

# *Horse Trail Riding*

## *Adventure Activity Standards (AAS)*

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

Supported by



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:**

- The Association for Horsemanship Safety & Education
- The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association
- The Horse SA Management Committee

**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**

<b>Activity description</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Definition of terms.....	12
Summary of abbreviations .....	12
<b>1 Planning</b> .....	<b>13</b>
1.1 Activity plan for horse trail riding .....	13
1.2 Pre-trip documentation .....	14
1.3 Document site-specific hazards/risk assessment.....	14
1.4 Emergency strategy.....	15
1.5 Restrictions to participation.....	15
<b>2 Responsibility of the trip leader/assistant</b> .....	<b>16</b>
2.1 Competencies.....	16
Assistant.....	16
Restricted Leader .....	17
Unrestricted Leader .....	17
Restricted Manager .....	17
Unrestricted Manager .....	18
2.2 First aid.....	18
2.3 Specific responsibilities of the leader .....	19
2.4 Assistant to the leader .....	20
2.5 Communication and authority .....	20
2.6 Ratios of trip leader and assistant(s) to participants.....	21
2.7 Group size .....	21
<b>3 Equipment</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.1 Helmets .....	22
3.2 Footwear .....	22
3.3 Clothing .....	22
3.4 Tack and miscellaneous .....	22
3.5 equipment condition, maintenance and storage.....	23
<b>4 Environment and conduct</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Waste .....	24
Fire .....	24
Camping.....	25
<b>5 Further information</b> .....	<b>26</b>

## Activity description

It is acknowledged that there are differing duties of care that apply to both commercial and non-commercial horse trail rides.

For the purpose of AAS, a horse trail ride involves organised recreational horseback riding where participants are lead as a group, outside of enclosed areas and through varying environments. These are relevant guidelines for all groups (commercial and non-commercial).

### Definition of terms

**Organisation:** A person or group of persons organised for a particular purpose and assuming the role of providing a horse trail ride (activity provider) being commercial (for profit) or non-commercial (not for profit/community group).

**Participant:** A person whose welfare is the responsibility of an assistant, leader or instructor (NOLRS 'Client').

**Assistant:** A competent person who assumes the responsibility for a group of participants on an adventure activity 'Horse Trail Riding' with the intention to offer the experience of the activity (rather than offering instruction) and to satisfy the objectives of the trip (commercial or not).

**Leader:** The individual who assumes the responsibility of the assistant and co-ordinates the entire group 'including assistants' to satisfy the objectives of the trip (commercial or not).

**Urban:** Urban trips are defined in AAS as any trip which is at no point any more than 2 hours from emergency medical attention.

**Remote:** Remote trips are defined in AAS as any trip which is at any point more than 2 hours from emergency medical attention.

**Emergency Medical Attention:** Definitive medical attention being that of a medically qualified person (paramedic, doctor). This may be getting definitive medical attention to the injured participant/s or by getting the injured participant/s to definitive medical attention.

### Summary of abbreviations

AAS	Adventure Activity Standards
DEST	Department of 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
AHIC	Australian Horse Industry Council
ATHRA	Australian Trail Horse Riders Association
AHSE	Association of Horsemanship Safety and Education
Cth	Commonwealth

## 1 Planning

Before setting out, the planning section of the activity standards contains the documented administrative aspects of AAS. It is here you will find the requirements that must be completed before undertaking any activity.

### 1.1 Activity plan for horse trail riding

Route selection is the most important consideration when creating an activity plan. Organisations and leaders must select tracks/routes that match the capabilities of the riders and/or horses. To do this, the following considerations are to be included:

- leader to participant ratio (see 2.6)
- objectives of the trip (desired outcomes)
- group size
- group skill/experience level
- participant expectations (adventure, scenery, education)
- support capabilities
- available horses
- foreseeable weather
- age and ability of participants
- characteristics of area (accessibility)
- duration of trip
- availability of emergency medical assistance
- environmental impacts
- prevailing conditions (fire bans, river levels and tides)
- other users (seasons/holiday)
- emergency procedures/risk management
- legislative restrictions.

When selecting a leader and assistant(s) for a ride it is essential to consider the following:

- the leader and assistant(s) have the required competency to conduct the trip and to satisfy the planned objectives
- the selected leader must have researched the specific area being visited
- competencies must be commensurate to the ride (see 2.1)
- appropriate police checks if working with under 18 year olds.

## 1.2 Pre-trip documentation

Documentation is often seen as a chore and not a minimum requirement. There are however, certain details which a leader and/or organisation must be aware of to maximise safety. The following is agreed to be the required documentation for a ride. It should be written as the organisation see fit but should be readily accessible to the leader and non-participating contact for the duration of the trip (in the event of an incident/emergency) and all individual participants' requirements must be appropriately accounted for throughout the trip:

- emergency strategy (including details set out below in 1.4)
- participant's name and address
- participant's emergency contact details
- list of relevant participant medical conditions and how they should be dealt with, for example:
  - any previous/existing conditions
  - asthma
  - diabetes
  - epilepsy
  - fainting/dizziness
  - specific allergic reactions (bees/wasps/ants)
  - blood conditions which may affect bleeding/clotting
  - impaired sight or hearing
  - conditions effecting balance
  - heart conditions
  - migraines
  - disability or other medical conditions relevant to ability to ride (e.g. pregnancy) and any relevant medication
- participants (or parents/guardians, if the participant is under 18) must provide signatures to acknowledge inherent risks and to authorise any relevant emergency treatment by a medical officer if required (to be acquired after a full explanation/brief)
- signed acknowledgement of the role of the leader
- legal liability disclaimer/waiver to sue form signed by participants 18 and over
- correct signage displaying effect of legal disclaimers and waivers to sue properly and prominently displayed

## 1.3 Document site-specific hazards/risk assessment

It is an inherent responsibility when conducting any horse trail riding activity to identify key hazards. The Australian/New Zealand Standard on Risk Management (AS/NZ 4360:1999) is an established process for risk management. It 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.'

AAS recommend that leaders conduct a documented risk assessment prior to any trip and document hazards, changes to the expected track condition and how they should be reasonably dealt with. This information should be made readily available within the organisation and reported to the land manager where relevant.

#### **1.4 Emergency strategy**

Emergency strategies must be written to manage incidents and minimise their escalation.

Trip leader(s) and an appropriate external contact, either within each organisation or otherwise, must be fully aware of the emergency strategy and a summary must be provided as a component of the preliminary group briefing.

A copy of the documented emergency strategy must be carried on the trip and a copy must be kept with the relevant non-participating contact. It should be noted here that the intention of the emergency strategy is to ensure that any rescue is conducted in an effective and timely manner.

The emergency strategy for a horse trail riding trip must be specific to each trip and must contain:

- access and egress routes (e.g. tracks, trails with approximate distances could be marked on a suitable map)
- assembly points where appropriate
- contact details for key organisations (e.g. police, land manager, CFS, Ambulance), including the means of communication (mobile phone, satellite phone, radio) where the communication can be expected to work and how they are best contacted
- planned start/finish time of the trip
- contact details for organisation or non-participating contact
- procedure if leader is injured
- search and rescue activation time(s).

#### **1.5 Restrictions to participation**

Operational restrictions to a horse trail riding trip include weather, equipment, difficulty of route, restrictions dictated by land managers and environmental factors (trail conditions, flood, drought and fire).

Activity providers must be able to reserve the right (without legal risk) to refuse any individual participation. Individual restrictions to a horse trail riding trip apply to:

- participants deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs, which may affect performance
- participants who declare a medical condition that poses an unacceptable risk to himself or herself, or the safe conduct of the activity

- participants who present a body weight, disability or level of fitness that pose an unacceptable risk to themselves or the safe conduct of the activity
- participants who behave in a manner during the activity that poses an unacceptable risk to themselves or the safe conduct of the activity
- participants who are unable or unwilling to follow instructions (see 2.3, Specific responsibilities of the leader)
- participants with an unsuitable horse
- participants who are clearly unprepared for foreseeable conditions.

## 2 Responsibility of the trip leader/assistant

This section includes all aspects of the activity plan that involves both the trip leader and assistant(s). This section covers the specific competency required for various difficulty levels and covers basic requirements.

### 2.1 Competencies

Several schemes are available through community organisations, employers, TAFE colleges, universities and registered training organisations (RTOs) for training horse trail riding trip leaders and assistants.

For this reason, any leader of commercial horse trail rides must be confident of having satisfied a process of skill acquisition and have experience which must be at least equivalent to that described by the following selected units from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

Non-commercial groups are also encouraged to ensure that the skills and experience available on any given trail ride are equivalent to that expected of the commercial ride leader.

A statement of attainment for these units is not compulsory. However, the inclusion of this section is intended to provide a suitable benchmark to introduce individual accountability.

The review of this AAS is likely to determine that commercial operators will be expected to demonstrate formal assessment at the appropriate level. This requirement will benefit the horse industry, as it will further demonstrate consistency and professionalism.

#### Assistant

Cannot work alone/inexperienced or under 18 years of age.

Code	Unit name
SRXINU002A	Apply sport and recreation law
RTE2104A	Carry out regular horse observation
RTE2121A	Provide daily care for horses
RTE2130A	Ride and care for horses and equipment
RTE2136A	Load and unload animals
SRXOHS001B	Follow defined OHS procedures
SROEQU001A	Handle horses safely
SROEQU002A	Demonstrate basic horse riding skills

**Restricted Leader**

Can lead single day rides only.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Unit name</b>
SRXEMR001A	Respond to emergency situations
SRXRIK001A	Undertake risk analysis of activities
SRXGRO001A	Facilitate a group
SRXGRO002A	Deal with conflict
RTE3712A	Administer medication to animals
SROODR002A	Plan outdoor recreation activities
SROODR005A	Guide outdoor recreation sessions
SROOPS003B	Apply weather information
SROOPS002B	Plan for minimal environmental impact
SROEQU003A	Supervise horse handling
SROEQU004A	Apply first aid to horses
SROEQU005A	Demonstrate horse riding skills in tracked areas
SROEQU006A	Guide day rides in tracked areas

**Unrestricted Leader**

Can lead overnight treks. The above skills (Restricted Leader) are also included.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Unit name</b>
RTE3104	Carry out basic hoof care procedure and dentition
RTE3131A	Transport livestock
RTE3402AI	Implement animal health control programs
SRONAV002B	Navigate in tracked and trackless areas
SROOPS006B	Use and maintain a temporary or overnight site
SROEQU011A	Guide overnight horse trail rides in tracked areas

**Restricted Manager**

Can manage and lead riding centre for single day rides only. The above skills (unrestricted leader) are also included.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Unit name</b>
RTE3102A	Educate, ride and care for horses and equipment
RTE4116A	Prevent and treat equine injury and disease
SRXEMR002A	Coordinate emergency response
SRXGRO003A	Provide leadership to groups
SRXOHS002G	Implement and monitor OHS policies
SROODR006A	Manage risk in an outdoor activity
SROEQU007A	Select and manage horses for beginner riders
SROEQU008A	Determine nutritional requirements for horses
SROEQU009A	Plan conditioning and training programs for horses
SROEQU010A	Train and condition horses for trail rides

**Unrestricted Manager**

Can manage and lead riding centres for remote and multi day treks. All of the skills mentioned are included.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Unit name</b>
SROEQU012A	Demonstrate horse riding skills in remote or wilderness areas
SROEQU013A	Manage horse illness/injury in remote areas
SROEQU014A	Guide trail rides in a broad range of situations
SROODR003A	Plan outdoor recreation activities (advanced)
SROOPS004B	Interpret weather conditions in the field

Details of these units can be accessed free by logging on to the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), National Training Information Service website at <[www.ntis.gov.au/](http://www.ntis.gov.au/)>.

**2.2 First aid**

Decisions on the level of first aid should be based upon the risk assessment and emergency strategy for the 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 table provides an overview of equivalent first aid training with South Australian providers 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.

### 2.3 Specific responsibilities of the leader

The following are the responsibilities of a trail ride leader. Individual tasks may be delegated but the responsibility remains with the trip leader.

Whenever commencing any trail ride, it is the trip leader's responsibility 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 and to receive acknowledgement from all participants that he/she (as leader) has the role of leading the group.

As such, it is the leader's responsibility to:

- research and plan for likely hazards
- be familiar with the emergency management procedures
- ensure that minimal environmental impact message is conveyed and adhered to
- confirm group experience/capabilities
- ensure a full brief is clearly carried out and understood by all guides and participants (see 2.5)
- ensure that all equipment is carefully secured at all times and is appropriate for the ride being undertaken
- confirm head count before, during and immediately following the ride
- maintain awareness of the physical and psychological condition of the group
- control the pace of the group and rest group if necessary
- maintain constant surveillance/observation of participants to ensure, to the best of your ability, that all participants avoid situations beyond their known capabilities
- appropriately designate responsibility to assistants
- notify appropriate persons of safe completion
- check all equipment prior to commencement of ride and on return
- ensure that any incidents and/or injuries are reported and recorded within your organisation where relevant

- ensure that there is an appropriate contingency for a horse and rider who prove to pose an unduly high risk to themselves, others and/or horses (these contingencies will be quite different for short treks and for long remote tours)
- ensure to the best of your ability the welfare of the horses.

#### **2.4 Assistant to the leader**

Assistants to the leader (where appointed) must support and assist the leader according to the trip plan and manage any incident or emergency according to the emergency strategy if the trip leader becomes injured or incapacitated.

#### **2.5 Communication and authority**

As for all outdoor activities involving group participation, all participants, assistants and leaders must use an agreed and understood system of communication. It is essential that this be devised before the trip and agreed as a component of the pre-trip briefing.

The pre-trip briefing may be delivered differently according to organisational preference and, where relevant, the length and complexity of a trip. It must include but is not limited to each and every element of the following and as a recommendation, should not be conducted while participants are mounted:

- introduction of leader, assistant(s), objectives and first aider
- strategies for environmental conservation including responsible riding techniques, flora, fauna and rubbish removal
- the nature of the activity, inherent risks, emergency strategy, group conduct and communication requirements
- confirmation of information gathered from clients (experience/medical issues, signing of legal waiver documents, etc.)
- description of ride (length, location)
- dangers related to behaviour of horses:
  - vices (kick/bite)
  - independent decision-making animal
  - flight instinct
- equipment and clothing
- helmets:
  - describe features of helmet
  - demonstrate proper fitting of helmet
  - check fit of participant's helmets
  - instruct participants to wear fastened helmet at all times
- behaviour requirements for riders:
  - no shouting, running or throwing things
  - no walking up behind or standing immediately in front of horses: when on foot stand near the horse's shoulder

- unless participant skill level has been assessed previously, no mounting without assistance (horses should be held for beginners when they mount)
- rules of the order of the ride (no passing front staff member/leader, distance between horses, keep in line, speed determined by staff/leader, etc.)
- obey instructions by staff members/leader
- unless participant skill level has been assessed previously, pre-ride demonstration should be conducted and include:
  - mount/dismount
  - holding and using the reins (stop and turn)
  - foot position in stirrup and applying pressure for forward motion
  - explanation and demonstration of how to correctly ride the horse at walk, trot, canter and gallop
  - rider to demonstrate ability to stop, turn and move forward (control their horse) to the satisfaction of the leader before departure on the ride
- participants:
  - confirm participants have understood the brief (acceptance of risk)
  - confirm participants are free of the effects of alcohol/drugs
  - check participants' clothing, footwear, hair and jewellery are safe and appropriate for the planned trip (chewing gum should be removed)
  - confirm participants understanding and ability to ride the horse at walk, trot, canter and gallop.

## 2.6 Ratios of trip leader and assistant(s) to participants

On any trail ride the ratio of leaders and assistants must not exceed 1:6.

- On rides that enter remote areas or where the ride occurs overnight, the group must be accompanied by a minimum of one leader and one assistant.
- Ratios of leader(s) and assistant(s) to participant(s) must be determined so that they allow adequate supervision of all participants and the ability to rapidly, and adequately, respond to emergency situations.
- The ratio of 1:6 (above) will not be adequate in many situations.
- Leaders and assistant(s) should assess each situation and adjust ratios accordingly. In determining this ratio, consideration should be given to:
  - the experience, ability and age of the participants
  - the nature of the activities
  - the terrain or course
  - the distance to and/or accessibility of emergency services.

## 2.7 Group size

For the safety of both the group and the environment maximum group size for a horse trail ride should be 20 horses (participants, leader, assistant(s) and packhorses).

### 3 Equipment

Equipment requirements vary with the objectives of the trip plan and the environmental conditions likely to be endured. When planning equipment requirements for a horse trail ride it is important to plan ahead as much as possible for all eventualities taking into account the appropriate route information and forecast weather conditions.

The following are consistent with the equipment requirements stated by the AHIC National Horse Safe Code.

#### 3.1 Helmets

- Properly fitted helmets that provide an adequate level of protection against physical trauma to the head must be worn by all riders. These helmets must comply with AS/NZS 3838, EN 1384, or ASTM F1163 and the manufacturer's recommendation that frequently used helmets are less than five years old (from the date of manufacture).
- Helmets that have had significant impacts (i.e. where the strength and integrity of the shell is likely to have been compromised) or have been otherwise structurally damaged must not be used.

#### 3.2 Footwear

- Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times when riding. Where stirrups are used this footwear must enable the uninhibited removal of the foot from the stirrup iron, especially in the event of a fall from a horse. The footwear must also hinder the foot sliding forward and through the stirrup iron, which may result in a rider's foot or leg being caught in the stirrup.
- Additions to stirrups that achieve the same purpose are an acceptable alternative.
- When handling horses (i.e. not riding) footwear must be worn that provides protection to the top of the foot in the event of a horse stepping on the foot.
- Boots with a smooth sole to reduce the risk of being caught in the stirrup are preferred. Open toed sandals and thongs provide minimal or no protection and should not be worn.

#### 3.3 Clothing

- Minimum clothing requirements are full-length trousers and an appropriate shirt (short sleeves and three quarter length trousers are acceptable) to offer protection from physical injuries or distress to the rider (e.g. sunburn, rubbing and grazes).
- Leaders should ensure that all participants engaged in trail riding have been advised of the possible need for protection from increased risk of sun damage and the environment, taking into account reasonably foreseeable weather conditions and the distance from shelter.

#### 3.4 Tack and miscellaneous

- Saddles must be securely attached to the horse in a manner that keeps the saddle properly and securely in place. A saddle must be secured by at least two points of

attachment (e.g. double-buckle girth, girth and surcingles) or by a double-wrapped latigo.

- Saddle girths should be checked before commencement of ride, again after approximately 20–30 minutes into ride and periodically thereafter.
- Neck straps or straps attached to the front of each saddle should be used as an aid to balance.
- Straps to hold saddle cloths in place should be considered. Saddle cloths should be periodically checked by visual inspection throughout the ride.
- For the purpose of minimising discomfort and avoiding breakage or malfunction of equipment that may put riders at risk, all equipment (e.g. saddles, bridles) used with the horse must be matched to the activity being undertaken, in good repair and correctly fitted. ('Matched to the activity' means that stock saddles would not normally be used for jumping, racing saddles for trail rides and so on.)
- Items such as bags, cameras and loose jewellery that could become entangled in a manner that may cause an accident must be carried in a way that will minimise the chance of this happening.
- A first aid kit appropriate to the activity must be carried at all times.

The trip leader and assistant(s) should be quickly and easily identifiable. For example they should choose to wear clothing and/or helmets as distinguishing them from participants wherever possible.

### 3.5 equipment condition, maintenance and storage

AAS consider it essential that where appropriate a log of all equipment use and maintenance be kept current.

## 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.

Specific to Horse Trail Riding, the following minimal impact code has been adapted from the code of conduct kindly provided by the ATHRA:

1. Always be observant and avoid unduly disturbing unstable or erosion prone soils.
2. Avoid horses denuding vegetation, especially during stays of more than one night. Check with land managers regarding the use of nightlines and ensure that portable yards are relocated each night.
3. Rather than risking damage to fragile creeks, streams and riverbanks, select firm, stony crossings. Use bridges wherever possible as this will help to ensure good water quality and limit erosion.
4. Carry and use canvas or collapsible buckets, and/or pump and hose, where possible to water and wash horses. Wash horses at least 50 metres away from watercourse.

5. Allow your horse to eat only weed-free feed at least 48 hours prior to entering bushland areas. Weed-free feed includes clean chaff, pellets and cracked, rolled or steamed grains. Never take meadow hay as it often contains seed.
6. Undertake some basic education in weed identification and possibly even assist land managers in quickly identifying and eliminating new outbreaks of problem species.
7. Dispose or disperse manure from overnight camp sites.
8. Use tree protectors on nightlines to prevent trees from being damaged. Incorporate stops in line to prevent horses becoming entangled around trees.
9. Where possible make nightline length 15 metres or more to reduce concentrated impact.
10. Avoid yarding horses not already familiar with each other. This will avoid conflicts in establishing a new social order.
11. Always camp horses well clear of watercourses: at least 50 metres.
12. Always be friendly and civil to other bushland users. You should always take the initiative in avoiding any potentially dangerous situations involving your horse and the general public.

Further to this, 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 South Australian fire danger season 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 should 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
- clear 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-borne pathogens such as phytophthora.

## **5 Further information**

- The Association for Horsemanship Safety & Education: <[www.ahse.info/](http://www.ahse.info/)>
- The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association: <[homevicnet.net.au/~athra/](http://homevicnet.net.au/~athra/)>
- Horse SA: <[www.horsesa.asn.au](http://www.horsesa.asn.au)>