



## Community Services: Education

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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

### **Safety in educational outdoor activities: a code of practice**

Attached is a copy of the code of practice which applies to all educational establishments.

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services  
March 2010

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES: EDUCATION**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

### Advice

It is recognised that many heads of establishments may have difficulty in the exercise of judgements on certain outdoor activities. In these circumstances advice, but not approval, may be sought from colleagues or persons with appropriate qualifications and known experience. Specialist advice may be obtained from persons designated by the Executive Director of Community Services.

The role of technical adviser is being undertaken by Undiscovered Country Adventure. For advice contact Ken Lacey: 01852 300770, 07771 918431, [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com)

The main concerns of the head of establishment in reaching any decision should be that the arrangements are sensible and properly planned and that the qualifications and experience of leaders are appropriate for the responsibilities that they plan to undertake.

- 1.1.2 Participation in any adventurous outdoor activity will inevitably involve a physical and psychological challenge and can never be free of some small risk. The elimination of all risk is not possible but it is indefensible to expose young people to dangerous conditions and unnecessary risk and so there must always be an acceptable framework of safety. It is recognised that the organisation of safety in remote and wilderness locations, particularly in the event of an emergency, cannot be foolproof and quick decisions have to be made. In these circumstances, organisers of activities cannot give guarantees of the safety of participants to their parents or carers, but at least assurances must be given that all reasonable care will be provided and that sensible preparatory arrangements have been made.
- 1.1.3 The guidance provided in the circular is particularly related to the physical safety of pupils and young people for whom the authority has a duty of care. In circumstances where pupils or young people with special educational needs are participating in activities, wherever a question of safety arises in relation to the safe supervision of the participants, more favourable staff student ratios should apply.

## **1.2 Definitions and exclusions**

- 1.2.1 The head of establishment is defined as the person in charge of an establishment which is organising the activity and to which participants belong or are associated. Consequently, the head of establishment can be a head teacher of a school, an officer-in-charge of a school hostel, a community education officer with either a centre or area responsibility, or a principal of a residential education centre.

1.2.2 Section 2 of the circular offers guidance of a general nature and includes guidance concerning activities involving:

- exposure to strong sunlight;
- the use of natural waters;
- the use of camping stoves.

1.2.3 Section 3 of the circular refers to specific approved activities.

- Bathing in natural waters.
- Canoeing and kayaking.
- Educational field visits.
- Hill walking.
- Horse riding.
- Miscellaneous use of boats.
- Orienteering.
- Climbing and abseiling activities.
- Gorge walking, canyoning, coasteering etc.
- Sailing.
- Skiing.
- Wind surfing.
- Cycling.

1.2.4 For other activities not referred to in this document advice should be sought from the legal department and the technical adviser Ken Lacey 07771 918431 or [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com)

Note Heads of establishment should also refer to the guidance circulated to all educational establishments in the document (MSF/26): *Use of dischargeable devices in educational establishments*. This makes reference to the use by pupils of bows and arrows, and the conduct of archery in schools.

1.2.5 The Adventure Activities Licensing Service

The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act came into effect on 1 April 1996 and makes it a criminal offence to provide adventure activities to young people under 18 without a licence.

Anyone who, in return for payment, provides adventure activities to young people under 18 must have a licence and abide by its conditions.

The scheme is aimed at those who sell adventure activities to schools and to the public. It does not cover activities offered by voluntary associations to their members, schools to their pupils or young people accompanied by their parents or legal guardians.

#### 1.2.6 Local authorities

Local Authorities are required to hold a licence if they provide facilities to their educational establishments for adventure activities without requiring payment.

#### 1.2.7 Schools

Though schools providing activities to their own students do not require a licence they are likely to be judged by the same standards should there be an accident.

#### 1.2.8 The following activities are included in the Act:

- caving (underground exploration of underground passages in natural caves and mines including potholing, cave diving and mine exploration);
- climbing (climbing, traversing, abseiling and scrambling activities, except on purpose-designed climbing walls or abseiling towers);
- trekking (walking, running, pony trekking, mountain biking, off-piste skiing and related activities when done in moor or mountain country which is 600m above sea level and which is remote, ie over 30 minutes travelling time from the nearest road or refuge);
- water sports (canoeing, rafting, sailing and related activities when done on the sea, tidal waters or larger non-placid inland waters).

Further guidance on the providers and activities in scope of the licensing scheme is given in the HSE circular *Guidance to the Licensing Service on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996*.

If there is any doubt whether an activity is licensable, Legal Services should be consulted.

### 1.3 Procedures

#### 1.3.1 In terms of SOEID circular 84 8 (1); and the 1989 DES/SED publication *Safety in Outdoor Education*, under statute and common law, responsibility for safety in maintained establishments rests mainly with local authorities.

The education authority is obliged, therefore, to ensure that clear arrangements are made for approval to be given to programmes of outdoor activities. In this connection the authority is also obliged to ensure that parents of school students and other young people should be fully informed of the details of the activities and give approval for the involvement of their children.

- 1.3.2 The attention of heads of establishments is drawn to the detailed instructions relating to school excursions and educational visits set down in education management circular 3.25. The appropriate appendices to this circular should be referred to when seeking approval for outdoor educational activities.
- 1.3.3 The leader or supervisor must be satisfied as far as is reasonably practicable that participants are physically capable of the activity involved, and that they are adequately informed of any medical condition that may influence the ability of particular individuals to participate in activities safely.
- 1.3.4 Heads of establishment and leaders or supervisors must have regard to the guidance and instruction as laid out for specific approved activities in section 3, and may find the department's *Guidelines on the organisation of educational visits* of further assistance.

Reference should also be made to education management circular 3.14 Insurance for participants, teachers and other adults taking part in educational excursions and activities.

- 1.3.5 It is confirmed that this code of practice applies to instructors, leaders and supervisors responsible for activities undertaken on behalf of the DofE Award when carried out under the auspices of the department of education as the operating authority.

1.3.6 Agencies/activities abroad

There will be many occasions when groups and individuals will make use of agencies not operated by the Council, for example, outward bound centres, national sports training centres, commercial and voluntary outdoor activity holiday providers.

There will also be occasions when groups of young people travel abroad under the auspices of the Department of Education and wish to participate in outdoor activities referred to in this circular. In these circumstances the leader of the group must be satisfied, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the operating standards and the qualifications of leaders/instructors of the activities are at least comparable with those described in this document.

The head of establishment in all circumstances has a duty to be satisfied, as far as is reasonably practicable, that agencies not maintained by the authority operate to at least the standards described in this document and that the qualifications of instructors accord to these standards. The possession of a licence issued by the Adventure Activities Licensing Service should ensure this. See paragraph 1.2.5 for details of the activities covered by the licence.

1.3.7 For further information heads of establishment should consult The Scottish Government's advice on Health and Safety on Educational Excursions (HASEE); see [appendix 1](#) Health and Safety on Educational Excursions

#### 1.3.8 Ratios

Ratios for all activities will be as recommended by the issuing body of the relevant award for the activity.

It is recognised that many governing bodies allow a degree of flexibility in numbers, both upwards and downwards, to reflect the ability of the participants and the conditions prevailing at the time. The judgement on whether to exceed or decrease numbers from standard ratios is covered in the training leading to the various awards and accreditation. For these decisions to be made the aims of the session must be clear to the instructor.

#### 1.3.9 Response to emergency situations

Before any activity takes place, a written set of emergency procedures must be available, in particular who will notify the emergency services should a group fail to return at the appointed time. Details of participants, routes and action to be taken if a group is overdue must be left with a responsible person(s) at base.

#### 1.3.10 Modern technology

Over-reliance on modern technology is to be discouraged. Where technologies such as mobile phones and global positioning systems can add to the safety of activities they should be used, but there must always be reliable and robust systems in place to take over in the event of failure of the technology being utilised.

#### 1.3.11 Accidents

Records of accidents and near misses should be maintained and there should be a system for discussing, analysing and informing relevant parties of the action to be taken to minimise the likelihood of their recurrence.

All incidents should be reported using the Council's accident/incident form PER/S/100c in accordance with the guidance given in PER/GEN/3 (copy available in all educational establishments).

#### 1.3.12 E.coli

All participants in camping/cooking activities should be reminded of the risk posed by the E.coli bacterium. Team leaders and instructors should bear this in mind in the selection of campsites. The risk is particularly high in areas frequented by animals.

Food hygiene should be given a high priority eg hand-washing.

#### 1.3.13 Risk assessment

It is essential that risk assessments are made for all outdoor activities. A generic risk assessment, which can be used as a risk assessment checklist, is shown at [appendix 2](#).

#### 1.3.14 Student ability

Leaders should ensure that venues and activities should reflect the abilities of the participants.

#### 1.3.15 Risk awareness for new entrants

A blank risk awareness form is contained at [appendix 3](#). Organisers should consider using this form to ensure that participants/parents are aware of the risks involved.

## **2.1 Activities involving exposure to strong sunlight**

2.1.1 In the light of warnings from the medical profession on the hazards of exposure to sunlight, the following guidance is offered to heads of establishment. The guidance is not intended to curtail activities out of doors, but is issued in order to reduce the incidence of avoidable injuries arising from excessive exposure to sunlight.

2.1.2 Although the hazard may be thought to be very small in the climate of the United Kingdom, the very unpredictability of the weather often results in a state of unpreparedness that makes sunburn not at all uncommon and heads of establishment should bring the following information and guidance to the attention of all staff directly responsible for groups involved in activities out of doors, both at home and abroad.

Present medical opinion is that skin cancer is associated with episodes of sunburn during participation in recreational activities. It is believed that a reduction in the incidence of sunburn will reduce the risk of contracting skin cancer later in life.

2.1.3 Actions to avoid sunburn injuries during outdoor activities.

- i Participants should have available some form of head cover, such as a peaked 'baseball style' hat, that gives shade to the face, especially the nose. In conditions of very strong direct sunlight, the hat should have a brim that provides shade for the tops of the ears and the back of the neck.
- ii Participants should have available clothing that offers full limb cover, and should only expose legs and arms to the sun for short periods of time.
- iii Participants should not be permitted to go on extended land-based expeditions wearing only shorts and T-shirts. During water based activities participants should not be permitted to undertake extended periods of activity wearing only swimming costumes or shorts and vests or short sleeved T shirts. It is in circumstances such as these that cases of severe sunburn occur.
- iv Participants should be encouraged to wear sun glasses during water based activities on bright sunlit days, because the damage to eyes arising from exposure to bright sunlight reflected from water and sails can be significant.
- v Groups involved in activities on snow or other reflective surfaces, even on overcast days, should wear sunglasses or goggles, head cover appropriate to the conditions, and use photo protective sun block creams that give adequate levels of protection to the face, particularly under the chin, the nose, ears and lips.

- vi The risk of sunburn from diffused sunlight reflected from water and snow even on overcast days exists at any time of year. Leaders should have special regard to the risk of burns to areas of pale skin not normally exposed to sun, such as under the chin, and the backs of legs and arms. The precautionary use of photo protective creams should not, therefore, be abandoned because the sun is not visible.
- vii Participants in land based activities out of doors during the summer months, especially when abroad, should be advised to wear photo protective creams, and to regularly re apply the protection to exposed areas of skin in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- viii Persons responsible for groups involved in activities out of doors during the summer should have with them high factor photo protective sun creams of a non allergic variety as a part of the first aid provision.

2.1.4 The occurrence of severe sunburn should be regarded as a reportable accident and should be recorded in the appropriate accident report forms. It is important that such records are kept because the incidence of avoidable sunburn injuries may in future have legal implications.

## **2.2 Activities involving the use of natural waters**

2.2.1 It is essential that in programmes of educational activities, where water related hazards may be encountered, safe practices are adopted at every stage of training, participants adhere to safety procedures and young people are encouraged to show the utmost vigilance for the safety of each other.

The following guidance is not intended to curtail such activities but is issued in order to reduce the incidence of avoidable drowning fatalities and infections.

2.2.2 The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has identified a series of factors that contribute towards drowning and other incidents. These are:

- i ignorance, disregard or misjudgement of potential hazards and dangers;
- ii a poor understanding of what constitutes a dangerous situation;
- iii allowing unrestricted access to dangerous situations to those ill equipped to cope;
- iv absence of adequate supervision;
- v lack of the means or knowledge of how to help oneself and others in danger.

Leaders are urged to keep these factors in mind during the conduct of any activity, but especially those associated with water, and to adopt a preventative approach.

2.2.3 The inadequate level of control exercised by the leaders and the lack of self-discipline and responsibility shown by young people themselves has been identified as a further contributory factor to certain accidents.

One of the essential outcomes of any programme of outdoor education should be that participants should be able to recognise danger and to understand how, by forethought and careful planning, it can be minimised or eliminated.

2.2.4 The sites used for water based activities should be familiar to a leader or supervisor of such activities, and should have been checked for any hazards. The leader should be aware of the meaning of the conventional safety signs and flags.

2.2.5 The water environment presents a number of potential hazards of which any person responsible for the health and safety of others should be fully aware. These are too numerous to list, but it is essential that leaders understand the significance of both the effect of wind and tide and the risk of hypothermia associated with undertaking activities in cold water especially on cold wet windy days. More obviously the presence of such hazards as steep overhanging banks, hidden underwater obstructions, thick weed, and strong currents, off shore winds, tides and pollution should be noted and avoided as far as possible. Badly discoloured waters should be avoided because it is not easy to determine the depth, the existence of hidden underwater obstructions or the degree of pollution.

2.2.6 A number of additional safety principles apply particularly to the conduct of water based activities:

- i the activity should only be conducted in suitable weather and tidal conditions;
- ii only suitably experienced and qualified leaders or instructors should be used to oversee and manage the activity, as indicated in section 3;
- iii only appropriate and reliable equipment should be used;
- iv all equipment used should be subject to routine safety checks and be adequately maintained;
- v all participants should have developed a level of water confidence appropriate to the activity;
- vi activity sites that are to be used for bathing or other activities where there is a high probability of participants ingesting water through mouth or nose should always be checked for pollution visually or by smell in the first instance; if doubt exists as to the water quality, further advice may be gained from the local water authority.

2.2.7 The hazards associated with polluted water which have been brought to the attention of the authority arise from the following.

- i Raw untreated sewage and industrial waste.  
Any beach or river should be checked for the presence of untreated sewage and industrial waste before it is used for water based activities.
- ii Untreated farm yard manure and slurries.  
It is important that the tributaries to any stream or river are checked for the presence of farm yard manure before the river is used for bathing or activities involving immersion or capsizing practice. The risks of disease for water sports participants are reported to be highest during periods of drought on stagnant canals and ponds, and after flash floods when high concentrations of pollutants can be washed into rivers and streams. It should be noted that water sports participants who do not capsize regularly and remain relatively dry are less at risk.
- iii Blue green algae.  
If participation in water sports involves a high degree of contact with water, such as when paddling, wind surfing, swimming, or canoeing then water that is discoloured bright green should be avoided. Water sports participants are advised to avoid all contact with water which has a blue green paint-like scum on its surface.
- iv Weil's Disease.  
This is carried in the urine of rats. Any areas suspected of being infested should not be used.

Further information relating to these hazards can be found in the establishment safety file. [Ref. MSF/24(fi)]

2.2.8 All participants involved in water based activities should adopt the normal precautions that are recommended to avoid infection:

- i all cuts and grazes should be covered with waterproof plasters before participation;
- ii hands should be washed before eating (or smoking);
- iii a shower should be taken after participation;
- iv all clothing used for the activity should be routinely washed in clean freshwater after use;
- v every attempt should be made to avoid ingesting water (and infection) through mouth and nose;
- vi where there may be a possibility of infection then full immersion should be avoided;

- vii footwear should be used at all times to avoid cutting feet;
- viii any symptoms that would suggest an infection has occurred after participation in water based activities should be immediately brought to the attention of a doctor.

2.2.9 Whenever there is a risk of young people getting into difficulty during activities in close proximity to areas of natural water, the leader should have available an appropriate means of rescue, such as a long stick or a buoyant object attached to a floating line, that can be used to effect a rescue. There are a number of commercially produced items on sale, such as 'Throw Bags' which are now widely used by canoeists that can be purchased for such a purpose from specialist water sports suppliers.

2.2.10 In the event of an incident requiring a casualty to be rescued the rescuer should avoid entering the water unless absolutely necessary and:

- i REACH out to the casualty from the bank; or
- ii THROW them a floating line connected to a buoyant object; or
- iii WADE out to them but retain contact with the bank; or
- iv ROW out and use the boat to tow the casualty to the shore.

[Refer also to section 3.1 Bathing in natural waters].

Note Heads of establishment and leaders in charge can get further information on safety procedures relating to activities involving water from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), the Scottish Accident Prevention Council and the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS).

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS)

[www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, (RoSPA)

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

Scottish Accident Prevention Council

[www.sapc.org.uk](http://www.sapc.org.uk)

### **2.3 Activities involving the use of camping stoves**

2.3.1 All stoves commonly used for cooking during expeditions can be dangerous if mishandled with a consequent risk of fire and burn injuries. All reasonable care must therefore be taken by all persons responsible for introducing young person's to the use of camping stoves so that any risk can be reduced as far as possible. The use of such stoves by pupils should be closely supervised.

Dealing with incidents involving injury due to fire can be very difficult if such injuries occur in isolated locations or at sea. Groups being introduced to the use

of camping stoves should therefore not use camp sites in very isolated locations remote from habitation and easy communication with emergency services. It is essential that thorough training in a controlled environment is given before stoves are used during camping expeditions.

### 2.3.2 General guidance

- i All staff should ensure that they are fully conversant with the safest method of using a particular type of stove, and fully understand the method of operation and the hazards associated with the fuels used.
- ii When introducing others to the use of camping stoves, the stoves should be in a stable position on a non-combustible surface and, where possible, out of doors. A suitable fire blanket should be close at hand.
- iii When cooking on a stove, it is advised that it should be used at ground level to minimise the possibility of scalds resulting from the spillage of hot liquids. The stove should also be in a position where fires resulting from misuse can be quickly smothered and controlled. The smothering and control of accidental fires should be demonstrated during instruction.
- iv Spare fuel containers should be kept well clear of lighted stoves. When not in use they should be kept outside the tent or bothy.
- v All persons using camping stoves should be made aware of the risks associated with flammable materials such as straw, dry grass, paper, cooking oil and cooking fat, tentage, sleeping bags and nylon clothing. Further information relating to the hazards of inappropriate clothing can be found in the establishment safety file *Health and Safety: Wearing of Shell Suits in Practical Areas* [Ref GSF17/15]. This advice was circulated to all educational establishments as a result of two articles in the SSERC Bulletins numbers 169 April 1991 and 170 June 1991.
- vi In the early stages of introducing students to the use of stoves the person in charge should control the spare fuel supply and closely supervise the process of refuelling and re-ignition. These are occasions when dangerous incidents often occur.
- vii The lighting of camp fires and the use of them for cooking is forbidden unless these activities take place in established camping grounds or barbecue sites where there are safe, properly constructed fire-places or barbecues and associated fire appliances. Exceptionally, a camp fire may be allowed where the camp fire is under the control of a trained Forest School practitioner or other similarly qualified person.

### 2.3.3 Solid fuel stoves

Solid fuel stoves are simple and easy to use safely. However, they are relatively inefficient and are easily affected by draughts.

- i The stoves should be used on hard non-flammable ground in a sheltered location, but one that is well ventilated as the fumes given off are unpleasant.
- ii Care should be taken when handling the stove after use and the stove should be given plenty of time to cool.
- iii After handling the fuel blocks the hands must be washed before preparing or eating food.

### 2.3.4 Pressurised gas canister stoves (Camping Gas, Epigas etc).

Pressurised gas canister stoves are very easy to use, but are potentially dangerous because the canisters can explode. Certain makes of stove are unstable when used on rough ground.

- i The stoves should be used at ground level on a surface on which they are stable. Where the burner is fitted directly to the top of the canister care should be taken that pans are in balance during cooking activities.
- ii The canisters should always be removed and placed in a safe location well clear of flammable materials and naked flames, preferably out of doors, and well away from tents.
- iii The re-ignition of the stoves after the replacement of a canister should be done in a safe place. There is an ever present risk of igniting leaking gas if there is a fault in the seal between canister and burner.
- iv Self sealing gas canisters of more recent design are safer but can be faulty. Damage to the thread and washer of the connecting appliance can still allow gas leakage. The connecting appliance should, therefore, be thoroughly checked by the instructor/leader before use by students.
- v The replacement of gas canisters should be closely supervised until students fully understand the risks associated with the use of such stoves.
- vi Empty gas canisters must never be ignited or thrown on to open fires. Empty canisters should always be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### 2.3.5 Non pressurised methylated spirit stoves (Trangia stoves).

This type of stove is now in common use because of its simplicity and ease of maintenance. It is particularly functional because it can be used in the open, even in strong winds, and is very stable during cooking activities.

- i All persons using such stoves should be aware that methylated spirits is a registered poison and when used as fuel it is very volatile, especially in the form of a vapour. The person in charge must, therefore, carefully control the supply of methylated spirits.
- ii The stove should be filled in the first instance by the instructor/leader in charge.
- iii Students should obtain additional fuel from the instructor/leader when their initial supply has run out, and the process of re-ignition should be closely supervised.
- iv An instruction with the wording "DO NOT REFILL WHEN HOT" should be permanently visible on the lower section of the stove which functions as a support and windshield, and also on the fuel bottle. Students must be warned that the flame of a lighted stove is often not visible in bright sunlight.
- v When it is planned to use this type of stove during an unaccompanied expedition as part of the DofE Award, sufficient prior practice in its use, under close supervision, must be carried out. Students must be made fully aware of all the risks associated with improper use of this type of stove.

#### 2.3.6 Hand pressured paraffin stoves (Optimus, Primus, Valor etc).

This type of stove has been in use for many years and is reliable, robust and popular. Such stoves can be bought in a variety of different designs, some of which are more stable when in use than others. It is advised that the more stable design be used for novice campers. This type of stove requires careful maintenance.

- i The paraffin stove needs to be preheated with a volatile priming fuel. It is usual for this to be methylated spirits. This should only be supplied in small quantities.
- ii The use of paraffin pumped from the stove for preheating the stove is a dangerous practice and should not be demonstrated as this regularly causes uncontrolled flare-ups of unvapourised fuel.
- iii This type of stove should be preheated without any pressure in the fuel tank and the heated paraffin vapour allowed to ignite before pumping pressure into the stove.
- iv When the stove is fully heated and the flame properly alight, an initial pump to pressurise the stove should be given to continue the heating process.

- v This type of stove should only be fully pressurised when it is fully heated and the paraffin arriving at the burner fully vaporised.

All users of this type of stove should be fully aware of the danger of pressurising an inadequately preheated stove, for this causes liquid paraffin to spill over the stove which may ignite and cause an uncontrollable explosive fireball. It should be noted that overfilling the stove with fuel can contribute to this occurrence.

#### 2.3.7 Petrol stoves

Petrol stoves should never be used by inexperienced young people because the fuel is very volatile and this type of stove requires to be preheated with great care.

Petrol fumes from fuel containers and escaping petrol vapour from stoves are very volatile, and naked flames are unavoidable during the operation of camping stoves.

#### 2.3.8 Use of stoves on boats

The use of all sorts of stoves in boats presents particular risks because of the presence of petrol and diesel and the possibility of accumulation of gas inside the hull. Stoves permanently fitted in boats operated by the authority should fully comply with government guidance concerning best practice in relation to the fitting and location of stoves in small craft.

- i Fuel canisters should be stored in separate, well-ventilated lockers and the fuel supply turned off at the canister after each use of the stove.
- ii Before lighting a stove aboard ship, the bilge should be pumped in order to evacuate any build up of gas. The hull should be kept as well ventilated as possible when using stoves.
- iii While cooking on any sort of appliance all utensils should be retained in place with appropriate fiddles or retaining systems.
- iv All fittings should be checked regularly for corrosion and maintained in a safe functional condition because of the effects of electrolytic action in saline environments.
- v The vessel should be fitted with appropriate fire appliances and all the crew should be aware of the action to be taken in the event of fire. The fitting of a gas alarm is advised where the vessel is the property of the authority.

2.3.9 The use of camping stoves by novice campers must always be closely supervised and the greatest care taken to avoid the accidental misuse of camping stoves. Great vigilance should be maintained to ensure that casual and dangerous practices are not adopted as a result of over confidence.

2.3.10 The functional reliability of all types of stoves can deteriorate quickly as the result of inexpert use. It is important, therefore, that they are well maintained and carefully checked by users before being taken out on camping expeditions. **This particularly applies to borrowed and hired stoves that are not the property of the authority.**

## 2.4 Qualifications

2.4.1 It has become the practice for certain leadership and instructional awards to be subject to renewal. This has resulted in confusion about the validity of certain awards and whether they continue to be recognised by the authority. In principle the authority recognises the awards as long as they are accepted as valid by the awarding organisations identified in the relevant parts of section 3 on specific approved outdoor activities.

### 2.4.2 First aid certificates and lifesaving awards

These awards must be kept up to date and valid. Unless otherwise stated the level of first aid training required by the authority for all activities is the 'standard' first aid course, comprising 24 hours of instruction and which meets the requirements of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

### 2.4.3 Instructional awards

It is recognised that in practice it is often very difficult for leaders/instructors of a number of activities to keep all their awards up to date and current. The authority accepts that young people will not be exposed to any significant additional risk in circumstances where a qualification has recently lapsed and the guidance contained in this document has been correctly followed. Heads of establishment should, therefore, exercise their own judgement as to whether a trusted and experienced leader or instructor, whose particular activity award has temporarily lapsed, should continue being responsible for activities.

In circumstances where a member of staff is regularly involved in leading, instructing and supervising groups, with sole responsibility for the safety of participants at an activity site, the relevant qualification must be renewed as quickly as practicable. It is recommended that an award should not have lapsed for more than 3 years.

2.4.4 Leaders and instructors are strongly advised to remain a member of any organisation that has awarded them a qualification, so that they continue to receive the sporting body's coaching literature and are able to keep up to date with safety procedures and proper coaching methods.

2.4.5 It is increasingly the practice for awards to be updated by re-validation or update training. Leaders and instructors must ensure that they adhere to the recommendations of the issuing authority of the awards that they hold.

Note Heads of establishment and leaders in charge can get further information concerning the conditions which limit the validity of any of the awards specified in this document by contacting the awarding organisation.

#### 2.4.6 Accreditation for experience or other qualifications

Experience, training or qualifications that are not contained within this document may be recognised. Such training should have been clearly structured so as to be quantifiably equivalent.

Where a potential group leader has substantial prior experience and training there will still be a requirement to demonstrate satisfactory ability in all levels of competence either by attendance at a training day or by a reference from a trainer/assessor of the equivalent national governing body award.

Applications for experience or other qualifications to be recognised must be made to the technical adviser: Ken Lacey [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com) or 07771 918431

### **3.1 Bathing in natural waters**

The categories of activities covered by the guidance given in this section are:

- (a) bathing in areas of natural water which are unsupervised by a professional lifeguard service;
- (b) outdoor activity groups incidentally using beaches, river pools and lakes for casual bathing and paddling;
- (c) outdoor activity groups involved in excursions, physical activities or environmental investigations in close proximity to areas of natural water.

3.1.1 Those involved in the supervision of these activities will not need to be reminded of the high incidence of fatalities during activities involving water. It is imperative that sensible safety precautions are adhered to and the utmost vigilance applied when bathers are actually in the water. There are no formal qualifications for the full range of activities that have been subsumed under the guidance provided in this section. Therefore, the guidance should be understood to be indicative of good practice and is provided to raise leaders' awareness of the factors that have to be considered if a high standard of safety is to be achieved.

3.1.2 Many drowning incidents are associated with the consumption of alcohol, or the onset of hypothermia. Therefore swimming and bathing activities should not take place:

- i soon after a meal;
- ii if there is reason to believe alcohol or drugs have been consumed by participants;
- iii in very cold waters;
- iv after nightfall;
- v on cold, wet or windy days.

3.1.3 Leaders in charge must also ensure that nobody goes swimming alone and unsupervised and that young people do not forcibly throw others into cold water against their will. Inflatable toys and air beds should not be used on tidal waters and open lochs but may be used on very confined areas of still water with an area of less than a hundred metres across in any direction.

3.1.4 Before undertaking bathing activities the leader in charge of the group should have referred to section 2 part 2.2 of this circular and have fully considered the actions that might need to be taken in the event of a participant getting into difficulties.

This should include the actions needed to contact appropriate emergency services.

### 3.1.5 Qualifications

Groups involved in bathing in natural waters must always be supervised by a person holding at least a life saving qualification equivalent to a Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) Bronze Medallion (General) or be a lifeguard holding a formal qualification of equivalent standard recognised as suitable to the task; see list in paragraph 3.1.14.

### 3.1.6 Recognition of other national qualifications

If the activity takes place outwith the UK, the qualification of any foreign lifeguard deployed for supervisory purposes should be one officially recognised by the country in which the activity takes place, appropriate to the situation being supervised and of an equivalent or higher standard than the RLSS Bronze Medallion (General).

### 3.1.7 Ratios

The maximum number of people in the water at any one time should not exceed 8 per qualified lifesaver or lifeguard. The lifesaver or lifeguard and the leader in charge should be constantly watching the bathers from a safe point, either outwith or on the water, from which the bathers are all visible.

### 3.1.8 Risk assessment

Before any bathers enter the water the leader in charge of the group must have careful regard for any hazards that might contribute to participants being put at risk. These might include the cleanliness of the water, the wind and tidal conditions, the presence of surf and waves that might imply the presence of undertow or strong currents, the temperature of the water, the depth and clarity, and the presence of any hidden rocks or obstructions. The number of other people in the water may also be significant if this makes it more difficult to keep a proper watch over members of the group. The leader in charge should also be aware of the significance of any hazard warning signs or flags displayed in the beach area.

### 3.1.9 Limiting the bathing area

A limited area should be identified for the bathers to stay within and this should be delineated by clearly identifiable physical features or flags. The area identified should be such that the leader(s) in charge can feel confident that a rescue can be effected without them being exposed to unnecessary danger.

If the leader in charge is unfamiliar with the swimming ability of the participants, the area identified should be limited to one within which the bathers will remain within their depth. The limited area should not generally exceed 1.25 metres in depth. If the water is generally deeper than 1.25 metres and the surface area of

water is greater than a hundred square metres, a boat should be at hand for rescue purposes.

#### 3.1.10 Use of 'buddy' system

The participants should be paired and the individuals in each pair should be asked to watch out for the welfare of each other while in the water. Bathers should be made aware of an appropriate method of alerting the supervising lifeguard from the water in the event of an emergency.

#### 3.1.11 Distance swimming

Bathers wishing to swim long distances should be asked to swim back and forward parallel to and close to the shore in an area within which a rescue could be effected and not far out to sea or into the middle of an open loch or reservoir or be accompanied by suitable rescue craft manned by competent crew.

#### 3.1.12 Diving

Diving should be only be undertaken after a careful check for depth and hazards.

#### 3.1.13 Particular activities

(a) Bathing in areas of water which are unsupervised by a professional lifeguard service.

##### i Means of rescue

The person supervising the bathers should have close at hand and available for immediate use a long pole or a floating throw line with a buoyant object attached that can be thrown to a bather experiencing difficulty, and used to draw them to the shore, without the rescuer themselves entering the water and being put at risk.

##### ii Lifejackets and buoyancy aids

To help to ensure their own safety the supervisor should have, close at hand, a life jacket or buoyancy aid to wear in the event of having to enter the water to assist a bather.

##### iii Spare clothing

It is advised that the group should have appropriate equipment and clothing to use in the event of any bather(s) becoming cold and showing symptoms of hypothermia.

(b) Outdoor activity groups incidentally using beaches, rivers and lakes for casual bathing.

i The leader in charge should have regard to the guidance in the preceding paragraphs. Groups should only go bathing if supervised by an

appropriately qualified lifesaver or lifeguard, as defined in paragraph 3.1.5 above.

- ii The waters should be well known to the person in charge of the group and free of hazards. In the case of lochans situated high in the mountains special regard should be paid to the temperature of the waters. Leaders must ensure that bathers do not swim out of their depth or dive into deep cold pools because the water temperature below the surface is seldom much above freezing.
  - iii The number in the water should not exceed 8 per supervising lifesaver at any one time.
  - iv The limited area of water to be used should be clearly identified.
  - v If the water is anywhere deeper than 1.25 metres, a floating throw line and buoyant object should be available.
  - vi The group should have with them spare warm clothing and provision to make a hot drink in case group members show symptoms of hypothermia.
- (c) Outdoor activity groups involved in excursions, physical activities or environmental investigations in close proximity to areas of natural water.

This guidance would apply to groups wading in shallow waters and crossing shallow burns in the course of other activities. Leaders and instructors of groups involved in activities where a water hazard is believed to exist must ensure that every possible care is taken and the following guidance is indicative of the matters that must be given consideration.

- i Leaders/teachers in charge should have regard to the preceding paragraphs and must familiarise themselves with the area to be used in advance of the visit, and assess the area for likely hazards.
- ii The leader should be particularly aware of such things as stagnant water, steep slippery banking, deep pools, fast flowing streams and rivers, undercut banks and overhanging trees and bushes.
- iii Potential hazards should be brought to the attention of the members of the group at an appropriate time and the actions they should take in the event of an incident explained.
- iv If, in the initial assessment of the area, a leader believes that there may be a significant degree of risk because of the existence of areas of potentially hazardous natural waters, the action to be taken in the event of an emergency should be carefully considered.

Consideration should be given to:

- the need for a lifesaver holding an appropriate life saving qualification to accompany the group (see list below in paragraph 3.1.14);
- whether a throw line, flotation aid, and lifejacket or buoyancy aid should be at hand in case of an incident;
- whether there is a need to have a day sack containing spare warm clothing and a flask of hot drink available, in case anybody accidentally becomes immersed in cold water;
- the location of the nearest means of communicating with emergency services.

- v The group should always be expected to work in at least pairs and no individual must be allowed to go off alone.
- vi In areas where the risk is considered to be high the leader must apply the utmost vigilance and not lose contact with any member(s) of the group for any extended period of time.
- vii If the visibility in the area is poor because of the topography or trees and undergrowth, the members of the group should be supplied with whistles to attract attention in the event of an incident occurring.

3.1.14 Other acceptable lifesaving and lifeguard qualifications:

- BCU Foundation Safety and Rescue;
- The Royal Life Saving Society Bronze Medallion (General);
- Surf Life Saving GB Beach Lifeguard.

Or any qualification that is of an equivalent or of a higher standard to any of those detailed above.

Note Heads of establishment and leaders of parties may gain further information concerning safety procedures appropriate to particular activities that take place in or near areas of natural water, by contacting The Royal Life Saving Society, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, or the Scottish Council for the Prevention of Accidents.

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS)

[www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, (RoSPA)

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

Scottish Accident Prevention Council

[www.sapc.org.uk](http://www.sapc.org.uk)

## **3.2 Canoeing and kayaking**

3.2.1 Heads of establishment and instructors should also have regard to section 2 on general guidance on safety during educational excursions, particularly part 2.2 relating to the conduct of activities involving the use of natural waters. Leaders in charge of canoeing activities should ensure that participants are appropriately experienced and have the ability to cope with the canoeing activities envisaged and the type of craft to be used.

### **3.2.2 Swim tests**

It is common practice in canoeing, endorsed by the BCU, to instruct beginners, non-swimmers and persons with some categories of handicap, in introductory sessions of canoeing without a swim test or capsize drill. It is important that such beginners should be confident to try the activity, and the session should be undertaken by a fully experienced and qualified instructor, at a location that is sheltered, where the water is placid. No progression to more exposed or disturbed water should take place before the participants have fully demonstrated confidence on being suddenly immersed in cold water.

A swim test and capsize drill in a heated swimming pool is not sufficient by itself.

### **3.2.3 Capsize drill**

Novices must have practised and understood capsize drill under controlled but realistic conditions during initial training before progressing to exposed or moving water. If canoeing takes place in deep open water, novices should have undertaken deep water capsize and have experienced being rescued before progressing out on to areas of water distant from the shore.

### **3.2.4 Buoyancy aids**

These should conform to CEN 393 standard providing 50 N buoyancy and may be worn by novice participants on rivers and sheltered areas of lochs and sea for introductory and proficiency level expeditions close inshore.

### **3.2.5 Lifejackets**

Lifejacket buoyancy is measured in Newtons (There are four European standards for lifejackets. All lifejackets must carry the CE mark and have sufficient flotation for the purpose required.

More details here [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk)

### **3.2.6 Canoes and kayaks**

Craft should not be used outwith the manufacturer's recommendations. Maximum buoyancy should be fitted where craft are used on open water or rivers.

### 3.2.7 Helmets and footwear

The use or non use of helmets should be risk assessed in line with the risk acceptance of the activity. At all times participants should wear suitable footwear to prevent injury to the feet.

### 3.2.8 Winter clothing

If frequent immersion takes place between October and April it is strongly recommended that wet or dry suits be worn in addition or in place of waterproofs.

### 3.2.9 Canoe/kayak overnight trips and remote areas

Evidence of training or experience in camping/bivouacking skills must be shown before these activities may proceed eg summer Mountain Leader Award or Argyll and Bute Council's Education Service in-house accreditation scheme additional training elements.

### 3.2.10 Sea and surf kayaking operating levels

Area of operation	Group instructor/leader qualifications
<p>Advanced tidal waters/sea</p> <p>Any journey on the sea where tidal races, overfalls or open crossings may be encountered, which cannot be avoided. Sections of coastline where landings may not be possible or difficult</p> <p>Difficult sea states and /or stronger winds (force 4 or above)</p> <p>Launching and landing through moderate surf</p>	<p>Level 3 Sea Coach with 5 star or (<i>SI Sea with advanced sea proficiency</i>) or BCU Level 4 (Sea) or BCU UKCC Level 3 + 5* Leader Award (Sea) or BCU 5* Leader Award (Sea)</p> <p>[The 4 &amp; 5 leadership awards are not coaching awards. They are not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport or more advanced environments]</p>
<p>Moderate tidal waters/sea - the definition involves the following</p> <p>A stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with easy landing, not involving fast tidal streams, tidal races, or overfalls, winds not above force 4 (force 2 if offshore when greatest of caution must be exercised)</p> <p>The upper reaches of some estuaries</p> <p>Launching and landing through moderate surf</p>	<p>As above; or Level 3 Sea Coach (<i>SI Sea</i>) or BCU UKCC Level 3 or BCU 4* Leader Award (Sea)</p> <p>[The 4 &amp; 5 leadership awards are not coaching awards. They are not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport or more advanced environments]</p> <p>A BCU Coach with Moderate Water Endorsement may coach and lead in moderate water conditions as per the BCU Terms of Reference</p>

<p>Sheltered tidal waters/sea</p> <p>Small enclosed bays, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore</p> <p>Enclosed harbours, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore</p> <p>Defined beaches (a short section of beach with easy landing throughout, no tide races or overfalls beyond the beach), in conditions in which swimmers and beach craft could be happily operating winds not above force 3 (force 2 if offshore when greatest of caution must be exercised)</p> <p>The upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving estuaries during neap tides</p> <p>In all cases the wind and weather conditions must be favourable</p>	<p>As above or Level 2 Coach trained for area with 4 star sea or appropriate SVQ/NVQ Level 2 Canoeing Coach with 4 star sea <i>(Instructor with Sea Proficiency)</i></p> <p>As above or Level 2 Coach or appropriate SVQ/NVQ Level 2 Canoeing Coach <i>(Instructor)</i> or BCU UKCC Level 2</p>
<p>Advanced surf (&gt; 1 metre)</p>	<p>SI surf with advanced sea proficiency or Level 3 Surf Coach with 5 star or BCU UKCC Level 3 + 5* Leader Award (Surf)</p> <p>[The 4 &amp; 5 leadership awards are not coaching awards. They are not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport or more advanced environments]</p>
<p>Surf (&lt; 1 metre)</p>	<p>As above or Trainee Level 3 Surf Coach (TSI Surf) or BCU UKCC Level 3 (Surf) or BCU 4* Leader Award (Surf)</p> <p>[The 4 &amp; 5 leadership awards are not coaching awards. They are not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport or more advanced environments]</p>

<p>Moderate surf</p> <p>Beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips or undertow, tidal streams, rocks or groynes). An area of beach must be marked out to contain the group and prevent any loss of communication. The area selected must not interfere with other beach users - swimmers and surfers in particular; small to moderate waves - 3 feet maximum</p>	<p>A BCU Coach with Moderate Water Endorsement may coach and lead in moderate water conditions as per the BCU Terms of Reference</p>
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### 3.2.11 Inland kayaking/canoeing operating levels

<b>Area of operation</b>	<b>Group instructor/leader qualifications Discipline specific</b>
<p>Advanced; white water grade 3-4 and above</p> <p>Open water more than 500m from shore and/or winds above force 4</p>	<p>Level 3 Coach with 5 star (<i>SI with Advanced Proficiency</i>) or BCU UKCC Level 3 + 5* Leader Award or BCU 5* Leader Award</p> <p>[The 4 &amp; 5 leadership awards are not coaching awards. They are not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport or more advanced environments]</p>
<p>Moderate; white water descents up to grade 2, and equivalent weirs.</p> <p>Open water no more than 500m from shore and winds below force 4</p>	<p>As above or Level 3 Coach (<i>SI</i>) or BCU UKCC Level 3 or BCU 4* Leader Award</p> <p>[The 4 &amp; 5 leadership awards are not coaching awards. They are not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport or more advanced environments]</p>
<p>Moderate inland water</p> <p>Large areas of open water which exceed the sheltered water definition, that are no more than 500m off shore and in wind strengths that do not exceed force 4</p>	<p>A BCU Coach with Moderate Water Endorsement may coach and lead in moderate water conditions as per the BCU Terms of Reference</p>

<p>Sheltered water</p> <p>Flat water rivers, faster flowing but not involving the shooting of or playing on weirs or running rapids</p> <p>Discretion and commonsense must apply when considering the use of lakes/lochs. To operate further than 200 metres from shore on a large lake can be a serious undertaking. To paddle in offshore breezes on large lakes requires the same degree of caution as for the sea. Water temperature (especially in Scottish lochs) must always be a consideration</p> <p>Suitable lagoons or sections of sheltered bays of larger lakes can sometimes be designated 'sheltered' or even 'very sheltered' water by careful and sensible selection</p> <p>The definition implies normal conditions. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low</p>	<p>As above or Level 2 Coach or appropriate SVQ/NVQ Level 2 Coach (<i>Instructor</i>) or BCU UKCC Level 1 plus site specific training (see note) + valid first aid + CRB (or Home Nation Equivalent) + over 18 yrs or BCU UKCC Level 2</p>
<p>Very sheltered water</p> <p>Quiet canals with easy bank side access and egress</p> <p>Small lakes, which are not large enough, and do not have difficult landing areas for problems to occur it there is a sudden change in conditions. Specified sites on gentle, slow moving rivers</p> <p>The definition implies weather conditions which are not in themselves likely to cause problems. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low</p>	<p>As above or BCU Level 1 or BCU Level 2 Trainee or BCU UKCC Level 1 plus site specific training (see note) + valid first aid + CRB (or Home Nation Equivalent) + over 18 yrs</p>

Swimming pools	As above or BCU Level 1 or BCU Level 2 Trainee or BCU UKCC Level 1
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Note Site specific training can be provided by any suitably qualified technical adviser this role is being provided by Ken Lacey [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com)  
07771 918431

3.2.12 There are large lochs in Scotland with open crossings exposed to weather conditions similar to those experienced at sea. If such crossings are to be attempted, the staff to student ratio should be more favourable than that for sheltered or normal open areas; the instructor responsible for the group must be suitably experienced and qualified to supervise participants on large open areas of water. The staff competence, equipment, ability of the group and weather conditions should be considered as if the expedition was an open sea crossing.

### 3.2.13 Weather forecasts

Instructors of canoeing activities using areas of exposed open waters that can be subject to hazardous conditions arising from wind or tidal conditions should always get a weather forecast and consider whether the activities should proceed if there is any indication that the weather is expected to be particularly inclement.

Those in charge should be particularly aware of the dangers arising from even light off shore winds.

### 3.2.14 Coast Guard Service

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency must be informed in all circumstances when canoeing activities take place in areas of open sea remote from the usual canoeing base if:

- i expeditions or journeys will involve an extended passage crossing areas of exposed open sea;
- ii an extended coastal journey will involve participants being more than 500 metres off shore;
- iii canoeing activities take place on areas of water from which it is possible to drift a kilometre from any shore;
- iv canoeing activities take place on areas of water that can be subject to hazardous conditions arising from the effects of wind and tide.

**The Maritime and Coastguard Agency must also be informed at the conclusion of such expeditions when all participants are safely off the water.**

Or qualifications that are of an equivalent or higher standard to any of those detailed above.

3.2.15 Heads of establishment may get further information concerning safety procedures relating to canoeing from:

Scottish Canoe Association

[www.canoescotland.org](http://www.canoescotland.org)

### 3.3 Educational field visits

- 3.3.1 Heads of establishment and teachers/leaders of field visits should also have regard to section 2: general guidance on safety during educational outdoor activities, and section 3.1 on bathing in natural waters and section 3.4 on hill walking. Further guidance is available in codes of practice for the safe conduct of field studies related to particular subject areas which should be included in establishment and departmental safety files. These make reference to safety equipment and procedures that are beyond the immediate scope of this document.
- 3.3.2 The head of establishment and teacher/leader should also consult the education department document *Guidelines for teachers on the organisation of educational field visits* which contains further advice. The bibliography that accompanies these guidelines includes references to books and pamphlets issued by a variety of bodies that should also be consulted.
- 3.3.3 **It is recommended that the leaders of educational field visits using remote moorland, wild country or exposed coastal areas should have attended a course in safety and leadership procedures such as the Argyll and Bute Council's Lowhills accreditation scheme.**
- 3.3.4 Preparatory arrangements. Prior to and in preparation for such visits leaders should:
- i obtain permission for access to the proposed fieldwork area;
  - ii arrange for a preliminary examination/investigation of the area to be carried out to assess any hazards present and to prepare an appropriate work programme;
  - iii advise participants on the type of clothing to be worn and equipment required; this should include clothing that can provide full arm and leg cover;
  - iv check the master health and safety file in their educational establishment and ensure that participants comply with the regulations and specific codes of practice therein as they relate to particular disciplines; consider carefully the staff to student ratio appropriate to the particular needs of the pupils and the nature of the activity if pupils with special educational needs are involved.
- 3.3.5 While engaged in the fieldwork excursion the leader should:
- i carry a list of all participants;
  - ii have available a contact 'phone number for the head of establishment;
  - iii be in possession of a suitable first aid kit;

iv ensure that pupils have access to all personal medication that may be required during the excursion.

3.3.6 If field studies excursions involve hill walking, boating or sea angling, the relevant parts of this document must also be referred to for further guidance.

3.3.7 Heads must exercise discretion when authorising individual field study projects which will be undertaken by senior students in moorland, wild country or exposed coastal areas. The nature and location of these projects must be clearly indicated, examined and, if necessary, specialist advice should be sought prior to authorisation.

Note Heads of establishment and leaders may be able to gain more information about safety procedures applicable during outdoor studies and visits from the National Association for Environmental Education, the Scottish Field Studies Association or the Field Studies Council.

The National Association for Environmental Education (NAEE)

[www.naee.org.uk](http://www.naee.org.uk)

The Scottish Field Studies Association

[www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)

The Field Studies Council

[www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org)

### 3.4 Hill walking

- 3.4.1 Heads of establishment and leaders and supervisors of hill walking expeditions should also have regard to section 2 on general guidance on safety during educational outdoor activities.
- 3.4.2 Safety on the hills is dependent on good leadership and skilled supervision provided by leaders with a combination of appropriate training and practical experience. Persons performing the role of expedition supervisor as defined in the DofE Award expedition guide should comply with guidance provided in this section, and should possess the experience and qualifications appropriate to the category of area within which the expedition takes place to ensure both the safety of themselves and the young people for whom they are responsible.
- 3.4.3 'Winter' means when winter conditions, including snow and ice, prevail or are forecast. This cannot be defined by a portion of the year. Summer means any conditions not covered under 'winter'.
- 3.4.5 A valid standard first aid certificate is required. All leaders and supervisors should carry a first aid kit appropriate to the seriousness of the expedition for which they are responsible.
- 3.4.6 It is good practice for leaders to be familiar with the hills and mountain areas prior to leading groups on them so that they are already aware of any difficulties or hazards which may be present. At locations where it can be foreseen that a head injury is likely to occur as the consequence of a slip or fall appropriate mountaineering helmets should be worn.
- 3.4.7 Ratio: maximum 1 leader to 12 participants.
- 3.4.8 Hill walking operating areas

<b>Area of operation</b>	<b>Group instructor/leader qualifications</b>
<b>Technically difficult ground - winter</b> Technically difficult and exposed terrain for which the use of a safety rope is known to be desirable, eg Aonach Eagach, Forcan Ridge, A'Chir Ridge, Liathach and other technical ground.	British Mountain Guide Carnet holder or aspirant British Mountain Guide or Mountaineering Instructors Certificate holder

<p><b>Technically difficult ground - summer</b></p> <p>Technically difficult and exposed terrain for which the use of a safety rope is known to be desirable, eg Aonach Eagach, Forcan Ridge, A'Chir Ridge, Liathach and other technical ground.</p>	<p>As above or Mountaineering Instructor Award holder</p>
<p><b>Mountain country - winter</b></p> <p>At any time of the year when snow, frost or other extreme conditions are present or forecast.</p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance, on open uncultivated land at any height or on a mountain above 600m.</p>	<p>British Mountain Guide Carnet holder or aspirant British Mountain Guide or Mountaineering Instructors Certificate holder or a Winter Mountain Leader Award holder with a satisfactory assessment report in their Mountain Leader Training Board log book of experience</p>
<p><b>Mountain country - summer</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance, on open uncultivated land at any height or on a mountain above 600m.</p>	<p>As above or holder of the European Mountain Leader Carnet or a Summer Mountain Leader Award holder with a satisfactory assessment report in their Mountain Leader Training Board log book of experience</p>
<p><b>Remote country</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes hazard-free walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance.</p> <p>The journey is substantially along tracks and paths, is free from outcrops and what could be termed craggy areas. Prior to journey being undertaken, routes will be approved by the technical adviser.</p>	<p>As above or Argyll and Bute Education Service in-house Lowhills training</p>
<p><b>Lowland country</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being less than 30 minutes hazard-free walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance.</p>	<p>None Argyll and Bute Education Service in-house Lowhills training or BEL recommended</p>

3.4.9 Leaders of walking parties intending to visit remote areas of wild country, particularly in winter, should get a weather forecast before departure and give careful consideration to whether the walk should proceed as planned if the weather is expected to be particularly inclement.

3.4.10 Area of operation for the Walking Group Leader Award

- open, uncultivated, non-mountainous high or remote country known variously as upland, moor, bog, fell, hill or down;
- areas enclosed by well-defined geographical or man-made boundaries such as classified roads (areas that merge with mountain regions and do not have well defined boundaries are excluded);
- areas of remoteness that are easily exited in a few hours, returning to a refuge or an accessible road;
- areas where movement on steep or rocky terrain is not required (in either planned or unplanned situation).

Due to the difficulty in interpreting the terrain for the Walking Group Leader Award in Argyll, contact should be made with the technical adviser Ken Lacey [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com) or 07771 918431 before leaders with this award are deployed.

Note Heads of establishment and leaders of hill walking parties will be able to gain further information concerning safety during hill walking activities from the Secretary of the Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board.

Mountain Leader training Scotland  
Glenmore  
Aviemore  
Inverness-shire  
PH22 1QU  
Telephone 01479 861248

[www.mltuk.org/docs/MLTS.html](http://www.mltuk.org/docs/MLTS.html)

### 3.5 Horse riding

Area of operation	Group instructor/leader qualifications
<p><b>Mountain country - winter</b></p> <p>At any time of the year when snow, frost or other extreme conditions are present or forecast.</p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance or open uncultivated land at any height or on a mountain above 600m.</p>	<p>It is permissible for there to be two leaders, one holding the hill walking qualification and the other the horse qualification</p> <p>British Horse Society Assistant Instructor Certificate or Trekking and Riding Society of Scotland Senior Ride Leader Award or Association of British Riding Schools Teaching Certificate and one of the following awards British Mountain Guide Carnet holder or aspirant British Mountain Guide or Mountaineering Instructors Certificate holder or a Winter Mountain Leader Award holder with a satisfactory assessment report in their Mountain Leader Training Board log book of experience</p>
<p><b>Mountain country - summer</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance or open uncultivated land at any height or on a mountain above 600m.</p>	<p>As above or British Horse Society Assistant Instructor Certificate or the Trekking and Riding Society of Scotland Senior Ride Leader Award or Association of British Riding Schools Teaching Certificate and one of the following awards a holder of the European Mountain Leader Carnet or a Summer Mountain Leader Award holder with a satisfactory assessment report in their Mountain Leader Training Board log book of experience</p>

<p><b>Remote country</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes hazard-free walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance.</p> <p>The journey is substantially along tracks and paths, is free from outcrops and what could be termed craggy areas.</p> <p>Prior to journeys being undertaken routes will be approved by the technical adviser.</p>	<p>As above</p> <p>or British Horse Society Assistant Instructor Certificate</p> <p>or</p> <p>the Trekking and Riding Society of Scotland Senior Ride Leader Award</p> <p>or Association of British Riding Schools Teaching Certificate</p> <p>and Argyll and Bute Education Service in-house Lowhills training</p>
<p><b>Lowland country</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes hazard-free walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance.</p>	<p>As above</p> <p>or British Horse Society Assistant Instructor Certificate</p> <p>or the Trekking and Riding Society of Scotland Senior Ride Leader Award</p> <p>or Association of British Riding Schools Teaching Certificate</p> <p>and Argyll and Bute Education Service in-house Lowhills training or BELA recommended</p>

Note Further advice can be gained concerning horse riding and pony trekking from:

The British Horse Society – [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

The Trekking and Riding Society of Scotland – [www.ridinginscotland.com](http://www.ridinginscotland.com)

The Association of British Riding Schools – [www.abrs-info.org](http://www.abrs-info.org)

The Scottish Equestrian Association - [www.s-e-a.org.uk](http://www.s-e-a.org.uk)

### 3.6 Miscellaneous use of boats

**NB** Any miscellaneous use of small boats should be referred to the technical advisers.  
Contact Ken Lacey: 01852 300770, 07771 918431, [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com)

#### 3.6.1 Small boats under 6 metres

Heads of establishment and persons responsible for using small boats of any description should also have regard to section 2 on general guidance on safety during educational outdoor activities: 2.1 concerning activities involving exposure to strong sunlight and 2.2 concerning activities involving the use of natural waters. They should also refer to section 3.6 concerning bathing in natural waters. The guidance relating to safety in these sections may inform action in relation to circumstances that might arise during activities involving the use of small boats.

#### 3.6.2 Swim test

Rowing boats and small boats under 6 metres with outboard motors are vulnerable to capsize in certain conditions. Where the body of water is less than 100m across in any direction, the leader or supervisor must be satisfied, as far as is reasonably practicable, that persons using such craft are able to swim with confidence in appropriate clothing. No progression to more exposed or disturbed water should take place before the participants have fully demonstrated their ability to swim sufficiently confidently to regain contact with the boat in the event of a capsize.

A swim test in a heated swimming pool is not sufficient by itself.

#### 3.6.3 Lifejackets and buoyancy aids

All persons while afloat must wear personal buoyancy which will help them stay afloat in the event of a capsize or falling overboard. Personal buoyancy aids should conform to the correct CEN standard, and should be of an appropriate size and be correctly fitted.

#### 3.6.4 Ratios

There should be no more persons in the boat than the number recommended by the boat manufacturer.

#### 3.6.5 Clothing

All participants must have available adequate clothing to wear appropriate to the prevailing and expected conditions.

#### 3.6.6 First aid

It is recommended that each leader should carry a small first-aid kit, some spare clothes, and a flask containing a warm drink.

### 3.6.7 Weather forecast

Before going afloat a weather forecast should be obtained and studied. If any doubt exists regarding a change in weather, advice should be sought by telephoning either the Coast Guard or the Glasgow Met Office. Having gone afloat the leader should be aware that conditions can change rapidly and should the weather deteriorate more than expected the boats should return to more sheltered waters or to shore.

### 3.6.8 Training of leaders

If it is possible for the participant to be more than 50m from any perimeter bank or the water is turbulent, the person in charge of the boat must hold a Royal Yachting Association qualification appropriate to the boat being used, and if there is any doubt as to the 'appropriate' qualification, then advice must be sought from the authority prior to the activity taking place. The leader in charge of each boat must have read the booklet 'Seaway Code' available from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and yacht chandlers.

3.6.9 Before going afloat, the overall leader in charge must designate the area of water within which all boats must stay and the time at which all boats should return to shore.

### 3.6.10 Maritime and Coastguard Agency

When boating activities take place on an exposed and extensive area of open sea that can be affected by potentially hazardous wind and tidal conditions and/or off a shore from which it is possible to drift more than a kilometre out to sea, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency should be informed of the time of the start and expected duration of the activity.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency must also be informed at the end of the activity when all boats have returned and all participants are safely ashore.

### 3.6.11 Season

The use of small boats under 6 metres by pupils and other novices for whom the authority has a duty of care should only be permitted on extensive areas of open water during the period 1 April to 31 October. The training for RYA powerboat awards is not limited to a particular season.

### 3.6.12 Sea fishing and charter boats

Consult Legal Services.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

[www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)

Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Scotland

[www.ryascotland.org.uk](http://www.ryascotland.org.uk)

### **3.7 Orienteering**

#### **3.7.1 Qualifications of leaders**

It is not considered essential for purely safety reasons for those who wish to take groups of young people to orienteering events or help them with elementary instruction in orienteering to have gained a coaching award from the British Orienteering Federation. It is, however, considered desirable that leaders should acquire such an award. A coaching award scheme exists for the sport administered by the British Orienteering Federation (BOF) and the Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA).

#### **3.7.2 Ratios**

No specific leader to student ratio is required for the safe conduct of the sport, but in circumstances when pupils are away from home and school, reference should be made to education management circular 3.25 part A on residential and overseas visits, sub-paragraph (c), in which a ratio of 1 to 12 is indicated as appropriate.

**3.7.3** Leaders taking groups of young people to areas of remote forest or moorland for organised events should be aware of any potentially hazardous terrain, eg steep crags or rivers in spate. Participants should be warned to avoid areas containing hazardous terrain and should follow the organisers' protocol. Leaders should also consult section 2 of this circular for general guidance on safety during educational activities and for further information concerning particular environmental hazards.

**3.7.4** Leaders taking groups of young people to areas of remote forest or moorland for training purposes should follow the guidance given by the British Orienteering Federation or have an equivalent level of mountaineering award.

#### **3.7.5 First aid**

The leader should ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the provision of first aid at any event including training sessions. The leader should have a basic first aid kit available.

#### **3.7.6 Medical advice**

A risk of cross infection of orienteers through cuts and scratches from infected vegetation has been identified, and also a risk of infection from ticks. It is important, therefore, for leaders to ensure that all participants wear clothing that provides full arm and leg cover. Leaders should also ensure that participants wear clothing suitable for the environmental conditions during cold, wet and windy weather, because there is always a possibility that poorly clothed participants may suffer from exhaustion and hypothermia.

**3.7.7** All participants should be made aware of the safety procedures that apply to the sport of orienteering and which are used during training and competitive events.

The leader should ensure that participants know the location to which competitors must report in the event of becoming lost or giving up and the recall signal to bring competitors back to the location should an event be terminated. It is normal practice for all participants to carry a whistle to allow them to attract attention if they become totally disoriented or injured.

Note Heads of establishment may get more information about the sport of orienteering and the coaching scheme from the Scottish Orienteering Association or the British Orienteering Federation.

Scottish Orienteering Association

[www.scottish-orienteering.org](http://www.scottish-orienteering.org)

British Orienteering Federation

[www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk)

### 3.8 Climbing and abseiling activities

3.8.1 Where these activities do not take place immediately adjacent to a road then reference should be made to section 3.4 on hill walking.

#### 3.8.2 Climbing operating levels

Area of operation	Group leader/instructor qualifications
Winter climbing	British Mountain Guide Carnet holder or aspirant British Mountain Guide or Mountaineering Instructors Certificate holder
Rock climbing - multi-pitch	As above or Mountaineering Instructor Award holder
Ghyll scrambling / gorge walking / Coasteering sea level traversing etc NB These activities only to proceed at the discretion of the technical adviser. See section 3.9	As above, with additional water experience or in-house assessed depending on level of activity or SVQ/NVQ Level 3
Rock climbing - single pitch	As above or Single Pitch Award or site specific training or SVQ/NVQ Level 2
Climbing walls	As above or Climbing Wall Leading Award or Climbing Wall Award or site specific training or SVQ/NVQ Level 2

In-house and site specific training to be carried out by the technical adviser  
Ken Lacey [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com) or 07771 918431.

#### 3.8.3 Equipment

- i Heads of establishment must ensure that all equipment used for rock climbing and abseiling activities complies with the appropriate Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA) standards for such equipment.\* The equipment should be regularly checked as appropriate to ensure that it is still serviceable and safe.
- ii Heads of establishment should ensure that all persons participating in sessions of rock climbing and abseiling activities wear climbers' safety helmets that conform to the UIAA standards\* at all times wherever there is a danger of stone fall or head injury.

\* Copies of these standards can be obtained from the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) Technical Committee.

Note Heads of establishment and persons interested in involving groups in such activities can gain further information concerning safety during rock climbing and abseiling activities from the Secretary of the Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board, the United Kingdom Mountain Training Board and the British Mountaineering Council.

Mountain Leader training Scotland

Glenmore

Aviemore

Inverness-shire

PH22 1QU

Telephone 01479 861248

[www.mltuk.org/docs/MLTS.html](http://www.mltuk.org/docs/MLTS.html)

### 3.9 Gorge walking, canyoning, coasteering etc

#### 3.9.1 Gorge walking, canyoning and coasteering operating levels

Area of operation	Group leader/instructor qualifications
Ghyll scrambling / gorge walking / Coasteering sea level traversing etc NB These activities only to proceed at the discretion of the technical adviser. See section 3.8	As above, with additional water experience or in-house assessed depending on level of activity or SVQ/NVQ Level 3

### 3.10 Sailing

3.10.1 Heads of establishment and instructors should also have regard to section 2 of this circular for general guidance on safety during educational outdoor activities: 2.2 concerning activities involving the use of natural waters, and 2.1 concerning activities involving exposure to strong sunlight.

#### 3.10.2 Qualifications

Small boat sailing: it should be understood by all group leaders with the appropriate NGB (National Governing Body) qualifications that the area in which we operate has a wide diversity, and as such decisions need to be made reflecting the daily operation of the activity. It would not be appropriate to state that only advanced instructors work a particular location, although on some occasions throughout the year that may be the case for that location. Judgement, as gained with the qualification, must be used.

#### Operating qualifications

All coaching qualifications used in coastal locations must incorporate **coastal endorsements**.

The person with overall responsibility for the organisation and control of group sailing tuition must be a holder of the **Senior Instructor** certificate of the Royal Yachting Association (RYA SI). The RYA Instructor's Certificate is the minimum qualification for a leader in charge of day sailing. The instructor shall implement the instructional programme laid down by the senior instructor. Where there is no SI connection the operation must have approval for normal operating areas from the technical adviser.

**RYA Dinghy Instructor/Senior Instructor:** day sailing in simple operating conditions local to the normal operating base. Where there is direct support from a Dinghy SI the number of instructors involved with the group may include **RYA Dinghy Assistant Instructors**, to a maximum ratio of one instructor to one assistant instructor. **RYA Advanced Dinghy Instructor** is the operating level for multi day trips and coastal journeys, with the accompanying safety boats being suitable for the task and operated by holders of the RYA Advanced Powerboat certificate and Safety boat certificate. All powerboat personnel on such a trip must wear the appropriate lifejacket, as defined by the RYA for advanced powerboat courses: EN396 with DoT approved lifejacket light.

#### 3.10.3 Swim test

Novices should be expected to undertake a simple swim test at some time prior to participating in sailing activities to demonstrate their ability to manage themselves adequately in cold water should they be involved in a capsize or fall overboard.

A swim test in a heated swimming pool is not sufficient by itself.

#### 3.10.4 Clothing/equipment

Instructors must ensure that all participants are suitably clothed for the planned activity, including the use of wet or dry suits if it is appropriate. All should pay careful attention for signs of extreme cold and hypothermia developing.

There is a growth area in the use of canoe style helmets when teaching novices. The instructor must outline to the participants the pros and cons involved when wearing a helmet, and give each participant the opportunity to use an appropriate, correctly fitting helmet if they desire it.

All equipment must be adequate and suitable to the task. Appropriate buoyancy aids/lifejackets must be used and be in a current serviceable condition. They must carry the CE mark

Buoyancy aids must conform to current legislation: EN393 (minimum) giving at least 50 Newtons of buoyancy and be designed for the use of and correct fit to the user.

Lifejackets, where used, must conform to EN396 (minimum) and, if operating on multi day ventures, be of EN396 (minimum) and be fitted with the appropriate lighting: DoT [UK] approved lifejacket light.

\* Older standards such as British Standards specifications BS 3595/81 were replaced by the CEN standard on 1 July 1995.

#### 3.10.5 Safety boats

Safety boat cover: this is an integral part of sail instruction, and as such all safety craft must be appropriate to the sailing craft in use and also to the area of operation. Operators of such craft must have a minimum qualification of RYA Powerboat Level 2 and, if involved in the teaching of novices or children, must hold the RYA Safety boat Certificate. If involved in large open water situations, the advanced certificate course is strongly recommended and, if involved in multi day journeys, the advanced and safety boat certificates must be held.

This should be read with relation to the dedicated section on powerboat use.

#### 3.10.6 Informing the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency should be informed whenever sailing passages are planned, remote from the vicinity of the normal sailing base, which will involve:

- i an extended crossing of exposed areas of open sea;
- ii novice sailors under tuition on sea areas that can be subject to hazardous wind or tidal conditions;

- iii a possibility of drifting more than a kilometre from any shore in the event of a capsize.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency must also be informed at the end of the session when all participants are safely off the water.

### 3.10.7 Weather forecasts

Before any session the senior instructor responsible for the organisation and control of the group under tuition should get a weather forecast and carefully consider whether the session should proceed if there is any indication that the weather is expected to be unusually inclement.

3.10.8 Extended multi day cruising in dinghies or charter yachts will only take place with the approval of the authority, granted at directorate level, with consultation to the technical adviser.

3.10.9 Groups operating with their own cruising vessels and undertaking coastal cruising must ensure that the person in charge has the appropriate RYA certificate as laid down in the 'RYA National Cruising Scheme (Sail) Syllabus and Logbook G15'. The vessel must fully conform to the construction and equipment requirements of the current government code of practice for the safety of small commercial sailing vessels.

### 3.10.10 Power boating

This is aimed at the smaller powerboat user, primarily working in outdoor teaching situations, not to operators who would normally fall within the cruising qualifications sector: Yacht master etc.

### 3.10.11 Power boating operating levels

<b>Area of operation</b>	<b>Group instructor/leader qualifications</b>
Operation of boat close to base	RYA Powerboat Scheme Level 2 certification
Operation of boat involved with novices; sailing, windsurfing etc	RYA Powerboat Scheme Safety boat certificate
Operation of boat in open water - away from home location Operation of boat in twilight/darkness	RYA Powerboat Scheme Advanced certificate
Coastal journeys as escort to activity fleet (sailing trips etc)	RYA Powerboat Scheme: Advanced certificate and Safety boat certificate
Instructing/coaching etc at any level	RYA Powerboat Scheme Instructor with correct endorsement for the level of operation

Any multi day ventures must be notified to the technical adviser for clearance prior to the event. All coastal operations must use the appropriate certification with coastal endorsements.

Note Heads of establishment may get further information concerning safety procedures relating to sailing and power boating from:

Royal Yachting Association Scotland

[www.ryascotland.org.uk](http://www.ryascotland.org.uk)

Royal Yachting Association (RYA)

RYA House, Ensign Way, Hamble, Hants SO31 4YA; telephone 02380 604100

Expedition Guide: Duke of Edinburgh's Award CD guide

### 3.11 Alpine/downhill skiing and Nordic/cross-country skiing

3.11.1 Heads of establishment and leaders should also have regard to section 2 for general guidance on safety during educational outdoor activities: 2.1 relating to activities that involve exposure to strong sunlight.

#### 3.11.2 First aid

The leader of skiing activities should carry or have close to hand a safety day sack containing a simple first aid kit, a compass, a piste map or an OS map or both, torch, whistle, photo protective sun block cream, light waterproofs, and spare ski goggles, hat, scarf and gloves or mittens for use in an emergency.

#### 3.11.3 Warm up

Before the commencement of each session of skiing activities the leader should ensure that the group has undertaken a series of appropriate warming up and stretching exercises which are sport specific to skiing as this reduces the chances of injury and strained muscles.

#### 3.11.4 Alpine/downhill/Telemark/Snowboard skiing operating levels

<b>Area of operation</b>	<b>Group leader/instructor qualification</b>
	The qualification should be relevant to the discipline being taught
Ski mountaineering	BMG Carnet holder or Snowsport Scotland Mountain Ski Leader
Scotland, off-piste away from marked/serviced areas	As above or Winter ML with BASI level 4 ISTD or BASI level 3 ISIA
Scotland, off-piste but within the recognised boundary of serviced area shown on piste map	As above or BASI alpine level 3 ISIA BASI alpine level 4 ISTD equivalence from other nations
Scotland, on piste within the recognised boundary of serviced area shown on piste map	As above or Snowsport Scotland alpine Ski Leader BASI level 2 Equivalence from other nations
Indoor Snow slope Dry slope	As above or ASSI -artificial slope instructor Snowsport Scotland/BASI level 1

### 3.11.5 Nordic/cross-country skiing operating levels

<b>Area of operation</b>	<b>Group leader/instructor qualification</b>
Nordic skiing - Scotland, off-piste at any altitude (away from marked/serviced area) Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance	Snowsport Scotland Mountain Ski Leader (Nordic) or Winter ML and one of Nordic Ski Instructor or Snowsport Scotland Nordic Ski Leader or BASI level 3 ISIA BASI level 2 or ESC/SCOW Nordic Coach (Touring) or ESC/SCOW Club Coach
Nordic skiing - Scotland, on-piste (within marked/serviced areas)	As above or BASI Associate Instructor
Nordic skiing - Scotland, lowland country - where travel will involve being less than 30 minutes hazard free walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance. Tracks and trails	As above or BASI Associate Instructor
Nordic or Alpine skiing - England and Wales	As above - relevant to the discipline for Scotland or Winter ML and ESC/SCOW Coach

Note the above qualifications relate to Nordic and Alpine skiing. Nordic and Alpine refer to the particular ski disciplines, not to geographical settings.

In the case of all groups skiing abroad it is emphasised that the leader in charge of the group during all skiing activities must hold a Snowsport Scotland Ski Leader's Certificate and has responsibility for the safety of the participants at all times while they are on the snow.

### 3.11.6 Ratios

The leader to student ratio of any group under instruction should not exceed the recommendations of the NGB and students should be supervised at all times while skiing or involved in any other activities on the snow.

### 3.11.7 Ski equipment

Leaders should ensure that all equipment fits the participants properly and that any skis, whether owned by the authority, hired commercially or owned by participants, are of an appropriate length and are fitted with modern bindings that meet the specification of the Deutsches Industrie Norm (DIN): 7881/Feb 82. It should be noted that modern ski boots are designed to be compatible with

bindings made to this industrial standard and for the bindings to work effectively boots should be modern and the soles should not be excessively worn\*.

Leaders should ensure that the bindings are properly adjusted and work effectively by carrying out a visual check before the start of each session of instruction. Any adjustments to be made to the bindings should only be done by a suitably qualified ski technician.

#### 3.11.8 Insurance

It should be noted that the normal insurance policy held by the Council does not cover competitive skiing activities. However they are not precluded provided that heads of establishment consult and seek approval from the insurance section in writing.

Note Heads of establishment and leaders in charge may get further information concerning safety procedures relating to skiing from the Scottish National Ski Council (Snowsport Scotland), and should refer to the safety advice contained in the Snowsport Scotland publication, 'Ski-Safe'.

Snowsport Scotland

[www.snowsportsotland.org](http://www.snowsportsotland.org) or 0131-317 7280

British Association of Snowsport Instructors

[www.basi.org.uk](http://www.basi.org.uk) or 01479 861717

\* Deutsches Industrie Norm (DIN), the German Industrial Standard.

Bindings for skis and boots have now been made technically compatible by the establishment of norms for the sole of the boot and the size and shape of a binding. All recently made boots and bindings of any manufacture are compatible. However old, worn or poorly maintained equipment cannot be guaranteed to be reliable.

The DIN standards for the following items of equipment are:

Ski boots - DIN780/ISO5355

Bindings - DIN7881/Feb 82

### 3.12 Wind surfing

3.12.1 Heads of establishment and instructors should also have regard to section 2 of this circular for general guidance on safety during educational outdoor activities: 2.1 relating to activities involving exposure to strong sunlight and 2.2 relating to the conduct of activities involving the use of natural waters.

#### 3.12.2 Wind surfing operating levels

Area of operation	Group leader/instructor qualification
Sea/tidal waters	Instructor Level 1 Open Sea or SVQ/NVQ Level 2 Coach
Inland waters	As above or Instructor Level 1 Inland or SVQ/NVQ Level 2 Coach

#### 3.12.3 First aid qualifications

Wind Surfing Instructor awards are valid for three years from the date of issue, provided a current first aid certificate is held. At the end of this period awards are normally re-validated and re-issued for a further three year period.

#### 3.12.4 Buoyancy aids

Participants should wear a buoyancy aid conforming to BS EN 393 standard providing 50 N buoyancy.

#### 3.12.5 Ratios

Where the additional security offered by a safety boat is not available the instructor to student ratio should not exceed 1:6. In sheltered waters when a safety boat is in attendance the operator of the safety boat may be considered a part of the total supervision available. In such circumstances the size of a group of novice wind surfers, where practicable for instructional purposes, may rise to a maximum of 12.

#### 3.12.6 Safety boats

In all sea locations and the majority of inland locations a rescue boat must be in attendance. The only exception to this would be in very restricted and sheltered locations, ie less than 500m in width or length, and shallow enough for participants to stand on the bottom, for example no more than 1.25m in depth.

It should be noted that to gain RYA recognition as a wind surfing 'school' an organisation must have a safety boat available at all times, except in the shallowest and smallest of ponds.

The safety boat operator at the site of wind surfing activity must hold an **RYA Safety Boat Certificate**, and all wind surfing instructors should have undertaken

the powerboat element of the Level 1 Wind Surfing Instructor's Award (or an equivalent training) before operating the safety boat.

#### 3.12.7 Maritime and Coastguard Agency

When wind surfing activities take place at open sea locations which can be affected by potentially hazardous wind and tidal conditions and/or from which it is possible to drift more than a kilometre off shore the Maritime and Coastguard Agency should be advised of the planned time of the start and end of the activity session.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency Maritime must also be informed at the conclusion of the session when all participants are safely off the water.

#### 3.12.8 Weather forecasts

Before sessions involving the use of areas of exposed open water the instructor in charge should get a weather forecast and consider carefully whether the session should proceed if there is any indication that the weather is expected to be particularly inclement.

#### 3.12.9 Winter clothing

If wind surfing activities take place in exposed sea locations or between 31 October and 1 April it is strongly recommended that protective clothing with layers additional to those specified in paragraph 3.1.4 should be worn by all participants.

Note Heads of establishment may get further information concerning safety procedures relating to board sailing from the Royal Yachting Association Scottish office.

Royal Yachting Association Scotland

[www.ryascotland.org.uk](http://www.ryascotland.org.uk) or 0131-317 7388

### **3.13 Cycling**

- 3.13.1 Many groups of young people for whom the education department has responsibility wish to undertake activities involving the use of both 'on road' and 'trail' or 'off road' bicycles. On many occasions these activities can only be undertaken by using bicycles that are hired from commercial organisations. The authority has received advice on safety considerations relating to the use of bicycles which has highlighted the risks of upper body and head injuries.
- 3.13.2 The utmost care must be applied in the planning and execution of any excursion involving the use of bicycles. Leaders in charge of cycling activities should avoid using busy main roads and minor roads during periods of time when heavy fast moving traffic can be expected. It should be noted that a growing number of cycle tracks and bridle ways are being designated to separate cyclists from other traffic and these should be used as far as is practicable.

#### **3.13.3 Pre-visits**

The leader of any cycling excursion should be familiar with the area to be used and aware of any potential hazards that exist.

#### **3.13.4 General guidelines**

- i It is essential that before any expedition or excursion a period of prior practical training take place in a safe 'off road' location.
- ii Leaders of groups involved in cycling activities should satisfy themselves that all bicycles, whether owned by participants, belonging to the authority, or hired commercially are properly serviced and appropriate for the planned excursion or expedition.
- iii Participants should be appropriately dressed for the environmental conditions that they are liable to encounter and, where the excursion involves the use of remote moorland or highland areas, the criteria that apply to clothing for hill walking activities should also be applied to cycling excursions. On such excursions it is strongly recommended that participants carry a light day sack, saddle bag or pannier which contains spare warm clothing and light waterproofs.
- iv Cycling helmets must be worn by all participants during both 'on road' and 'off road' cycling activities. For excursions involving the use of public roads, brightly coloured tops or yellow 'day glow' safety vests should be worn by all participants.
- v The leader should carry a repair kit suitable for any 'off road' expedition, or have made suitable arrangements for the group to be picked up from

any 'on road' location should they become immobilised as a result of mechanical breakdowns.

- vi The leader of the group should carry a first aid kit appropriately matched to the seriousness of the excursion.
- vii The authority has been advised that the maximum recommended ratio of leaders to novice cyclists is 1 to 8, and the maximum recommended group size is 12, and there should always be at least two adults. There should always be a responsible person at the front and back of any group to prevent the group becoming too widely dispersed.
- viii The leader should ensure that members of the group comply at all times with any procedures that are designed to ensure the safety of the group. Attention should be paid to coping with steep ascents and descents during 'off road' expeditions and the participants should be made aware of the injuries that arise from excessive speed resulting in loss of control and hard falls.
- ix The leader should get a weather forecast before any excursion and judge whether it should proceed if the weather is forecast to be particularly inclement with the associated risk of hypothermia.

#### 3.13.5 Qualification of leaders

There are now a number of mountain bike specific awards. The technical adviser Ken Lacey - [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com) or 07771 918431 - should be contacted if there is any doubt as to the remit of any award.

Heads of establishment should therefore satisfy themselves that any persons organising and leading cycling activities is sufficiently experienced and skilled to take responsibility for the activities envisaged.

If the activity is to take place off the public road, in remote, wild or mountainous country, cognisance should be taken of the leadership qualifications, locations and planning criteria codified in section 3.4 on hill walking. Expeditions to such areas should be carefully planned and fully justified using similar criteria to those that apply to hill walking expeditions. The limitations and conditions as to the location and the time of year when the hill walking qualifications can be deployed should also be conformed to when used in relation to 'off road' cycling expeditions.

### 3.13.6 Cycling operating levels

Operating area	Group leader/instructor qualification
<p><b>Mountain country - winter</b></p> <p>At any time of the year when snow, frost or other extreme conditions are present or forecast</p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance or on open uncultivated land at any height or on a mountain above 600m</p>	<p>Cycle experience and one of the following awards</p> <p>British Mountain Guide Carnet holder or aspirant British Mountain Guide or a Winter Mountain Leader award holder with a satisfactory assessment report in their Mountain Leader Training Board log book of experience</p> <p>or Mountain Bike Leader with winter endorsement</p> <p>or SMBLA Trail Cycle Leader with winter and expedition endorsements</p>
<p><b>Mountain country - summer</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance or on open uncultivated land at any height or on a mountain above 600m</p>	<p>As above or cycle experience and one of the following awards:</p> <p>a holder of the European Mountain Leader Carnet</p> <p>or Mountaineering Instructors Certificate holder</p> <p>or Mountaineer Instructor Award</p> <p>or Summer Mountain Leader Award holder with a satisfactory assessment report in their Mountain Leader Training Board log book of experience</p> <p>Or SMBLA Mountain Bike Leader.</p> <p>or SMBLA Trail Cycle Leader with expedition endorsements</p>
<p><b>Remote country</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance</p> <p>The journey is substantially along tracks and paths, is free from outcrops and what could be termed craggy areas. Prior to journeys being undertaken routes will be approved by the technical adviser</p>	<p>As above</p> <p>or cycle experience and the following award:</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Education Service in-house Lowhills training</p> <p>Or SMBLA Mountain Bike Leader.</p> <p>or SMBLA Trail Cycle Leader with expedition endorsements</p>
<p><b>Lowland country</b></p> <p>Where travel will involve being more than 30 minutes walk from a road accessible by a road-going ambulance</p>	<p>Cycle experience and Argyll and Bute Education Service in-house Lowhills training or BELA recommended</p>

<p>Public highways, way-marked routes, rights-of-way on which cycles are permitted, identifiable routes, tracks and trails with obvious navigational features. In normal summer conditions. These routes will be 90-95% rideable and take the group no more than 30 minutes walk by a reasonably fit person away from the nearest accessible road or a shelter with communication. They will not involve cycling activity of more than one day length</p>	<p>Cycle experience or Trail Cycle Leader</p>
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### 3.13.7 First aid

The leader in charge should be qualified to administer first aid. An 'emergency aid' training is sufficient for activities that only involve the use of roads and tracks close to well inhabited areas, but a full 'standard' first aid certificate is required for 'off road' expeditions to remote highland and moor land locations.

### 3.13.8 DofE Award, expedition section

If expeditions involve the use of 'on road' or 'off road' cycles, the above guidelines should be carefully followed during the process of training the award scheme candidates until the supervisor of any planned unaccompanied practice or qualifying expedition is confident that the candidates can be relied upon to follow all the procedures necessary to reasonably secure their own safety. The supervisor of an unaccompanied cycling expedition should monitor the progress of the participants through pre-arranged check points. The progress of the participants along any section of road shared with a significant amount of motorised traffic should be continuously monitored from a distance, in order that the emergency services can be quickly mobilised in the event of a traffic accident involving the participants. It is recommended that in the event of the participants ignoring safety advice and acting in a way that may be a threat to their own safety the expedition should be terminated or continued as an accompanied training expedition in accord with the above guidelines.

Note Heads of establishment and leaders in charge may get further advice on safety procedures relating to the use of bicycles from the Scottish Cyclists' Union, the Cyclists' Touring Club or the British Cycling Federation.

Scottish Cycling

[www.scuonline.org](http://www.scuonline.org) or 0131 317 9704

## **Appendix 1: General guidance**

### **Argyll and Bute Council education management circulars and codes of practice**

Education management circular 3.25 on School excursions and educational visits

Education management circular 3.14 on Insurance

Health and Safety in Physical Education Code of Practice (Revised) - amended section 9 (swimming) and related appendices

Use of dischargeable devices in educational establishments (reference MSF/26)

Wearing of Shell Suits in Practical Areas (reference GS17/15)

### **Scottish Government advice**

Health and Safety on Educational Excursions

Supplement 1: Standards for Local Authorities in Overseeing Educational Excursions

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20444/48934](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20444/48934)

Health and Safety on Educational Excursions

Supplement 2: Standards for Adventure

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20444/48937](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20444/48937)

Health and Safety on Educational Excursions

Supplement 3: A Handbook for Group Leaders

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20444/48940](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20444/48940)

## **Appendix 2: Generic risk assessment**

NB This can be used as checklist for risk assessments

### **Argyll and Bute Education Service, Argyll House, Dunoon**

#### **Step 1 Hazard**

There are four principal causes of death and disabling injuries.

- 1 Impact with something solid (which either falls onto you or onto which you fall).
- 2 Hypothermia.
- 3 Drowning.
- 4 Poisoning.

There are many hazards associated with adventure activities, for example:

- inappropriate activity for the participants or leaders (eg too demanding);
- slipping and tripping hazards (eg boulder fields, iced rocks, muddy paths, wet grass);
- fire (eg from flammable materials such as camping stove fuel);
- electricity (eg poor wiring, lighting);
- chemicals (eg battery acid);
- work at height (eg from abseil tower);
- poor lighting (eg twilight);
- vehicles (eg minibuses, canoe trailers);
- low temperature (eg adverse weather conditions);
- camp hygiene (eg e-coli);
- equipment failure (eg bikes).

#### **Step 2 Who might be harmed**

- group leaders/instructional staff;
- clients/students;
- contractors and freelancers;
- members of the public;
- people sharing your workplace;
- supervisors;
- visitors;
- other site users.

Pay particular attention to:

- staff/students with disabilities;
- inexperienced clients/students and staff;
- visitors;
- lone workers;
- young/immature people.

They may be more vulnerable.

### **Steps 3 and 4: controls already in place; risks which are not adequately controlled; action to be taken**

Procedures already in place.

- Follow guidance in education management circular 1.26 on Safety in educational outdoor activities: a code of practice, and education management circular 3.25 on School excursions and educational visits.
- Follow AALA licence report recommendations.

Action.

- 1 Ensure meetings of relevant heads of centres/sections are undertaken to confirm that the above documents are being followed with particular reference to leader deployment, recall, lost and overdue procedures.
- 2 Consult accident and near miss records.
- 3 Ensure all leaders and heads of centres/sections have access to the above documents.
- 4 Ensure all new staff/leaders are aware of the policies and procedures.

### **Step 5 Review and revision**

Review should take place when an incident or near miss occurs or as a result of feedback from:

- group leaders/instructional staff;
- clients/students;
- maintenance personnel;
- contractors and freelancers;
- members of the public;
- people sharing your workplace;
- supervisors;
- visitors;
- other site users.

### Appendix 3: Risk awareness for new entrants

Please print the name of the participant \_\_\_\_\_

Which course/event will you be attending? \_\_\_\_\_

Dates \_\_\_\_\_

All activities carry risk. The risk in outdoor activities for beginners/new participants is usually low, comparable to that involved in playing football or any other physical activity. Injuries such as grazes, minor cuts, bruises, sprains, bumps, dislocations, minor breaks (finger, collar bone, wrist, ankle etc) are always possible regardless of the care taken by the instructor/coach/group leader. Argyll and Bute Council places great emphasis on safety at all times and will implement national guidelines as produced by governing bodies and associations and comply with health and safety regulations.

#### **Insurance**

It is recommended that personal insurance against loss of property, cancellation or injury is taken out by the participant.

#### **Personal protection**

Most jewellery can cause injury or be damaged/lost during physical activity. Rings, body piercing (often hidden from view) etc should be removed before participation. If in doubt inform and seek advice from the instructor/coach/group leader.

Clothing can be damaged or lost. Wear old clothing. If in doubt ask what clothing is appropriate. Valuables can be damaged or lost; please leave behind.

Always inform instructors of medical conditions and predispositions that require special consideration before activities take place.

Disclosure of information will not necessarily stop the person from taking part, but will allow the instructor/coach/group leader to plan accordingly.

Argyll and Bute Council cannot be held responsible for the consequences non-disclosure of information on any of the above.

Things you may encounter in carrying out the activities include, but are not limited to the following.

*Rough or rugged terrain:* if you are only used to footpaths and tarmac surfaces you should be aware of the difference.

*Physical effort:* all our courses involve physical effort, which at times may be more than you are used to. These may require stamina or physical strength.

*Drinking water:* Participant should use only boiled, bottled or treated water.

*Environmental hazards:* this will most often be sudden changes in the weather and may result in some discomfort from heat or cold. You should be prepared for the changes in the equipment you carry.

*Slips and trips:* these are the commonest types of accident throughout society and our courses are no exception.

Argyll and Bute Council has clear obligations and responsibilities and we take these very seriously. Each participant is required to contribute to their own and each other's safety by following the advice and guidance given by our staff and failure to do so may result in you no longer being permitted to take part in the activities.

Acknowledgement - I have read the above information and understand it. I recognise:

- that this course, programme or event may require a degree of skill or knowledge different from other activities in which I have been involved;
- that the nature of the risks may be different to those which I am familiar with;
- that certain inherent risks remain.

Signature of parent/carer (where appropriate)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Signature of participant (in all cases)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

#### **Appendix 4: Check list for outdoor activities**

- Decide activity.
- Check suitability for group (section 1.3.14).
- Check for relevant qualifications of leader (section 3).
- Advice can be sought from Ken Lacey [info@seakayakscotland.com](mailto:info@seakayakscotland.com) or 07771 918431 or the school visits co-ordinator.
- Undertake risk assessment (section 1.3.13, section 2, appendix 2).
- Check emergency procedures, including return times, group overdue, failure to return on time etc (section 1.3.9).
- Consult other appropriate documents (appendix 1).
- Apply for permission from head of establishment.
- Obtain parental permission and provide risk awareness for participants and parents/carers (appendix 3).
- Undertake activity, monitoring group and conditions remaining flexible and amending plans as appropriate.
- Provide feedback.

This list is provided for guidance only; it is not exhaustive.

## **Appendix 5: Support courses available**

The following courses are available.

Argyll and Bute Council's Lowhills Accreditation course (Mountain Leader Training Scotland approved).

Site specific climbing wall accreditation.

Site specific training for one of walks/environmental visits/field studies.

Gorge walking etc accreditation.

Off site safety management and risk assessments.

Site specific training for level 1 BCU coaches.

Contact the technical adviser Ken Lacey [info@seakayakscotland](mailto:info@seakayakscotland) or 07771 918431 for details.