dependent participants. This document should be used as part of your organisation's risk management program.

Participants undertaking adventure activities may already have a degree of skill and experience in a particular adventure activity, and as such may be less dependent upon the group leader for guidance and instruction. In these situations, the AAS should be adapted to reflect the experience of group members and the particular situation of the adventure activity.

Regardless of the extent to which the AAS is adopted, each organisation, guide and leader has a duty of care to its participants to have completed a risk analysis of the activity, and developed a risk management approach to address potential and unexpected situations.

The AAS have been prepared with the involvement of a wide cross-section of South Australia's and Victoria's outdoor industry, and reflects minimal acceptable standards of behavior expected when planning and undertaking outdoor adventure activities with inexperienced and dependent participants.

Acknowledgement

In the development and implementation of AAS in South Australia, Recreation SA acknowledges the work of the Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc. in initiating, coordinating and developing AAS through many outdoor recreation groups within Victoria.

These AAS can now be adapted nationally across a number of outdoor adventure activities, and Recreation SA has reviewed and amended the content, in consultation with South Australian outdoor industry representatives, to reflect South Australia's legal, government, environmental, social, education and industry conditions.

The implementation of the AAS in South Australia is recognition of the State's commitment to national minimum industry standards for outdoor adventure activities.

Important disclaimer

The information contained in this publication has been gathered through widespread industry consultation. All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that it is accurate, relevant and current at the date of publication. Nevertheless, the Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) are only advisory and general in nature and should not be relied upon to meet individual or specific requirements. They are recommendations for voluntary application to adventure activity providers and participants. They are not binding on any person or organisation and have no legal force.

The AAS will not cover each and every circumstance of an adventure activity. Nor can they, when adhered to, entirely eliminate the risk or possibility of loss or injury. Consequently they should be used as a guide only. Whenever using the information contained in this publication or any AAS, all adventure activity providers should carefully evaluate the specific requirements of the intended adventure activity and the persons participating in it. If necessary, advice should be obtained from a suitably experienced and qualified professional person.

This publication and the information and the AAS it contains are made available on the express condition that the Government of South Australia (Office for Recreation and Sport) and Recreation SA, together with the authors, consultants and advisors who have assisted in compiling and drafting this publication and the AAS are not rendering professional advice to any person or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person as a consequence of reliance upon anything contained in or omitted from this publication.

Supported by members of Recreation SA's Outdoor Standing Committee representing:

- Department for Environment and Heritage
- Operation Flinders
- Bushwalking Leadership SA
- Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures
- Venture Corporate Recharge
- BCS Adventure Services
- Scouts SA
- The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education
- Rock Solid Adventure
- With Good Company
- TAFE SA, Adelaide North

Managed by the AAS Steering Committee representing:

- Department of Education and Children's Services
- Department for Environment and Heritage
- Department for Families and Communities—Office for Youth
- Department for Families and Communities—Youth Adventure and Recreation Service
- Office for Recreation and Sport
- Recreation SA
- TAFE SA, Adelaide North
- Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures
- Venture Corporate Recharge
- South Australian Rock Climbing Education Association (SAREA)

Content provided by and endorsed by:

- Bushwalking Leadership South Australia Inc
- Department for Environment and Heritage
- Department for Families and Communities—Youth Adventure and Recreation Service
- TAFE SA, Adelaide North
- Scouts SA

Adventure Activity Standards: why have standards?

AAS are voluntary guidelines for undertaking adventure activities in a manner designed to promote:

1. **Safety** for both participants and providers
2. **Information** for providers against legal liability claims and criminal penalties
3. **Assistance** in obtaining insurance cover.

These AAS are **not** statutory standards imposed by law.

Basis of legal liability

Legal liability for personal injuries or property damage is primarily governed by the law of:

1. Contract
2. Negligence.

Although provisions of statutes such as the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)* and the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002* are also relevant.

Claims in contract

For there to be a claim in contract there must be a legally enforceable agreement (i.e. a contract) between the person who has suffered injury or loss and the provider against whom the claim is being made. For example, there is a contract between a provider and a client, where the provider agrees to provide services for payment. The contract can be in writing or oral, or both. The claim in contract can only be made by one party to the contract against the other party, unlike a claim in negligence, which is not so limited.

Apart from the express terms of the contract, the law will usually imply certain terms into a contract that require a service provider to do a number of things when providing that service. Those implied terms might include a requirement to provide competent guides and instruction, safe equipment, and a general requirement to exercise the degree of reasonable skill and care which is to be expected of a competent provider. Some of these terms will be implied by sections of the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)* and the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*.

If injury or damage occurs because the provider did not exercise reasonable care in the provision of the service, a Court can find there was a breach of the contract entitling a party to claim compensation (damages) for the loss or injury suffered.

Claims in negligence

Over recent years the law of negligence has undergone substantial legislative change in South Australia. These changes are set out in the *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)*.

The essential elements of a claim in negligence are:

1. a duty of care being owed by the provider to take reasonable measures for the safety of their clients/participants

2. a breach of this duty of care
3. the breach of the duty of care being a cause of the harm suffered by the participant.

A successful claim in negligence against a provider will result in an award of damages against that provider to compensate for the loss or injury thereby suffered.

Although the law does not automatically impose a duty of care, it is likely such a duty will be imposed when one party (the provider) assumes responsibility for another in the provision of adventure activities.

The duty of care is a legal requirement imposed by the courts on a provider to take reasonable care to protect a client or participant from foreseeable harm or loss.

If a claim is made and a court finds that a duty of care is owed, the court must then decide what is the appropriate level or standard of that duty of care, to determine if the provider has acted reasonably or alternatively has breached the duty of care. The standard of care is determined by all the relevant circumstances and the particular facts of each case. A court will have regard to the experience of the providers and the clients, the conditions at the time, and ultimately may seek the guidance from experts in the field. A court will find that the standard of care has not been met, (i.e. there has been a breach of the duty of care) if the evidence, on the balance of probabilities, establishes that the provider has not acted reasonably in the circumstances. If that conduct has caused loss and damage the provider will be liable to pay damages to compensate the party who has been injured or has suffered a loss.

For example, in an outdoor recreation activity some participants could find themselves in a situation suited to more advanced participants. There may be persons in the group who have been lead to believe by the provider that a certain skill level was not required and enrolled to join a group mis-described as being for 'beginners'.

If an accident occurred due to their inexperience, and these 'novice' participants were injured, it is possible that a legal action to recover damages might be based as follows:

- in the law of contract, against the provider, if it can be demonstrated that the provider incorrectly described the group as being for 'beginners'
- in the law of negligence, against the leader and guide, as well as the provider because of a failure to adequately instruct, advise and perhaps supervise the group.

The duty of care of the provider is higher than that placed on the ordinary citizen because the provider has agreed to provide services for a reward or assumed a responsibility of care for others, e.g. by holding him/herself out as experts or specialists who have agreed to take participants into potentially dangerous or remote situations.

Whilst not an exclusive list the following is a guide to the standards that should be addressed by any provider, guide, instructor, teacher or staff member:

- ensure the activity is appropriate for the skills and experience of the intended participants
- ensure the intended activity is appropriate given the known, expected and forecast conditions

- provide adequate staff/leader supervision
- provide competent and appropriately trained staff/leaders
- provide safe and properly functioning and adjusted equipment
- provide reasonable food and safe shelter (if relevant to the activity)
- provide reasonable guidance, instruction and direction to participants
- depending on the activity, have an adequate knowledge of the area in which it is to take place and be able to provide reasonable first aid, emergency backup and rescue.

The law will require the provider to protect participants from known hazards, but also from those risks that could arise (that is, those that the provider, instructor, teacher or staff member/guide should reasonably have foreseen) against which reasonable preventative measures could be taken.

In these circumstances, in order to limit potential for legal liability and to minimise the risk of injury, each organisation needs to implement risk and safety management processes, which have identified foreseeable risks and put in place measures to control such hazards. For the same reasons, all providers, leaders or guides ought, as a minimum, to have completed appropriate first aid and activity specific training.

This is particularly so where the activity is a specialised one. In these circumstances, as a participant will be seen as relying on the expertise of the provider, leader or guide, a high duty of care will be imposed because they will be considered as having a responsibility for the control, guidance and protection of the participant.

Defences against claims by participants

No Negligence

The most obvious defence to a claim in negligence is for the operator to establish that he/she acted with all reasonable care in the circumstances: that is, was not negligent.

In attempting to do so the following questions must be considered:

- was the risk of harm foreseeable?
- was the risk not insignificant?
- would a reasonable operator have taken additional precautions that would have prevented the harm?

In determining whether a reasonable operator would have taken additional precautions a court will consider the following (amongst other relevant things):

- the probability that harm would occur if care were not taken
- the likely seriousness of the harm
- the burden of taking precautions to avoid the risk of harm
- the social utility of the activity that creates the risk of harm.

Voluntary Assumption of Risk

If it can be proved, on the balance of probabilities, that a participant was fully aware of and freely accepted the risk of suffering injury in an activity then this will be a defence to a claim in negligence. It will not be a defence, however, if the injury was caused by the inexperience or incompetence of the provider, defective equipment, inadequate supervision or instruction as it is highly unlikely that any participant would have consented to accept such risks.

If the risk of harm was an obvious one then there is a rebuttable presumption that the person who suffered the harm was aware of the risk.

Duty to Warn

A person who owes a duty of care to another person to give a warning, or other information in respect of a risk, satisfies that duty if reasonable care is taken to give that warning, or other information. This is potentially very important in the context of an Adventure Activity where it may be prudent for the provider to give all participants printed instructions and warnings (where appropriate) and obtain signed acknowledgements.

However, section 38 of the *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)* prescribes that there is no duty to warn of an 'obvious risk', or if there is an applicable code of practice in force under the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*. Further to this, the section does not apply if the plaintiff has requested advice or information about the risk from the defendant or if the defendant is required to warn the plaintiff of the risk either by law or pursuant to the code in force under the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*.

Contributory Negligence

If the accident was caused or contributed to by lack of reasonable care on the part of the participant then this will be a partial defence, according to the apportionment of responsibility made by the court between the provider and the participant. In cases of extreme acts of negligence by the participant, contributory negligence can be very high (e.g. 80–90%) and sometimes a complete defence.

Inherent Risks

A person is not liable in negligence for harm suffered by another person as a result of an inherent risk. An inherent risk is a risk of something occurring that cannot be avoided by the exercise of reasonable care.

Waiver to Sue/Exclusion of Liability Agreements

Amendments to the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*, and the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)* enables providers of 'recreational services' to modify or exclude a duty of care owed to a consumer by the use of a waiver or limitation of liability. This will only apply where there is no registered code in relation to the recreational service. The amendment will only apply until 1 August 2007, after which time the only manner in which liability will be able to be modified with respect to a recreational service will be in accordance with a registered code.

Good Samaritans, Volunteers, Apologies

Good Samaritans

Under the *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)* (as amended) an individual who provides assistance, advice or care to another person in an emergency, where there is no expectation of payment by money or other means, will not be able to be sued for any injury or harm he/she causes if acting in good faith without recklessness (provided the good Samaritan's ability was not significantly impaired by alcohol or drugs).

Volunteers

Pursuant to the *Volunteers Protection Act 2001 (SA)* volunteers are protected from liability for injury to another when they are acting in good faith and without recklessness in the course of carrying out community work for a community organisation. This immunity does not operate if the volunteer's ability to carry out the work properly was impaired by drugs or the volunteer was acting outside the scope of activities authorised by the community organisation or contrary to instructions given by the community organisation.

Expressions of Regret

The *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)* provides that no admission of liability or fault is to be inferred from the fact that a person expressed regret in respect of the incident relating to the injury.

Limitation on claims for personal injury damages

Pursuant to the *Civil Liability Act 1936* (as amended) an injured person cannot obtain damages for pain and suffering unless the injured person's ability to lead a normal life was significantly impaired by the injury for a period of at least seven days or medical expenses of at least the prescribed minimum have been reasonably incurred in connection with the injury. The assessment of pain and suffering is assigned a scale value on a scale running from zero to sixty, sixty being the most severe form of injury.

The Act also imposes a cap on damages for pain and suffering of a maximum of \$241,500 (indexed annually) together with other limitations in respect of damages for mental harm, and claims for both past and future economic loss.

Applying the Adventure Activity Standards

Having suitable risk management programs and strategies in place, and ensuring the AAS are met, will minimise the likelihood of injury or loss. Evidence of compliance with such programs and the AAS may also assist in the legal defence of claims and in helping to establish that a provider and its leaders have acted reasonably in the circumstances (i.e. were not negligent). It is also likely such programs will assist providers in obtaining more favourable insurance arrangements.

Disclaimer

The above comments on legal liability in Contract and Negligence and defences and limitations thereto, including recent legislative changes, do not purport to be a complete and accurate description of the law on these topics. The State Government of South Australia (Office for Recreation and Sport) and Recreation SA, its servants and agents are not by these comments providing legal advice to any person, company or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person, company or organisation as a consequence of or in reliance upon anything contained in, implied by, or admitted in this document.

Contents

Activity description	12
Definition of terms.....	12
Summary of abbreviations	12
1 Planning	13
1.1 Considerations for developing an activity plan	13
1.2 Pre-trip documentation	14
1.3 Risk management.....	14
1.4 Emergency strategy.....	15
1.5 Restriction to participation	15
2 Responsibilities of the trip leader/assistant	15
2.1 Skills expected of a leader	16
2.1.1 Bushwalking Leader on 'Urban walks'.....	16
2.1.2 Bushwalking Leader on Tracked or Easy Untracked (Easy).....	16
2.1.3 Bushwalking Leader on Difficult and Trackless (Intermediate)	17
2.1.4 Bushwalking Leader on Unmodified landscapes (Advanced)	18
2.2 First aid.....	18
2.3 Specific responsibilities of the trip leader	19
2.4 Assistant to the trip leader	19
2.5 Communication.....	20
2.6 Ratios of trip leader and assistant/s to participants	20
2.7 Group size	21
3 Equipment	21
3.1 Clothing	21
3.2 Personal items.....	22
3.3 Group equipment.....	22
4 Environment and conduct	22
Waste	22
Fire	22
Camping	23
5 Further information	24

Activity description

Bushwalking is the activity of walking in the natural environment that may include walks for pleasure, challenge, experience and/or educational outcomes. The term 'bushwalking' can be applied to long (multi day) as well as short (an hour or two) walks and can be enjoyed in environments as diverse as urban suburbs, coastal and alpine regions.

AAS are written specifically for formal groups (commercial and non commercial organisations) undertaking organised activities and are intended to provide guidance towards satisfying the legal obligations inherent in delivering such activities. For this reason it is important to ensure that each leader, guide or organisation interpret the AAS appropriately for the specific group, area and duration of each bushwalk.

Definition of terms

Organisation: A group of persons organised for a particular purpose and assuming the role of providing a walking activity (Activity Provider) being commercial (for profit) or non-commercial (not for profit/community group).

Participant: A person whose welfare is the responsibility of the trip leader or assistant (NOLRS 'Client') and/or who participates in an activity not in a leadership role.

Assistant: A person who assumes responsibility as delegated by the trip leader for a group of participants (commercial or not) (NOLRS 'Guide').

Trip Leader: The person who assumes the responsibility of the assistant(s) and coordinates the entire group, including the assistants to satisfy the objectives of the trip regardless of it being a commercial trip or not.

Urban Walk: These are not clearly defined but are generally walks undertaken in urban parks such as city parks and Linear Park. The inclusion of the term urban walks is to acknowledge that some bushwalking occurs at a level not generally considered to be an adventurous activity but which requires minimal skill and planning.

Summary of abbreviations

AAS	Adventure Activity Standards
DEST	Dept. Education, Science and Training
NTIS	National Training Information Service
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
SRTA	Sport and Recreation Training Australia
NOLRS	National Outdoor Leaders Registration Scheme
CBD	Central Business District
GPS	Global Positioning System
Cth	Commonwealth

1 Planning

In any adventurous activity, planning is essential in order to achieve objectives, have fun and to minimise the inherent risks to participants. There are many recognised ways to plan a bushwalking activity and AAS recognise that each group will approach this differently. This section is intended to provide a framework for planning bushwalking activities to minimise the risks to participants.

1.1 Considerations for developing an activity plan

Organising bodies and experienced leaders may be familiar with the many factors that can influence the quality and the safety of a bushwalking trip. The following is a list of such factors and should be addressed in any bushwalking activity plan.

Although recommended, it is not essential that the process of addressing these factors be documented for all groups:

- objectives of the trip (desired outcomes)
- expected capabilities of participants:
 - age, experience, skill
 - fitness, disposition, known medical conditions
- area and route selection:
 - availability and suitability of maps
 - land managers requirements (access restrictions, group sizes, permit requirements, booking requirements)
 - availability of area specific information
 - ability of site to withstand visitation with minimal impact
 - terrain (route characteristics) and associated implications
 - remoteness and access
 - seasonal factors (snow, fire and availability of drinking water)
- expected weather conditions and implications (hypothermia, hyperthermia)
- group composition:
 - size of group
 - standard of care (education, commercial or community organisation)
 - supervision requirements (see 2.6)
- equipment, food and clothing requirements:
 - availability of equipment for participants
 - available communication equipment
- support/evacuation capabilities (vehicle, etc.)
 - response time for emergency rescue/retrieval may take minimum of 4 hours in remote areas
- first aid requirements.

The leader selected to conduct or undertake a bushwalking trip:

- must have the required skills and experience available to conduct the trip
- should be suitably familiar with the area being visited (the level of familiarity will vary according to the objectives and circumstances surrounding the walk/group).

Reasons for cancelling, modifying or postponing a trip include (but are not limited to) inappropriate weather conditions, insufficient equipment, restrictions dictated by the land manager and environmental factors (flood, drought, fire).

1.2 Pre-trip documentation

There are many sound reasons for documenting certain aspects of the activity plan. This may be for the safety of the group should the leader become injured or incapacitated, it may allow search and rescue teams to conduct a more efficient search (where necessary) or to assist with a legal defence following an incident.

Appropriate to the standard of care owed to the participants, the following should be documented, carried on the walk and a copy made available to a non-participating contact:

- trip plan (at least from where to where, how long it should take and expected hazards)
- emergency strategy (refer 1.4)
- participants' names, address and emergency contact details
- any medical conditions of participants that is likely to affect performance (for example asthma (details of management plan required), diabetes, epilepsy, fainting/dizziness, specific allergic reactions, blood conditions which may effect bleeding/ blood clotting, conditions effecting balance, recent or long-standing injuries (e.g. back, knee, ankle), disability or other relevant medical conditions (e.g. pregnancy, repetitive strain injury (RSI) and any relevant medication)
- acknowledgement of the inherent risks involved in the specific activity, signed by participants after a full explanation briefing
- the signature of a parent/guardian for participants under the age of 18.

Throughout the trip, the leader must take reasonable steps to account for any known specific participant medical requirements.

1.3 Risk management

The Australian/New Zealand Standard on Risk Management (AS/NZ 4360:1999) is an established process for risk management, which describes risk management as 'a process consisting of well-defined steps which, taken in sequence, support better decision making by contributing a greater insight into risks and their impacts.'

Appropriate to the walk being undertaken and the group involved, foreseeable risks should be noted and strategies should be considered to avoid or minimise these risks. This may be a part of the trip plan and should identify hazards such as unseasonal snowfalls, rock scrambles and river crossings.

Some trips and organisations (such as clubs and commercial operators) have established risk management guidelines, which should be referred to. It may be a requirement of the organisation that this be formally documented.

1.4 Emergency strategy

An emergency strategy should be devised from the risk assessment to manage foreseeable incidents and minimise their escalation.

Trip leader(s) and a non-participating contact, either within each organisation or otherwise, should be made aware of the emergency strategy.

The emergency strategy for a bushwalking trip should be specific to each walk and will contain:

- emergency access and emergency escape routes (where possible)
- emergency contact details for key organisations (land manager and police) and how they are best contacted (mobile phone, satellite phone, radio)
- planned start and finish time of the walk
- the emergency trigger time for the non-participating contact to inform emergency services (on failure of group to return/check-in)
- specific communication being carried by group
- strategies adopted peculiar to specific areas being visited (e.g. the rock scramble mentioned within 1.3).

The trip leader should communicate with the relevant non-participating contact at designated time/s. Upon failure to do so the non-participating contact will commence the planned process/strategy to ultimately notify the police according to that process/strategy (trigger time).

1.5 Restriction to participation

Participants may be excluded from a trip (or a trip may be modified) at any time prior to departure and at the leader's discretion throughout the trip where possible. Such participants can include (but are not limited to) those who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including prescription drugs which may affect performance), those who are unable or unwilling to follow instructions, those who lack suitable equipment, level of fitness, physical ability and experience for the particular trip.

2 Responsibilities of the trip leader/assistant

This section of the AAS includes all aspects of the activity plan that are specifically relevant to the leader of the trip and any assistants. It describes the skills that those individuals should have and the minimum tasks that they are responsible for throughout the duration of any bushwalk.

The following does not exclude 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 directions/instruction of the leader on any walk.

2.1 Skills expected of a leader

To lead commercial bushwalking activities a leader should be confident of having skills and experience at least equivalent to that described by the following Units of Competency. It is acknowledged that experience, training through community organisations such as walking clubs or via employers, TAFE colleges, universities, registered training organisations (RTOs), in-house training and international qualifications are all ways in which a leader can acquire these skills.

In non-commercial bushwalking activities participants are often peers/club members with known experience/skills. Where this is the case the leader may not require all of the skills listed below but may prefer to delegate some aspects to other members of the group. These groups need to assess the list of skills described below and to ensure those that are relevant to the particular activity are available within the group.

A statement of attainment for these units is not required but the inclusion of this section is intended to provide a suitable benchmark describing the skills that leaders should have, although not all of the skills listed below will be applicable on all trips. It is recommended that leaders keep a record of activities they participate in and/or are responsible for as relevant experience is also extremely important.

2.1.1 Bushwalking Leader on 'Urban walks'

Urban walks are not defined within the National Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package, however the need to describe such walks has been identified through the consultation to develop this AAS. Leaders of urban walks should be deemed to be responsible adults by the organisation but should not be expected to have additional specific skills.

Reasonable care should be taken to plan the activity and ensure that assistance can be sought if necessary: refer 2.3 for Specific responsibilities of the trip leader.

2.1.2 Bushwalking Leader on Tracked or Easy Untracked (Easy)

Tracked or easy untracked areas are reliably marked on maps and are obvious on the ground. Tracks are inspected on a regular basis and road or other safe catching features are easily reached within 2 hours by applying elementary navigation principles.

A leader at this level should be confident they have the following skills:

Leadership and management skills

Code	Unit name
SRXEMR001A	Respond to emergency situations
SRXFAD001A	Provide first aid
SRXGRO001A	Facilitate a group
SRXGRO002A	Deal with conflict
SRXINU002A	Apply sport and recreation law
SRXOHS001B	Follow defined OHS procedures
SRXRIK001A	Undertake risk analysis of activities

Outdoor recreation skills

Code	Unit name
PUAOPE002A	Operate communication systems and equipment
SRONAV002B	Navigate in difficult and trackless areas
SROOPS002B	Plan for minimal environmental impact
SROOPS003B	Apply weather information
SROOPS006B	Use and maintain a temporary or overnight site
SROODR002A	Plan outdoor recreation activities

Bushwalking skills

Code	Unit name
SROODR005A	Guide outdoor recreation sessions
SROBWG002A	Demonstrate bushwalking skills in difficult and trackless areas
SROBWG008A	Guide bushwalks in tracked or easy untracked areas

2.1.3 Bushwalking Leader on Difficult and Trackless (Intermediate)

Difficult or trackless areas are where there are limited modifications to the natural surface so that track alignment is indistinct in places; there is minimal clearance along the track; signage is minimal and only for management purposes; there are terrain and man-made hazards (such as cliff lines or dense forests); the possibility for changes in weather and visibility exists.

A leader at this level should be confident they have the above plus the following skills:

Leadership and management skills

Code	Unit name
SRXEMR002A	Coordinate emergency response
SRXGRO003A	Provide leadership to groups
SRXOHS002B	Implement and monitor the organisation's OHS policies, procedures and programs

Outdoor recreation skills

Code	Unit name
SRONAV003B	Navigate in unmodified landscapes in extreme environmental conditions
SROOPS004B	Interpret weather conditions in the field
SROODR003B	Plan outdoor recreation activities (advanced)
SROODR006A	Manage risk in an outdoor recreation activity

Bushwalking skills

Code	Unit name
SROBWG003A	Demonstrate bushwalking skills in unmodified landscapes
SROBWG004A	Demonstrate river crossing skills
SROBWG009A	Guide bushwalking in difficult and trackless areas

2.1.4 Bushwalking Leader on Unmodified landscapes (Advanced)

Unmodified landscapes are those which are totally natural where there are no modifications to the natural surface so that track alignment is indistinct and no clearance along the track; there is no signage; the track is not managed for public risk and where the onset of extreme environmental conditions has a significant adverse impact upon the bushwalk.

A leader at this level should have all of the above skills plus the bushwalking skills described within the Unit of Competence:

Code	Unit name
SROBWG010A	Guide bushwalks in unmodified landscapes

(Details of these units and the National Outdoor Leaders Registration Scheme (NOLRS) can be accessed by contacting Recreation SA.)

2.2 First aid

Decisions on the level of first aid should be based upon the risk assessment and emergency strategy for the adventure activity. Leaders and guides should have the appropriate first aid skills commensurate with the planned activity, the skills of the group and the location of the activity, including remote areas. A comprehensive first aid kit appropriate to the level of first aid training must be accessible at all times. Remote areas may require more advanced first aid skills such as Wilderness First Aid where leader and guides recognise, prevent and treat many illnesses and injuries prevalent in wilderness and remote locations.

The following provides an overview of equivalent first aid training with St John Ambulance and Australia Red Cross.

Level 1: Basic First Aid (Resuscitation) involves basic skills and knowledge in order to recognise and provide immediate first aid for a range of common illnesses and injuries and minimise the severity of injury or sudden illness.

Leaders and guides with Basic First Aid should be able to:

- perform CPR (resuscitation)
- manage breathing emergencies: expired air resuscitation (EAR)
- control bleeding, wounds and bandaging
- manage extremes of heat and cold
- manage injuries to bones, joints and muscles
- manage poisoning, bites and stings

Level 2: Intermediate or Senior First Aid involves skills and knowledge to recognise and provide immediate first aid for a range of common illnesses and injuries and minimise the severity of injury or sudden illness.

Leaders and guides with Intermediate or Senior First Aid should be able to:

- define the principles of first aid
- demonstrate knowledge of basic human anatomy

- recognise and manage both a conscious and an unconscious casualty
- perform effective CPR and expired air resuscitation (EAR)
- identify a range of common illnesses and injuries
- control bleeding and care for various types of wounds
- recognise and manage injuries to bone or soft tissue
- recognise and manage medical conditions that may need emergency care, including heart attack, stroke, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy
- use practical first aid skills using prepared and improvised materials
- demonstrate knowledge of first aid management for a range of common illnesses and injuries.

On multi-day trips, trips planned for participants with disabilities and/or walks into remote areas, more specialised first aid knowledge may be required.

2.3 Specific responsibilities of the trip leader

The following are the responsibilities of a bushwalking trip leader (in addition to leading the group). Individual tasks may be delegated but the responsibility remains with the trip leader to:

- take reasonable steps to ensure that the level of knowledge, ability, skill and equipment of each participant is appropriate for the level of difficulty and complexity of the trip
- research and plan for likely hazards
- ensure that minimal environmental impact message is conveyed and adhered to
- nominate an assistant (or assistants) who has/have known knowledge and are willing to perform the duties where considered necessary
- ensure a briefing is conducted and understood by all participants
- undertake headcount before, during and immediately following the trip
- maintain awareness of the physical and psychological condition of the group
- control the pace of the group appropriately
- delegate responsibility to other group members as necessary (whip, first aid, etc.)
- notify appropriate persons of safe completion
- ensure that any incidents are managed, reported and recorded
- manage group to avoid or minimise the effects of hazards.

2.4 Assistant to the trip leader

If an assistant to the leader is appointed, they must be familiar with the requirements of the activity in order to be able to assume an effective assistant role. They must also have the ability to competently participate in emergency response procedures as needed.

If the leader becomes incapacitated, then the nominated assistant assumes the responsibilities of the leader.

2.5 Communication

It is essential that communication of a trip begin with pre-trip information being accurately disseminated to potential participants in adequate time for an informed decision to be made about their participation.

All participants and leaders should use agreed and understood communication (briefing, calls). It is essential that this is devised before the trip and that it is included as a component of the pre trip briefing.

The briefing should be delivered to ensure that all participants are aware of the following:

- identity and role of trip leader(s) and assistant(s)
- an outline of the trip plan and objectives
- the nature of the activity and its inherent risks
- essential equipment and clothing
- recommendations on the type and amount of food likely to be required
- recommendations on the availability of water
- strategies for conservation including flora, fauna and rubbish removal and sanitation
- a summary of the emergency plan or sufficient information to allow participants to act appropriately in the event of an incident or emergency
- explanation of what is expected of participants and that once informed, it is the participant's responsibility to act as requested (conduct, etc.)
- Agreed methods of communication within the group.

Leaders should receive acknowledgment that participants have understood the content of the briefing.

2.6 Ratios of trip leader and assistant/s to participants

There are clearly situations where judgement will dictate the requirement for smaller numbers of participants per leader/assistant. As such, the leader of any walk should carefully consider the supervision ratio based upon consideration of:

- experience of the leader
- expected capabilities of participants
- conditions (environment, remoteness, weather)
- land manager's requirements
- planned duration of walk
- remoteness of planned walk.

For groups where the participants are primarily minors, under the age of 18, a ratio of 1:10 should not be exceeded.

2.7 Group size

Group size is an essential component of group management. Maximum and minimum group size must be carefully decided based upon the following:

- specific restrictions imposed by the land manager
- expected environmental impact of the planned route
- experience of the leader and participants
- the potential impact of other users.

As a general rule, groups should be of no less than four and where practical to do so, large groups should be split into two or more smaller groups.

3 Equipment

Equipment requirements for bushwalking are subjective and will vary with the objectives of the trip, experience of the participants (and leader), and the expected environmental conditions. As such, it is essential that equipment and clothing requirements be considered in a way that can account for foreseeable eventualities.

Leaders should be satisfied that all participants set out with suitable equipment, food and clothing for the planned trip. It is recommended that this be achieved by reference to a tailored checklist, which should be provided to participants in advance. The checklist should include (as a minimum) the contents of section 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 below, which are provided as examples.

Adjustments to the clothing and equipment should be made for:

- walking in hot dry conditions
- walking in tropical conditions
- walking in winter conditions
- extended trips.

(The Bushwalking and Ski Touring Leadership Handbook of the Bushwalking and Mountain-craft Training Advisory Board contains a thorough list of essential and optional equipment for day walks and for overnight walks; 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 are summary lists subject to seasonal variation and do not include specific details about each item.)

3.1 Clothing

Footwear, socks, gaiters, shorts, trousers, shirt, thermal top and pants, wool jumpers or fleece jacket, waterproof jacket, waterproof pants, sun hat and beanie, gloves or mittens.

Consider what spares may be required.

3.2 Personal items

Watch, compass and maps, notebook and pencil, whistle, sunscreen, insect repellent, first aid kit and any personal medication, matches/lighter, suitable knife, toilet paper, trowel, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, toiletries for over night walks.

Pack, pack liner, sit mat, water bottles, food, torch, rubbish bag, section of cord or rope.

3.3 Group equipment

The leader should consider the following equipment when determining what equipment is appropriate for the specific walk being undertaken. Depending on the group it is likely that participants will share the group equipment:

- tent, groundsheet, cooking equipment, pot scrubber, candles (for overnight/extended trips)
- communication equipment such as mobile phone, radio, PLB (personal locator beacon) appropriate to the location (for day or overnight/extended trips).

4 Environment and conduct

The leader, guide and organising body should be satisfied that participants are aware of their responsibilities (as members of the group) to ensure areas of scenic or recreational significance, special scientific or archaeological sites, and the natural environment are respected, and that the requirements of land managers are adhered to.

The following strategies, which effectively minimise disturbance to natural and cultural values, represent acceptable conduct for the long-term sustainability of both the activity and the environment.

Waste

Rubbish: It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that no rubbish or introduced matter is left as a result of the group's activity in an area. This particularly applies to all food or drink packaging, food scraps and activity equipment. Leaders should plan to carry rubbish receptacles sufficient to enable all group-generated rubbish to be removed from the area. Where practicable, leaders should encourage participants to remove rubbish left by previous users.

Human waste: Faecal wastes are to be managed and disposed of in line with environmental regulations and land manager directions. This means that where toilet facilities are provided, these must be used. Where camping is permitted and no toilet facilities are available, toilet wastes must be buried at least 100 metres from a watercourse. If it is not feasible to bury wastes or to bury them at least 100 metres from a watercourse (e.g. narrow river valley, cliff areas), group leaders should plan to use equipment (e.g. 'poo-tubes') that enable the wastes to be removed and disposed of at a facility designed for this purpose.

Fire

Fire Bans: In most parks, the fire danger season in South Australia usually extends from 1 November to 30 April, depending on seasonal conditions. No wood fires are permitted in parks during this time. Some parks have year round bans on wood fires. Open flames

are banned in all parks on days of extreme fire danger. These are declared by the Country Fire Service (CFS). Parks may be closed to visitors on Total Fire Ban days. The onus is on the leader to check the fire ban status for the area they are visiting. Phone or visit the Department for Environment and Heritage or CFS Office for more details.

Camp Fires: Native vegetation within reserves is protected. In non-reserve areas, dead trees and fallen logs play an important role in the environment. In some parks, wood fires are prohibited or restricted. Gas or liquid fuel stoves are preferable. Where fires are permitted they must be:

- lit in existing fireplaces where possible or in a properly constructed fireplace or pit (minimum 30cm deep and a maximum of one metre wide) and returned as closely as practicable as it was
- cleared of flammable vegetation for at least three metres around the fireplace or pit
- kept to a minimum size necessary for cooking, minimising disturbance to the surrounding area
- attended at all times
- extinguished with water
- avoided if fuel is scarce
- avoided if at all unnecessary or where doing so will not comply with the minimal impact approach.

Camping

- Camp at established campsites where possible
- Make campsites away from water resources (at least 20 metres from any stream) and allow animals undisturbed access
- Use floored tents with poles
- No trenches around tents
- Use toilet facilities where available
- Avoid using any soaps or detergents. If they must be used, use only biodegradable soaps and detergents. Dispose of washing water at least 50 metres from any water source
- Wash all soil from camping and personal equipment and vehicles before leaving home or moving between locations, in order to avoid transporting seeds or soil-born pathogens such as phytophthora.

In addition, walkers are also expected to:

- try to avoid tracks and other areas which will be intrinsically more prone to erosion, especially with larger groups
- use boot washing and or hygiene stations to assist in the prevention of phytophthora
- make reasonable efforts to minimise the impact of the group on others

- assist other parties in difficulty providing this action does not adversely effect the safety of the group
- be diplomatic with other groups and other recreational users of the area
- try to minimise noise.

5 Further information

Bushwalking Leadership SA Inc.

73 Wakefield Street Adelaide SA 5000

Ph: (08) 8232 9411

Fax: (08) 8232 4744

Email: blsa@bushwalkingleadership.org.au

Web : www.bushwalkingleadership.org.au/