



EDUCATION, CULTURE & SPORT SERVICE

Outdoor Education Safety Document

1 - INTRODUCTION

This document is addressed to all those who carry responsibility for safety and good practice in Outdoor Education.

For those closely involved it will provide a continuous source of reference whilst for others, it can be used for clarification on specific points.

The document should be seen as an essential information resource and should be readily available to all who are involved in the outdoors.

July 2007 update information

The July 2007 update has not changed the Highland Council policy with regards to the provision of adventurous activities.

The following changes have been made;

- Functionality of the document
 - active contents page
 - hyperlinks to other sources of information
- Organisations and Awards
 - National Governing Bodies (NGB's) name changes
 - New awards
 - Award name changes

One of the most important happenings since this document was first published are the significant access rights identified in the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).

A right of responsible access has been clearly established, the three key principals are

- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the Environment
- Take responsibility for your own actions

Full details of the Code can be found on the [Outdoor Access Scotland](#) website.

It is important that as leaders of others, Highland Council staff educate those in their charge of the existence of the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) and of their rights of responsible access

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Outdoor Education

The concept of Outdoor Education has widened over the last two decades and many developments and changes have taken place. The present picture bears little resemblance to the early days of the 50s and 60s. In that period the focus placed on adventurous sports and pursuits was largely on the development of the skills and confidence required to participate in activities in hazardous environments.

Currently, much of the emphasis of Outdoor Education is focused on the creation of learning opportunities, centred on the skills and challenge of living, travelling, learning and sharing together out of doors. Such opportunities, especially those which have a residential element play an important part in promoting the personal and social development of people of all ages and abilities as well as contributing to their understanding of particular subjects and topics. More young people and adults now take part in a much wider range of activities than ever before.

Not only are there more specialist activities, but there is an increasing number of other activities designed to facilitate different learning outcomes. The settings in which activities take place have also diversified. It can often be easier to bring the activity to the learner than to take the learner to the activity. This is partly due to the increasing cost of transport and the amount of time available, but more importantly it has reawakened the idea that the outdoors is all around us and that urban and rural environments can be just as valuable for meeting learning outcomes as remote and wilderness terrain.

As a consequence of the changing emphasis in Outdoor Education, and the development of diverse activities there is a need for Leaders to be much more flexible in their approach. New teaching and instructional styles have been developed with clear emphasis being placed on the needs of the individual and group.

Sometimes the focus of activities will be on the development of particular skills, at other times on the process by which learning occurs, or by the provision of opportunities for learning through direct experience.

All these changes and developments have presented those who work in Outdoor Education and those responsible for the management of programmes with new challenges. Consequently the generally prescriptive approach to safety in the past cannot always be applied to the varied educational experiences of the nineties.

The keys to safe management in Outdoor Education are firstly that all those working directly with people out of doors are adequately and appropriately trained; secondly that all those involved feel supported by an effective policy, and thirdly that the aims of the activity are clear.

The Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996

Outline of the licensing scheme - Aim of the licensing scheme

The aim of the adventure activities licensing scheme is to give assurance that good safety management practice is being followed so that young people can continue to have opportunities to experience exciting and stimulating activities outdoors while not being exposed to avoidable risks of death and disabling injury. Requirements on providers are drawn from existing health and safety legislation. The scheme guarantees that providers have been inspected and have demonstrated compliance with relevant health and safety legislation.

Anyone who provides, in return for payment, adventure activities within the scheme 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 provision for young people accompanied by their parents or guardians.

The following activities are within scope of the scheme:

- Caving - underground exploration 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 ski-ing and related activities when done in moor or mountain country which is remote i.e., over 30 minutes travelling time from the nearest road or refuge
- Watersports - canoeing, rafting, sailing and related activities when done on the sea, tidal waters or larger non-placid inland waters.

Source – Guidance to the Licensing Authority on The Adventure Activities Regulations 1996 (H.S.C.)

Activities provided by staff within Highland Council's Education & Culture & Sport Service fall within the scope of the Scheme and therefore the Outdoor Education Unit holds an [Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority](#) licence to comply with the regulations.

The present licensing scheme does not apply to schools offering outdoor activities to their own pupils, but there is a strong moral argument for an equally good safety management system to be expected.

Theme of the document

Safety documents in the past have concentrated mainly on the need to be concise, in an attempt to exclude all possible dangers. They did not take into account the variety of ways in which a leader might work or the variety of ways in which any one environment might be used.

Regulations, which prescribe closely, are appropriate only in detailed, tightly defined, situations. They tend to inhibit aims, students' expectations and abilities, and to restrict the range of settings in which programmes can operate.

It is hoped that these guidelines will provide operational flexibility. They do not stipulate actual content for outdoor activity sessions, but they do allow trained and experienced persons to make their own judgements in particular situations.

Format of the document

The document has four sections.

Section A

This section is addressed to all those involved in the policy, management, planning and delivery of outdoor education. It covers the aims of outdoor education, principles of safety, management and accountability structure, the role of the Head of Establishment, incident procedures and the role of the leader, teacher or instructor whilst in loco parentis.

It provides statements on the training and competencies of staff involved in the delivery of Outdoor Activities. This takes into account the needs of less experienced staff as well as those with experience who are highly trained and skilled.

Section B

This deals with specific land and water-based activities. Each activity is covered within a separate chapter containing three sections.

1 General Information on the activity which is designed primarily for the guidance of heads of establishments, co-ordinators, managers and parents who are themselves not practitioners.

2 Qualifying Awards relating to the activity. Relevant awards are listed, together with the "remit" ascribed to the award holder.

3 Guidance for Leaders on all aspects of good practice for the activity. This guidance is written particularly for the less experienced leader. It covers such aspects as planning, limitations, equipment, clothing, group size, supervision, safety procedures, training and various recommendations.

Section C

This section is directed to all concerned with Outdoor Education and provides information on a range of aspects common to all forms of Outdoor activity.

These aspects are key ingredients in the provision of a safe and enjoyable learning experience.

The importance of addressing environmental issues and concerns, as well as educating all those involved, is essential to the long term development and future of outdoor education. Consequently this section also contains a chapter Towards an Environmental Ethic which is directed at all concerned in the provision of Outdoor Education.

The Appendices

These provide additional information which will enhance the knowledge of all those involved, as well as giving essential detail on various matters.

Activities not covered

While this document covers the range of most common activities it is recognised that from time to time establishments will wish to organise and take part in a range of other activities.

Where there is no reference to a particular activity, heads of establishment should seek advice from the;

Outdoor Education Resource Centre

Old Tarradale School

Muir of Ord

IV6 7RJ

Tel: 01 463 870 797

Fax: 01 463 871 044

Email: outdoor.ed@highland.gov.uk

2 - PRINCIPLES OF SAFETY

Outdoor Education embraces a diversity of forms of human activity. It would be neither practicable nor desirable to take specific account of each situation that may occur.

It is therefore intended that this document will provide the basis for informed judgement on the part of all involved in the provision of learning experiences out of doors. Such judgement should be based on sound principles of safe practice which are synonymous with the principles of good educational practice.

Safe practice has as its basis the competence of individual members of staff. This competence is itself based on experience and training as is the case in all aspects of life.

Thus both safe practice and good practice are ensured and underpinned by a process that continually strives to ensure that staff undertaking work out of doors have the appropriate competencies for the task in hand.

To achieve this, two main areas need to be considered. The first being the mechanisms that are created to plan, manage, and assure the quality of outdoor education; the second being the competence of the staff involved with the provision of outdoor education.

The principles explored in this document are intended to apply to all situations where parties from educational establishments are operating programmes out of doors. Whilst the principles remain unchanged, there are situations where the detailed advice should be re-evaluated, modified, or abandoned, in order to meet the specific needs of the particular group while remaining within the basic principles defined.

Key Elements

The head of establishment has responsibility for ensuring safe practice in outdoor education. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the key elements below are considered for each planned event.

The key elements upon which the principles of safety are based are:

- Well defined objectives
- Risk assessment
- Adequate supervision
- Good communication
- Planning and preparation
- Evaluation

Well Defined Objectives

- The objectives for the particular programme or event should be clearly stated and understood by all concerned.

Risk Assessment

- Challenge and adventure are never free of risk. Learning to have regard for the safety and welfare of oneself and others is an aspect of the personal development of participants to which outdoor education can make a valuable contribution. However, there must always be an acceptable framework of safety.
- It is unacceptable to expose young people to dangerous conditions and unnecessary risks.
- The head of establishments should ensure that as an integral part of planning for all educational visits and journeys
- All potential hazards and risks are identified. Prior knowledge of the intended location is an essential part of the planning process.
- Contingency plans are made. Potentially variable characteristics of the location should be anticipated and planned for.
- Resources are available to allow for these contingencies. The most important resource being the competence of the staff involved.
- Leaders must be aware of the dangers of exposing participants to psychological harm, for which the level of risk is highly subjective. The potential for harm may be present for some individuals in situations, which appear innocuous.

Adequate Supervision

- Competent leadership is the most important safety factor of all.
- Special training and experience are essential for all who take parties on expeditions into potentially hazardous environments; enthusiasm by itself is not enough. Leaders need to be able to safeguard the physical and psychological health of the people and especially young people in their care.

Good Communication

- It is essential that all those involved in the planning and delivery of programmes understand their role and responsibility.
- Effective communication during all stages of the planned event is therefore crucial. Usually it will be sufficient to communicate verbally, but it may be necessary to provide written instruction on occasions.

Planning and Preparation

- All aspects of the proposed activity should be carefully planned.
- Consideration must also be given to ensuring that contingency arrangements are in place.

Evaluation

- It is important to evaluate the outcomes of a particular event in order to learn from the experience. The evaluation process will contribute to and inform the planning for all future programmes.

Particular Considerations

The detailed guidance contained within this document is intended to meet the "duty of care" owed to young people by staff. The document also applies to all Education Department groups of all ages and abilities. Particular requirements will need to be considered as appropriate.

Special Educational Needs

The diversity of outdoor education will generally enable a form of activity to be found to complement an individual's particular needs and abilities. Challenges taken and achievements gained in this way may make a valuable contribution to the individuals quality of life and development.

In many cases the format of activity and its venue will need to be adjusted to suit the individuals involved.

Equipment and other resources deployed may need particular consideration.

The number of staff and the range of expertise and competencies should be determined by the needs of the individuals within the group and the nature of the activity.

The judgement of staff skilled both in meeting special needs and in working out of doors, set against the principles of good practice contained throughout this document, must be relied upon.

It would not be appropriate in a general document of this nature to provide specific advice relevant to all activities and all needs.

Adult Groups (Those Over the Age of 18)

Where instruction for adults is to be provided a duty of care exists which whilst differing from that for children, must be seen to be comparable. The detailed guidance within this document must then apply.

Where a group of adults comes together to participate in an activity without instruction (typically within a Community Learning group) then a different situation exists, and the detailed guidance within this document does not necessarily apply.

In such circumstances adults are primarily retaining responsibility for themselves, whilst accepting a mutually agreed level of shared responsibility as a group. In this situation it may be more appropriate to refer instead to the guidance published by the governing body of the activity concerned.

Broader Aspects of Safety

Safety out of doors should not be considered alone. It must be seen in the context of and developed within a broader culture of safety in the education service.

The duty of care owed to all participants must be considered holistically. Other associated aspects of safe practice such as Use of Minibuses, Fire and Domestic Safety, Safety in Built-up Areas, provision of appropriate insurance must all be given due consideration.

Staff Fatigue

Whilst it is always desirable to have at least two adults with any group it may sometimes be the case that the leader or instructor is the only member of staff present.

This member of staff may be required to drive the group to the venue, provide instruction in a particular activity and drive the group home at the end of the day. Many excursions involve an early start and late finish. Such circumstances can lead to undue fatigue creating potential hazards for all concerned.

Consideration should therefore be given to providing a support member of staff who can share the driving and assist the leader or instructor with the overall supervision of the group.

Thought should also be given to the possibility of excessive workloads in other staffing situations.

3 - MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION

This section considers, and separately recognises, the administrative/management arrangements for:

- Provision of Outdoor education
- Response to emergency situations
- Investigation of incidents

Although these management activities have common factors and commonly involve the same personnel, they are discrete and separate functions and must be managed as such.

Provision of Outdoor Education

It is essential that all those involved in the management and delivery of outdoor education understand their particular responsibilities and that there are clear channels of communication through the management system, from policy makers to participants.

There are responsibilities at all levels within the Education Department:

- The Director of Education, Culture & Sport
- Area Managers
- Heads of Establishment
- Party leader/instructor
- Participants

The role of the Outdoor Education Officer is to provide advice, support and guidance on matters of safety and good practice.

Chain of Accountability

In terms of the practical management for outdoor education, the head of establishment is the person who has the most crucial responsibility. They are responsible for authorising all events and programmes.

The role of senior officers is to support the head of establishment by developing and providing advice on policies. They have no direct role in the provision of outdoor education.

Head of Establishment

The Head of Establishment has responsibility for ensuring safe practice in outdoor education and the implementation of the Council's policy for safety in outdoor education. Special care should be taken to ensure that:

- The relevant administrative procedures are followed including information to participants (and parents or guardians where applicable), recorded consents, and contingency arrangements
- The proposed excursion has appropriate, achievable and well defined aims
- All staff have appropriate experience and training, and that the required qualifying awards are current
- Party size, group size and ratios of staff to participants conform to the guidelines
- The contact arrangements for the event are sufficient for all eventualities, and allow for a proper and co-ordinated response to any incident that may occur
- Staff involved understand their respective roles and responsibilities
- The financial and insurance arrangements are adequate
- The particular requirements of those with special educational needs are considered, including arrangements for medication.

In all cases the responsibility to approve each event rests with the head of establishment. Advice can be sought, at any stage of planning or delivery; from the Outdoor Education Officer. Heads of establishment are encouraged to do so whenever there are any concerns or lack of clarity regarding the planned activity.

Delegated Member of Staff

It should be noted that some or all of the above responsibilities may be delegated to other appropriate staff in an establishment.

In such cases the responsibilities must be clearly stated and understood by all concerned. The overall responsibility of the head of establishment remains.

Party Leader

The party leader is the person in whom the head of establishment has placed responsibility for the safe conduct of activities. Some appropriate share of these responsibilities is assumed by others who may be colleagues from the establishment or staff from other agencies.

The party leader has overall responsibility for the safety of individuals and the group at all times. In particular they are responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation of the Council's Policy for safety in outdoor education
- Ensuring that all participants in their care are adequately briefed

- Effective liaison with other staff involved in the programme
- Taking full account of any special educational needs
- Making arrangements for any medical requirements

Instructor

Instruction may be provided by the party leader, other members of staff, part-time Outdoor Education staff or external providers.

They have responsibility to ensure that:

- All equipment is checked for suitability and safe condition
- They operate within the safety in outdoor education policy of the Highland Council
- Where appropriate they adhere to other relevant codes of practice

Participants

All participants (and parents or guardians of children participating) should, as far as is reasonably practicable, take responsibility for ensuring:

- That the activity suits their needs and abilities
- That they conform to any guidance on matters of safety and good order given before or during the activity
- That any distress, concern, or discomfort arising during, or resulting from, the activity is drawn to the immediate attention of the leader.

The responsibilities of parents and guardians in re-enforcing and encouraging responsible attitudes in their children must be recognised and accepted.

Use of External Providers of Activities

The Council's policies apply to all programmes of outdoor education regardless of how they are provided.

Heads of establishments may only authorise the planning of programmes using an external provider when:

- for groups under 18 years of age - the provider holds a Licence from the [Adventure Activities Licensing Authority](#) allowing them to undertake the provision of adventure activities specified in the schedule to their licence
- for groups over 18 years of age - the provider will comply with the relevant policies of the Council throughout the activities to be provided. Particular attention should be given to ascertaining the training and qualifications of the staff delivering activity sessions. The provider must accept full responsibility

for the services to be provided and must have appropriate Third Party/Employers Liability Insurance.

Where the information made available by the External Provider is not fully clear to the Head of Establishment, advice from the Outdoor Education Officer should be obtained.

Response to Emergency Situations

Emergency situations can occur despite the best precautions and therefore contingency planning and consideration of emergency procedures are necessary. Such planning ensures that the consequences of an incident are handled efficiently and sensitively and do not progress arbitrarily.

Principles of Planning for Emergency Situations

The principles outlined provide a format for response and communication for Highland Council groups encountering misfortune whilst undertaking outdoor activities.

These principles do not attempt to provide details for all possible situations. They are intended to form the basis of plans developed by Establishments to suit their particular situation.

A progressive hierarchy of emergencies is utilised and is shown in section 2.2.3.

The Flow Chart in section 2.2.4 represents the channels of communication during the containment phase of the emergency. The subsequent investigatory procedures are an entirely separate, but essential, process.

The effectiveness of all such plans depends on the staff concerned being familiar with their specific duties and responsibilities. The role of each individual must be understood by all concerned. Lines of communication must be confirmed or established for each planned excursion. A list of key individuals is given in section 2.4.

Both the flow chart and the hierarchy of emergencies are schematic. Commonsense should prevail in the preparation of plans at establishment and other levels.

Preparation of Plans – Establishment and Area

Detailed arrangements will need to be made by each establishment and education area. These will of necessity reflect the nature and size of the establishment and the nature of the activities planned or anticipated. The use of previously prepared Action Cards is recommended.

The individual roles need to be carefully considered, especially in very small establishments e.g., 1 or 2 teacher primary schools. Frequently a member of staff may find that they are undertaking two or more roles, e.g., the Head of Establishment may be the Party Leader, and the Co-ordinator's role performed by their Depute or another member of staff or, in some cases a spouse or a parent.

Where the role is undertaken by a person who is not a member of staff the function will be limited to the relaying of information in a predetermined manner.

It must be recognised that many events will take place out of normal office hours. Planned contact arrangements must take account of this.

Hierarchy of Emergencies

Misfortunes and incidents do not fit naturally and automatically into predetermined categories. The categories listed below are useful however in predetermining the appropriate level of response, both to deal with the event at the time and in subsequent investigation.

Level 1 - Misfortunes

- Slightly delayed return to home
- Minor "accidents" requiring some attention from the party leader
- No medical attention required.

Level 2 - Minor events

- Significantly delayed return
- Injuries minor, but requiring medical attention on return
- Party still able to extract itself and return home without outside help

Level 3 - Serious events

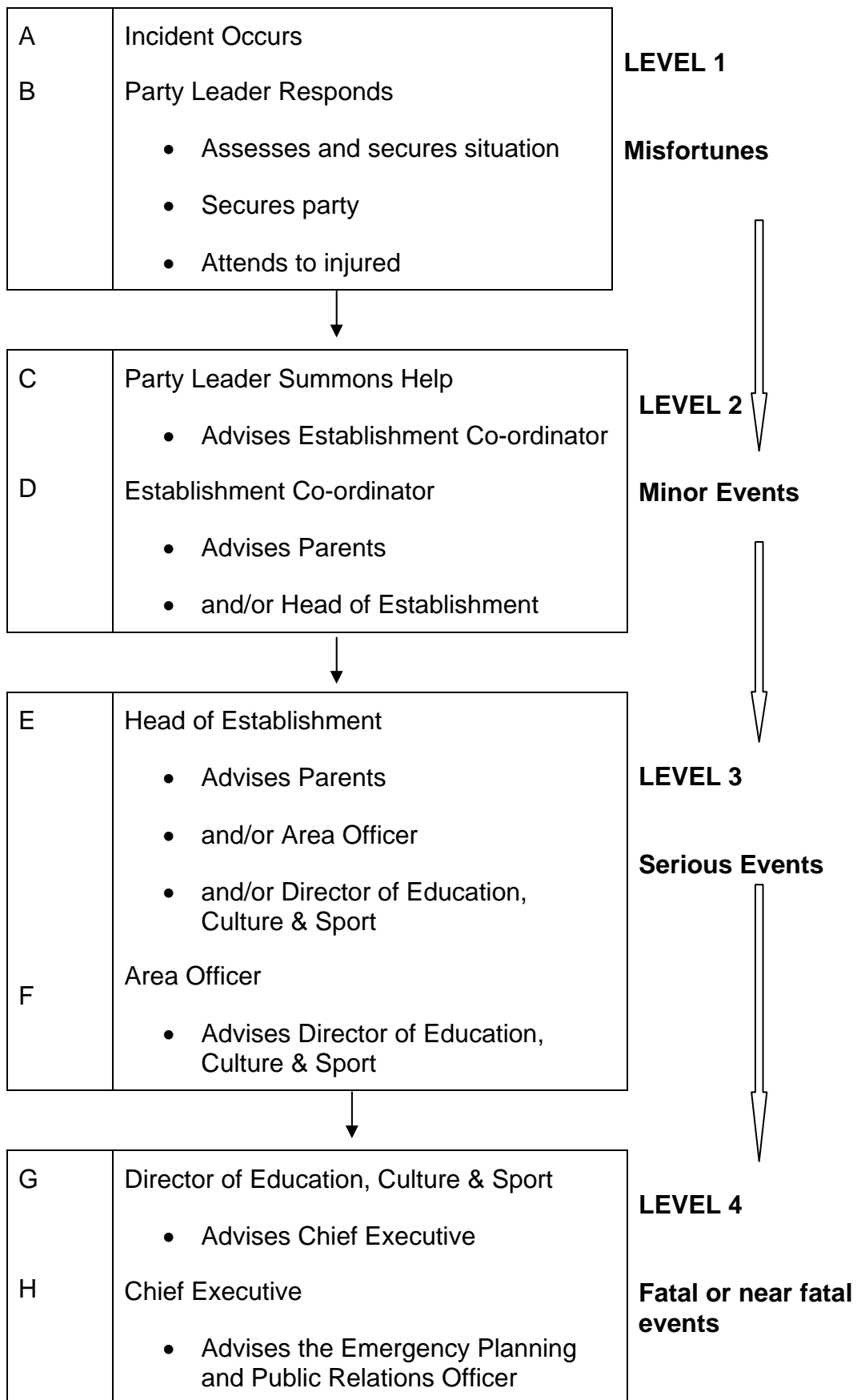
- Injuries significant but not life-threatening
- Part or all of the party requires to be "rescued"

Level 4 - Fatal or near-fatal events

Near misses

An event where no injury or other misfortune has actually befallen the party - but may well have. May or may not require specific response at the time, but should subsequently be investigated in order that lessons may be learned and appropriately shared.

Emergency Response Flow Chart



Operation of Emergency Response Plans

It is imperative that contact is made at each stage. Therefore, individual staff must be clear who they will need to contact and how. If that person is not available then an alternative contact on the same or next tier of administration should be advised.

Similarly other tiers within the administration must ensure that response arrangements are established and that procedures are known to the individual officers concerned.

It should be recognised that during an ongoing emergency response, it may be appropriate for various individuals to be in direct contact, by-passing others within the network, i.e., the Press Officer will need to speak directly to the Head of Establishment and to the Party Leader.

Whilst such contact is essential to a proper response, it is essential that control is maintained. Control will rest with the most senior member of staff involved, and direct contact between individual officers will be at their discretion.

Key Individuals Referred to

Party Leader

Teacher, Community Learning Officer, Youth Worker or other leader responsible for the planned activity.

Where several staff are involved with an event then their separate responsibilities and duties must be pre-determined.

Establishment Co-ordinator

Responsible person remaining contactable throughout the planned activity. Provides primary communications link between party, establishment and families. Retains copies of all information throughout planned activity (itinerary, group lists, parental consents etc.)

Head of Establishment

Head teacher, Community Learning Officer. Authorises activity, briefed by Party Leader at each planning stage. Advised by Establishment Co-ordinator during emergency, and advises senior officers according to the pre-determined plan. In many ways, as prime bearer of responsibility, this person is the centre of the communications net.

Area Manager

Each Officer provides the first element of management oversight for heads of establishment in their sector, supports the head of establishment in the management of all safety matters. May have little or no involvement in incident response, but will be involved in incident investigation.

Director of Education, Culture & Sport

Is informed of all higher level (Level 3 and 4) incidents. Provides primary liaison as appropriate with officers within the Chief Executives Department.

Chief Executive

Responsible for co-ordinating the Council's response to all disasters, principally via:

- Emergency Planning Officer
- Press Officer.

Investigation of Incidents

The nature of certain outdoor education projects involves an acceptance that things do not always turn out as anticipated. Getting cold, wet, lost, arriving home late, twisted ankles or cut knees should be recognised as unwelcome but possible outcomes.

Unfortunately, the public nature of some activities often results in uninitiated observers making ill-informed judgements. Relatively minor incidents can be "blown up" out of all proportion especially when rescue services and the media are involved. This can seriously distort the perceptions of all concerned. Of course, disasters attracting national publicity, meriting major enquiries with serious legal implications can also occur.

Investigation is an exploratory process and is intended to uncover the lessons that may be learnt from the particular incident.

The investigatory procedure must be designed to cater for various levels of incident and to allow sensitive handling of situations arising from unplanned circumstances. Prior knowledge of the method of inquiry will allow leaders to understand that the consequences of their actions will follow a course which allows for a fair hearing. Investigation does not automatically imply incompetence or negligence.

Near misses must be investigated as a low level incident by the head of establishment. The Outdoor Education Organiser will be advised.

Guidance for Investigating Officers

The investigating officer will draw upon the observations of staff and participants in a form they feel appropriate.

Advice or assistance will be available from the Outdoor Education Officer at any stage.

Levels 1 and 2 incidents (section 2.2.3) will be investigated by the Head of Establishment.

The investigation is intended to be an information gathering exercise; as such it should be carried out in a reasonably informal non-judgemental manner.

The intent is to seek the causes of incidents in order to inform the ongoing development of good practice in the establishment and elsewhere.

Where, as a result of the incident, there is a possibility of disciplinary or other action being followed the investigating officer must exercise caution to avoid one process compromising another.

Advice from senior officers and/or Personnel Services should be sought before proceeding with the investigation of the incident.

Copies of the final report should be made available to all those who were involved with the incident and/or contributed to the investigation. A copy must be sent to the Outdoor Education Officer.

Outdoor Education Officer will provide information for a Council wide analysis of incidents from reports that have been received from establishments.

Level 3 incidents (section 2.2.3) will be investigated by the appropriate Area Manager with the support of the Outdoor Education Officer. Although essentially an Establishment and Area based process, reference will be made to the Outdoor Education Officer as the representative of the Director of Education, Culture & Sport.

Responsibility for the investigation of Level 4 incidents (section 2.2.3) will rest with the Director of Education, Culture & Sport.

Investigation of Incidents - Summary

LEVEL OF INCIDENT	INVESTIGATING OFFICER	INVESTIGATION CONTRIBUTORS	CIRCULATION OF REPORT
LEVEL 1 & 2	Head of Establishment	Relevant establishment staff. Participants. O.E.O.	O.E.O
LEVEL 3	Area Manager	Head of establishment and relevant staff. Participants O.E.O	Area Manager
LEVEL 4	Director of Education, Culture & Sport	Area Manager Head of Establishment and relevant staff. Participants O.E.O.	Chief Executive

4 - TRAINING OF STAFF

In Section 1 - Principles of Safety, it was stated that the proper training of staff formed one of the key elements essential for achieving consistent safe practice in education out of doors.

Health and Safety legislation, both U.K. and E.C. requires an employer to provide the necessary training for staff to undertake their duties.

The implication of this for the Education, Culture & Sport may be considered in two ways:

- The Highland Council must provide adequate training for staff. This is achieved through the in-service training programmes operated by the Education, Culture & Sport, and elsewhere
- Heads of establishments must only require or allow staff to undertake programmes of work for which the required competencies have been acquired. Recognition of competence is based on relevant experience, recognised training, and Council Accreditation or National Governing Body Awards. Staff should not be permitted to undertake tasks for which they are not accredited or qualified

The role of Head of Establishment

The head of establishment will allocate or agree the tasks that staff will undertake based on informed judgement of the competence of the member of staff in relation to the task concerned.

In the context of outdoor education the competencies or skills that need to be evaluated fall within two broad categories

- Personal skills (often referred to as soft skills) are those attributes of judgement, leadership, organisation skills and interpersonal skills that are essential to any educational undertaking
- Technical skills (often referred to as hard skills) are those that pertain to the particular activity.

A head of establishment's knowledge of staff's personal skills forms the basis of all judgements on tasks to be undertaken. In this context this knowledge is complemented by information on the technical competencies of the member of staff. This information is often received from a source external to the establishment. In many cases the attainment of appropriate technical competence is achieved by undertaking a defined course of training leading to Council Accreditation or an appropriate National Governing Body (NGB) award.

The chapters in Section B contain information on the qualifying awards for each activity, and describe their role and limitations.

Governing Body Award

The Governing Bodies of all outdoor sports and activities administer schemes of training for coaches, instructors, and leaders.

In virtually all cases these schemes provide the preferred form of training for staff undertaking those activities.

Most schemes provide for a progression of training and commonly have an entry level based on experience gained by participation in the sport or activity.

Often such awards are designed to suit a wide range of organisations involved with the sport. The awards quite properly focus on the more technical aspects of coaching, instructing and teaching and do not presume to evaluate the personal and interpersonal skills of staff.

For example, Mountain Leader Training UK notes within the prospectus of the [Mountain Leader Award \(Summer\)](#) the following;

- 2.2 It is the combination of technical skills, wide experience and personal leadership qualities, which forms the basis for effective group management and the scheme assesses all these aspects. The employer or operating authority must ultimately decide whether a leader possesses the personal attributes needed to take responsibility for a particular group of people.

Highland Council Education, Culture & Sport Department Accreditation Scheme

Outdoor Education Instructor

This scheme is designed to accredit and approve 'instructors' who do not hold National qualifications to operate within the framework of the Council's safety regulations.

The accreditation scheme is not seen as an alternative to National qualification and awards; rather it is a stepping stone towards obtaining the instructor/ leader award of the governing body of particular sports.

All activities being undertaken within the auspices of the Highland Council must, in the first instance, receive approval from the Head of the particular establishment concerned. It is the responsibility of the Head of Establishment to ensure that all those instructing activities are qualified or accredited to do so.

First Aid Training

Outdoor Education is invariably undertaken "off-site" and both staff and participants are removed from the first aid arrangements that are maintained at the establishment.

Provision for First Aid must be considered an essential aspect of any educational activity that takes place, regardless of its nature or location. As activities become

more technical and as the locations used become more remote from outside assistance, then the need for staff to be well trained in First Aid becomes increasingly important.

Thus whilst it is clear that all staff who are responsible for others away from the establishment require basic training in First aid, progressively higher levels of competence may be needed by staff who are involved in more demanding and more remotely undertaken activities.

It is universally recognised that First Aid awards are only valid whilst they are current.

First Aid Requirements

There are a variety of First Aid training courses, both within Highland Council and elsewhere. The courses detailed below show the required level of competence for staff operating in a variety of situations.

Emergency Aid

A minimum four hour course, at a basic level of competence

This is regarded as the minimum level of competence for staff who are "off-site", undertaking non-technical activities in situations where additional assistance would be readily obtained when necessary.

Health and Safety Executive Guidelines

A minimum of twelve hours training, providing a good general grounding in First Aid. This is the appropriate level of Competence for staff instructing or leading more technical activities at a basic level, or non-technical activities in less accessible situations.

Health and Safety Executive Certificate

A higher standard award, based on 24 hours of training with examination. This is the appropriate level for staff who have a major commitment to outdoor programmes within an establishment. Such staff should also consider update training more frequently than the conventional three year interval.

Lifesaving

As with First Aid the need for currency in lifesaving and water rescue skills for staff involved with watersports is recognised.

The form of lifesaving skills required are specific to each water activity and are specified within the guidance for each activity.

Up-Date Training

Increasingly it is widely recognised that if it is important to become qualified to undertake particular tasks, then it is equally important to remain qualified.

Currency of competence, especially where this relates to safe practice, can only be retained by appropriate ongoing training to complement continuing involvement with the activity.

Staff can only continue to be recognised as competent and qualified in a particular form of activity by participating in up-date training within the period specified by the awarding body. These periods normally range between three and five years.

The up-date training undertaken may be a specifically designed training event, or may be another form of training experience that achieves the same end result.

Council Accreditation will normally be valid for 5 years. Staff must then revalidate their status by attending an Accreditation Refresher Course.

Staff Ratios and Party Size

For most non-technical outdoor activities a maximum ratio of 1: 10 is appropriate. Significantly exceeding this will have clear consequences on both educational outcomes and overall safety. In virtually all situations it is highly desirable for there to be more than one member of staff present.

Advice for particular forms of activity are included within the appropriate Chapters of Section B. However, some general principles must be heeded.

Supervision must be such that it is adequate throughout the event planned.

Staffing ratios must be a reflection of the needs of the group not the activity. It is important to evaluate the composition of any group and give careful consideration to the needs of the individuals within that group. Only then can a realistic estimate be made of the requirements for staffing, staff expertise and resources to allow the objectives to be achieved.

Due consideration should be given to gender balance.

There are particular difficulties in safely managing large parties.

Reliance on staffing ratios alone is insufficient. For the duration of the event each leader must assume responsibility on an individual basis within appropriate ratios. For example on a weeks' ski trip for 40 pupils, with 4 members of staff, each member of staff will individually take responsibility for ten pupils.

Staff supervision may be often and valuably complemented by "Buddy Systems" operating within the group.

5 - WALKING AND CLIMBING

General Information

Whilst being a valid and valuable activity in its own right, walking forms the basis of many other outdoor activities.

The variety of coastal, rural, hill and mountain terrain within and around Highland provides a wealth of opportunities for educational parties of all types, whether for specific learning opportunities or as a leisure activity.

Provided that the correct terrain is chosen with regard to both the prevailing conditions and the needs of the participants, and provided that the qualities of good leadership are applied, valuable learning experiences consistent with good and safe practice can almost always be created.

Whether the excursion is to local open country near the coast or to the high tops of the Cairngorms the principles underlying good practice and effective leadership are the same.

Effective leadership is based upon appropriate personal experience of the activity overlaid by training in the additional skills and knowledge required to lead others.

Experience, training and qualifications must relate to the nature of the terrain to be encountered on any trip and therefore this document considers the following three definitions:

- Open Country
- Remote Area
- High Hills

Distinction is also made between summer and winter hillwalking, the seasons being defined as follows:

- Summer : May to October inclusive
- Winter : November to April inclusive

Types of Terrain – Open Country / Remote Areas / High Hills

The traditional definition of terrain referring to height was not thought appropriate for the Highland Council area and therefore the following definitions have been derived:

- **Open Country** - refers to low lying areas such as farm land, coastal areas, parks and simple woodlands

- **Remote areas** – refers to low-lying hills and open moor land which is often by its nature remote from roads and refuges. This type of terrain is described by the Duke of Edinburgh Award as Wild Country
- **High hills** - refers to mountainous terrain, which is often also remote.

Open Country Activities

A considerable range of educational activity on foot takes place out of doors at low level in open country, much of which is more appropriately considered as "off-site" activity rather than hillwalking.

Open country walking is generally considered to be a low risk activity. There are, however, features or terrain that may be encountered that proves to be hazardous e.g., beaches, cliffs, ruined buildings, eroded paths.

Leaders must be familiar with and evaluate these risks.

The Guidance for Leaders given in section 5.4 below should be considered, particularly in terms of planning, clothing and footwear, taking heed of weather forecasts, party size, and the experience and competence of staff for such activity.

Walking in open country is not necessarily constrained to the summer months only, but considerable thought should be given to winter walking particularly with younger children.

Hill-walking in Remote Areas

Most walking in remote areas is reasonably straightforward on most days of the year. Remote areas in Highland can still be hazardous and challenging at times, and require appropriate skills and leadership.

Staff leading parties in remote areas must hold an N.G.B. Award.

Hill-walking on High Hills

Parties on High Hills i.e. mountainous terrain where groups are going over rather than through remote areas must be supervised by an Accredited or qualified leader. The appropriate qualification is the [Mountain Leader Training UK](#) (MLTUK), [Mountain Leader Award \(Summer\)](#).

Qualifying Awards

Highland Council Accreditation Scheme

[Walking and Camping](#)

This is the appropriate accreditation for leaders wishing to take groups through rather than over hills/mountains e.g. through terrain described by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as suitable for Bronze and Silver expeditions.

Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK)

The [National Guidelines](#) produced by MLTUK provides advice on Good Practice for anyone with a responsibility for mountain related activities, encompassing the principles of a safety management system.

Walking Group Leader Award (WGL)

The WGL Award offers the opportunity to gain experience and demonstrate technical competence in leading groups on hill walks in areas of the UK and Ireland that fall within the technical definition outlined below. Such areas may often be subject to hostile weather conditions and require an element of self-sufficiency and this is reflected in the syllabus of this scheme.

Suitable Terrain for the WGL will meet the following four criteria:

- 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 a planned or unplanned situation)

Mountain Leader Award (Summer)

The Mountain Leader Award (ML) was established to promote the safe enjoyment of the hills and mountains. The scheme provides training and assessment in the technical and group management skills required by those who wish to lead groups in the mountains, hills and moorlands of the United Kingdom and Ireland, other than in winter conditions. It integrates experience, training, and assessment in a variety of testing conditions in mountainous country.

Mountain Leader Award (Winter)

The purpose of the Winter Mountain Leader award scheme is to provide training and assessment of the skills and techniques necessary to lead walking parties on the hills and mountains of the UK under winter conditions, excluding roped climbing on technical terrain. The demands made on the hill walking leader in winter are much greater than in summer, therefore the Mountain Leader award is a prerequisite for all

candidates and the scheme builds on many of the skills already acquired. It is a natural progression. The scheme integrates personal experience, training and assessment.

Since its introduction in 1965, the scheme has achieved widespread recognition by Education Authorities, youth organisations and individuals for ensuring technical competence in this field. The scheme is operated on behalf of the Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK) by Mountain Leader Training Scotland (MLTS), formerly the Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board, and the award is valid throughout the UK although all training and assessment courses are run in Scotland. The MLTUK recognises this award as the lowest level of qualification suitable for those who operate independently while leading walking groups in mountainous country in the UK in winter conditions.

International Mountain Leader Award (IML)

The International Mountain Leader Award (IML) provides comprehensive training and assessment for individuals who aspire to work as leaders in Europe and further afield. It integrates training, experience and assessment in a variety of realistic situations.

The Award provides training and assessment in the skills required for leading and educating groups worldwide in summer conditions and also on easy snow-covered, rolling, Nordic-type terrain in the “middle mountains” in winter conditions. The scheme does not involve the techniques and equipment of alpinism or glacial travel.

Single Pitch Award (SPA)

The numbers of organised groups enjoying rock climbing and abseiling on outcrops, crags, quarries and climbing walls has multiplied in recent years. The MLTUK and its member organisations are concerned that high standards of supervision are maintained, so that both enjoyment and safety are enhanced, without compromising either the sport of climbing or the participation of other crag or wall users. High standards of supervision and organisation are best achieved through experience, personal qualities, training and validation.

This scheme has been designed to provide a level of basic competence for those who are in a position of responsibility during single pitch rock climbing activities. Whilst the award does include a measure of personal competence it is not designed as such, and should not be used as either an entry requirement or measure of suitability for individuals who wish to climb on climbing walls or crags.

Mountaineering Instructors Award (MIA)

The Mountain Instructor Award (Summer), known as the MIA, is for instructors working in summer conditions and covers multi-pitch rock climbing, scrambling and other mountaineering skills.

Mountaineering Instructors Certificate (MIC)

The Mountain Instructor Scheme provides comprehensive training and assessment for individuals working as instructors in the mountains. It is designed for the specific situations and conditions found in the UK. It integrates training, experience and assessment in a variety of testing conditions in mountainous country.

The scheme provides training and assessment in the skills required to teach, train and assess general mountaineering, rock and ice climbing and related activities. There are two separate awards:

The Mountain Instructor Certificate, known as the MIC, covers the additional skills required for winter mountaineering and winter climbing. It also includes elements of training and assessment which the MLTUK feels are necessary for those advising and directing other courses of training or related activities.

British Association of Mountain Guides (BMG)

This scheme trains and assesses experienced mountaineers in the skills required for the provision of instruction and guiding services in climbing, skiing and mountaineering on rock, ice and snow in all conditions and all seasons at BMG and IFMGA international standards.

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details refer to the checklist contained in the Appendices.

Specifically, the following should be considered as essential to the planning of any walking activity:

- All aspects of the planned walk should be appropriate to the needs and abilities of the participants, i.e., terrain, season, weather
- A detailed weather forecast for the area should be obtained prior to the event. See Appendices.
- Details of the planned route, including estimated time of return, must be left with an appropriate person.
- Where a route is planned to finish at other than the starting point, transport arrangements should allow for a range of possibilities.
- Contingencies must be planned for, alternative routes for part or all of the day noted, and the criteria to be used in making changes thought out and discussed by all leaders in advance.

Training

All walking activity must be planned to be within the known capabilities of all members of the group.

Where ambitious projects are planned, a systematic approach to preparation must be taken to enable the final project to be successfully undertaken. Such preparation must appropriately develop the abilities of all members of the group in terms of their physical fitness, technical abilities and psychological preparedness.

Environmental Considerations

All walking activity must not only be conducted in an environmentally aware manner, but should progressively develop a positive environmental ethic in all participants.

The philosophy of minimal impact on the environment (and on other users of that environment) should underpin all planning and activity.

Safety Procedures

The leader will maintain an ongoing awareness of the well-being of each individual in the party throughout the day. Particular attention should be given to:

- The preparedness of members of the group at the start of the day, and the suitability of clothing and equipment.
- Party members must be briefed of the plan for the day, and must have an appropriate understanding of actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.
- At the beginning of the walk the Leader must be sure that the planned route is achievable and appropriate in the circumstances pertaining at the time, i.e., preparedness, actual weather and underfoot conditions, remaining daylight hours.
- Changes in the weather, both expected and unexpected, should be observed, and responded to as appropriate. The possible effects of various types of weather on the health and comfort of members of the party must be considered e.g., extremes of heat and cold, wind chill, combination of wind and rain.
- The crossing of mountain rivers is always potentially hazardous. The crossing of swollen rivers should only be considered in an emergency situation when no acceptable alternatives exist. Leaders must operate within the limits of the training they have received.
- It would not normally be considered reasonable to include children (under 16) in winter mountaineering ("High Hills") activity. Persons under 18 years of age will not be involved in overnight expeditions on High Hills in winter.
- When planning walks to High Hills in winter full account must be taken of the prior hillwalking experience of the party members.

- Avalanche Forecasts and Awareness - On High Hills in winter an avalanche forecast should always be obtained (generally with the weather forecast). Parties should retain an ongoing awareness of avalanche conditions, and should receive training in avalanche procedures.

Equipment and Clothing for all Group Members

General

The equipment and clothing used must be suited to, and in good condition for, the task, the terrain and the season.

It is essential that Party Leaders ensure that all items to be used by members of the party are adequate. If, on the day, members of the party are inadequately clothed or equipped, plans must be re-evaluated to account for those inadequacies.

Even on the simplest of open country walks it is good practice for each member of the party to be as self-reliant as is practicable, and to carry his/her own items in a day-sac.

Each person should have:

- Appropriate footwear as described in section 5.4.2.2
- Items of clothing as given in section 5.4.2.3
- Sufficient food and drink for the day (with some extra provisions as reserves)
- A whistle
- A map and a compass (whilst it is always desirable for all party members to have a map and a compass, it may not always be practicable. However, it is essential in Remote Areas and on High Hills, elsewhere a number may be distributed among the party).
- A torch and spare batteries (individual in Remote Areas and on High Hills, some among group in open country.)
- Individual survival bag (on hills where group shelter is not carried).

In addition to the items listed above for walking on High Hills in winter each individual will also have the following items, unless these are deemed not to be required by the leader.

- Ice axe
- Crampons
- Helmet

Footwear

Open Country footwear must be suited to the terrain underfoot, e.g. wetness, slipperiness, roughness. Although there are many situations where trainer type shoes are appropriate this is not always the case. Consideration should always be given to the possible need for more substantial footwear.

Remote Areas footwear must be related to terrain as above. In many cases walking boots will be the most appropriate.

For High Hill walking trips in summer appropriate hillwalking boots must be worn. Care should be taken, particularly on descent, with some modern sole patterns with radiused heels.

For High Hill walking in winter conditions, again appropriate boots must be worn and these must have sufficient rigidity, both for general movement on snow and for use with crampons.

Clothing

This must always suit the anticipated conditions and assume the worst. As well as insulation, consideration must always be given to windproof and waterproof qualities. Jeans are generally unsuitable for all but the lowest levels in mild and dry conditions.

For Open Country walking a waterproof jacket or cagoule (worn or carried) is almost always essential, and waterproof over-trousers may be desirable. An additional sweater and warm hat and gloves will often be prudent.

In Remote Areas a waterproof jacket and over-trousers are essential, as are spare sweater, hat and gloves.

Summer walking in the High Hills requires a waterproof jacket and over-trousers, spare sweater, hat and gloves as essential clothing items. Shirts, trousers and sweaters to be worn should be suitably warm, and should be non-restrictive. Warm underwear should be used as appropriate.

Clothing requirements for winter walking in the High Hills should be as for summer but greater care must be taken with the suitability of clothing. Warm underwear is generally essential, and spare clothing must be more extensive. Mittens and goggles and gaiters are also essential. Hats should be of balaclava type or supplemented with a scarf.

Leaders Equipment

The equipment available to the Leader of a walking party must anticipate not only the unexpected situations but also the predictable shortcomings in equipment carried by the group members. Although these items would not necessarily always and only be carried by the party leader, they should be present within the group and should include the items given below.

General

- Additional spare clothing

- An appropriate first aid kit
- "Repair kit" according to circumstances
- Torch and spare batteries
- Map and compass
- Paper and pencil
- Emergency hot drink (or the means to make).

Low Hill Areas

In addition to the equipment given in 5.4.2.1 above, expeditions in Low Hill areas should also have the following equipment available within the group.

- Group shelter

Remote Areas

In addition to the equipment given in 5.4.2.1 and 5.4.2.2 above, expeditions in Remote Areas should also have the following equipment available within the group.

- Hillwalking rope
- Sleeping bag or duvet jacket
- Spare map and compass

Winter Walking

In addition to the equipment given in sections 5.4.2.1 to 5.4.2.3 above, expeditions in winter should also have the following equipment available within the group.

- Snow shovel

Group Size and Supervision

The size of any group must always allow the leader(s) to remain in total control and in effective contact with all members of the group. In practice this cannot be achieved with groups exceeding 15 persons.

Where organisational constraints require larger parties to operate they must be broken into manageable groups operating and staffed independently.

In addition to compromising safe practice, excessively large groups have a disproportionately large impact on both the environment and upon others using the outdoors, and conspire against the educational aims of any outing.

The style of supervision should be such as to maintain order and control at all times.

The strategy of party management and style of leadership must enable the leader to maintain ongoing contact with each individual in the party.

The following table gives guidance on appropriate group size for walking in various areas throughout the year.

	Optimum total Group size including all adults	Maximum total Group Size including all adults
Open Country (all times)	10	15
Remote Areas (Summer)	10	15
Remote Areas (Winter)	10	12
High Hills (Summer)	10	12
High Hills (Winter)	6	10

In Remote Areas and on High Hills there should be two adults in every party (i.e., the trained leader is supported by a second member of "staff").

However, situations will arise where it may be appropriate for the leader not to be supported by a second adult. The decision to lead a party without a second adult will be based upon the training the leader has received, the experience of the party, the terrain and the conditions prevailing. This may particularly apply when operating close to the road or in situations where other sources of external support are present.

Indirect Supervision

Where young people are indirectly supervised, e.g. during [Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Expeditions](#), the responsibilities of the staff member supervising are no less than for a party being led. Reference should be made to Section C Indirect Supervision and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Unaccompanied parties of young people should contain between 4 and 8 persons.

When indirectly supervised parties are in remote areas, the supervisor must ensure that they know the location of the group or groups at all times. Frequently this will require ongoing, unobtrusive, observation of the group.

Recommended Reading

Mountain Craft and Leadership	Eric Langmuir
Hillwalking (MLTUK)	Steve Long
Winter Skills (MLTUK)	Allen Fyffe and Andrew Cunningham
Rock Climbing (MLTUK)	Libby Peter
Safety on Mountains	British Mountaineering Council
A Handbook of Climbing	Allen Fyffe and Iain Peter
The Mountain Skills Training Handbook	Pete Hill and Stuart Johnston
Mountain Navigation	Peter Cliff
Expedition Guide (The official Expedition Handbook for Duke of Edinburgh's Award)	W.J. Keay
National Guidelines (MLTUK)	Mountain Leader Training UK

6 - CAMPING

General Information

Camping, as well as being part of an extended expedition using light weight equipment may also be an integral part of an activities programme. Camping may itself be the major aim, or may simply be the form of accommodation.

The educational value of camping is widely recognised, it is a form of activity containing much in the way of transferable learning that is achievable without an especially high level of prior competence from staff or students.

Safe camping, however, is generally efficient camping. It is essential, therefore, that a degree of preparation and training, appropriate to the event being planned is undertaken in advance.

Qualifying Awards

It is recognised that on such occasions, for an overnight or standing camp, no formal qualification would be required for those taking charge of camping.

Leaders must be competent adults who are themselves experienced campers, familiar with camping with groups of young people.

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details refer to the checklist contained in the Appendices.

Specifically, the following should be considered

- Obtaining any access permissions
- Choosing, arranging and/or booking good camp sites
- Arranging food, fuel, tents and transport
- Obtaining local weather forecasts. Refer to Appendices
- Adequate hygiene arrangements including toileting for individual groups
- Arrangements for leaving the site in proper order

Training

Individuals participating in camping should ideally have had the opportunity beforehand to practice the relevant skills.

Environmental Considerations

Living in and achieving a harmony with the chosen environment is the essence of camping. Care for the environment should be seen as an integral part of a camping ethic in which the needs of the environment should be considered alongside those of the group.

"Minimum - Impact" is the only acceptable approach to travelling and camping.

Safety Procedures

All participants must be clearly briefed on matters of safe practice and safe behaviour - both before and during the event. This briefing should refer not only to the camp-site itself, but to the immediate area, noting in particular any potential hazards in the vicinity.

The leader should ensure adequate control of pitching and striking camp.

Arrangements for the use of stoves should be absolutely clear. The degree of supervision of students using stoves, and especially refuelling stoves, must be appropriate to the situation. With large parties, arrangements for a roll call or equivalent on a regular basis must be considered.

Equipment

General

The following should be considered:

- The suitability of sleeping bags, tents and stoves which are available.
- That the equipment is in good, safe order.
- First aid Kit.

Clear and meaningful information on personal equipment must be provided to all participants.

Clothing

The clothing of the students should be adequate for the conditions to enable them to remain warm and comfortable.

Group Size and Supervision

The size of a camping party should reflect the following:

- Venue
- Time of year
- Prevailing conditions
- Experience of leaders
- Experience of the group

Ideally there should be a student to staff ratio of 15:2 and consideration needs to be given to male and female balance.

7 - EXPEDITIONS

General Information

Expeditioning requires the ability to live as comfortably as possible, under any weather conditions in remote areas with the minimum of equipment needed, to ensure adequate shelter and feeding. Expeditioning covers a range of activities from an overnight camp in an official campsite, to standing camps, to extended expeditions using light weight equipment. The skills of expeditioning are similar whatever the form of transport, whether on foot, by canoe or by sail.

In general, efficient camping is safe camping and many aspects of campcraft can be practised before attempting an expedition. The safety and success of many expeditions, on land or water, depend on campcraft skills. Those introducing people to remote and potentially hazardous environments, should have been suitably trained and have the necessary skills and experience to operate safely.

The use of expeditions as an educational activity is widely recognised. Through camping, bivouacing, bothying or building shelters, people learn to live comfortably and efficiently out of doors, to accept and value personal qualities of behaviour and to develop interests in the natural environment.

For young people to be able to journey unaccompanied without undue hazard to themselves or detriment to the country through which they pass, requires a high degree of training. Considerable emphasis should be put on developing an environmental ethic and an awareness of the needs of rural communities. Leaders should encourage their groups to be aware of the effect of their passage through the natural environment.

Highland has wild mountain areas offering solitude and remoteness. It also has forests and woodlands, rivers and valleys and a rich agricultural heritage, all of which provide an opportunity for expeditions on foot, by canoe, bicycle or by boat.

Qualifying Awards

Competent leadership is the most important safety factor of all. Special Training and experience are essential for all those who take parties of young people on expeditions into potentially hazardous environments. Enthusiasm in itself is not enough. The awards listed relate only to expeditions undertaken on foot. For other forms of expedition travel reference should be made to the relevant chapter. However, it should be noted that other awards generally provide little or no training in expeditioning.

[Sports Leader UK](#)

Level 2 Award in [Basic Expedition Leadership](#)

The Sports Leaders UK Level 2 Award in Basic Expedition Leadership is a nationally recognised award that trains and qualifies teachers, youth workers and other members of the community to:

- Lead groups in lowland areas
- Have responsibility for the care of others when outdoors including day journeys
- Organise base and mobile camps

The award is the minimum qualification required by many Local Authorities and Operating Authorities of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to train and lead groups in the expedition section of the Bronze and Silver Awards.

The award also counts towards the service section of all three Awards in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

The award does not qualify people to lead groups in remote or mountainous areas

Highland Council Accreditation Scheme

[Walking and Camping](#)

This is the appropriate accreditation for leaders wishing to take groups through rather than over mountainous terrain, e.g. Through terrain described by the Duke of Edinburgh Award as suitable for Bronze and Silver expeditions.

[Mountain Leader Training UK \(MLTUK\)](#)

The [National Guidelines](#) produced by MLTUK provides advice on Good Practice for anyone with a responsibility for mountain related activities, encompassing the principles of a safety management system.

A brief description of the awards below is provided in chapter 5- Walking and Climbing. For more detailed information please read the handbook for each award which is available via the hyperlinks in each title.

[Walking Group Leader Award \(WGL\)](#)

[Mountain Leader Award \(Summer\)](#)

[Mountain Leader Award \(Winter\)](#)

[International Mountain Leader Award \(IML\)](#)

Further Recommendations

Leaders wishing to develop expedition skills should be fully aware of the training and assessment schemes of [Sports Leader UK](#) and [Mountain Leader Training UK](#)

Leaders should be encouraged to attend training courses administered by [Sports Leader UK](#) and [Mountain Leader Training UK](#) or to attend training provided by Highland Council.

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Training

Individuals participating in any expedition should have had the opportunity beforehand to practice all the relevant skills.

Pre-expedition training must allow each individual to be fully and appropriately prepared for all aspects of their expedition. Only in this way will an expedition achieve its objectives, both educationally and otherwise. Refer to sections relating to the specific activity. Reference should also be made to sections 'Well Being' and 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme'.

Environmental Considerations

Living in, and achieving a harmony with the chosen environment is the essence of any expedition. Care for the environment should be seen as an integral part of a expedition ethic in which the needs of the environment should be considered alongside those of the group.

Minimum - Impact is the only acceptable approach to travelling and camping during an expedition.

Safety Procedures

Remote country offers the opportunity for challenge and adventure and this often implies risk. The element of risk has to be contained to an acceptable level by proper training and by observing safety procedures.

For all expeditions the following points should be considered by the leader:

- That the nature of the expedition is within the leadership competence of the staff involved.
- Do you know the individuals in the group well enough to forecast their reactions under the trying and physically demanding conditions that are likely to be met?

- Are you competent in providing First Aid?
- Do you carry the additional equipment essential to the safe conduct of the party?
- Is the nature, purpose and aim of the expedition clearly understood by all concerned?
- Has a responsible person been provided with the names and addresses of the party and other relevant details such as the route plan and timings?

Equipment

- Protective overclothing, waterproof and windproof, weight and toughness
- Spare clothing for emergencies
- Adjusting clothing to changing weather conditions
- Footwear, appropriate for venture

Group Size and Supervision

The size of an expedition party should reflect:

- Venue
- Time of year
- Prevailing conditions
- Nature of terrain
- Length of journey
- The skill levels required to complete the proposed expedition
- Experience of the leaders
- Requirements and experience of the group

For guidance on specific numbers refer to the appropriate activity chapter. Where an allowable range for group size is given then the lower figure indicated (for day events) should be used for expedition situations.

The safety of an expedition is dependant on good supervision. There needs to be a sufficient number of leaders, or responsible adults to supervise the following:

- Pitching and striking camp under all weather conditions and in the dark
- Organising and establishing a daily routine for pitching and striking camp

- Personal camp hygiene. Toilet requirements
- Arrangements for leaving the site clean and tidy
- The removal of waste and rubbish
- Coping with bad weather
- Cooking, the siting and use of stoves under all conditions and in the dark. The dangers of cooking with lightweight stoves
- The party is kept together and group control maintained

Recommended Reading

Expedition Guide (The official Expedition Handbook for Duke of Edinburgh's Award)	W.J. Keay
Hillwalking (MLTUK)	Steve Long
Backpacking	Don Robinson
Mountain Craft and Leadership	Eric Langmuir
Follow the Map	John G. Wilson
Mountain Navigation	Peter Cliff

8- OFF – ROAD AND TRAIL CYCLING

General Information

Trail cycling, using specially designed and built cycles, is steadily increasing in popularity as a means of exploring the countryside. Terrain cycling, mountain biking, cross country cycling and trail cycling are all widely used descriptive terms for this developing sport. Similar stamina and safety techniques to those necessary for mountain and hill-walking are required.

There is no doubt that this activity appeals to a wide range of individuals from those who are regularly out and about in the hills, to those who see it as an enjoyable alternative to hill-walking.

Cycle touring, using conventional road cycles, is enjoying a revival in popularity amongst all age groups. Many youngsters plan their own cycle tours based on advice and encouragement from parents, schools or clubs. Duke of Edinburgh gold expeditions can be undertaken on cycles and are centred on wild country using minor roads, lanes and tracks.

Cycling ventures whether on trail cycles or tour cycles can involve greater distances than those using other methods of journeying e.g., on foot or by canoe and great care and attention should be given to safety, group management and route planning.

The appeal and enthusiasm for trail cycling and cycle touring in Highland is considerable and is a reflection of the nature of the countryside. It lends itself to exploration by bicycle.

This together with the increased use of trail cycles has led to justified concern about the environmental impact of trail cycles, particularly in sensitive areas. The bicycle itself is an unobtrusive form of transport, making little contribution to pollution. It is essential that the problems already associated with this sport, such as erosion to paths and tracks, conflict of land use with hill-walkers, people orienteering and other users are fully recognised and understood. Leaders introducing young people to the countryside on trail cycles should be aware of any local agreements or decisions by landowners, including the Forestry Commission, on the use of trail cycles.

Qualifying Awards

Whilst a number of qualifications presently exist, those wishing to incorporate the use of cycles into an activity programme should consider carefully the potential difficulties of this as a group activity.

Leaders should nevertheless be thoroughly familiar with the type of cycle activity they are leading, and with the considerations necessary for leading parties on the type of terrain to be used.

Leaders must also ensure that they are familiar enough with cycle maintenance to affect any necessary repairs required to complete the journey.

Implicit in all the above is the requirement for Leaders to have practical cycling experience.

Scottish Mountain Bike Leader Association (SMBLA)

Trail Cycle Leader (TCL)

On successful completion of TCL assessment the participant will be sufficiently skilled in mountain bike leading to lead groups of up to 6 riders throughout Scotland and the UK as detailed below:-

1. Public highways, way-marked routes, rights-of-way on which cycles are permitted, identifiable routes, tracks and trails with obvious navigational features and with low to medium technical difficulty
2. The award covers normal summer conditions
3. These routes will be 90-95% rideable and take the group no more than 30 minutes walk by a reasonably fit person away from a shelter with communication, and to be no more than 600 metres in height
4. They will not involve cycling activity of more than one day's length

A Trail Cycle Leader could also act as an assistant to a Mountain Bike Leader, and would be encouraged to do so to attain the next level of award.

Mountain Bike Leader (MBL)

On successful completion of MBL assessment the participant will be sufficiently skilled in mountain bike leading to lead groups within Scotland and the UK as detailed below:-

1. Public highways, way marked routes, rights of way on which cycles are permitted, identifiable routes and tracks with obvious navigational features
2. Routes requiring considerable technical ability which are rideable for 90-95% of their total length and to any height above sea level and more than 30 minutes walk from the nearest shelter with communication
3. The award covers normal summer conditions

Expedition Leader

An Expedition Leader can lead self-sufficient groups on multi-day trips which requires carrying additional equipment and planning and management of groups on such trips. Terrain and technical difficulty are determined by the scope of the Expedition Leader's level of award (TCL or MBL).

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details refer to the checklist contained in Appendices.

Specifically, the following should be considered as essential to the planning of any cycle trip:

- Terrain - factors affecting the choice of a suitable area or route will include
 - Experience and fitness of group
 - Experience of leader
 - Time of year
 - daylight hours
 - weather
- Return section of the journey – factors to be considered will include
 - Should a direct or circular route be taken
 - Has sufficient account been taken of the terrain, gradient and wind strength or direction to allow the return to be undertaken in reasonable time
- Descent of steep ground should allow for
 - a suitable pace for descent
 - a safe distance between individuals
- The possibility of mechanical breakdown or accidental damage to cycles should be anticipated
 - due account of this must be taken in planning the route
 - Sufficient time for safe return must be allowed in such eventualities.

Training

Before planning a journey it would be unwise to make the assumption that everybody can ride a bicycle.

The following are worth considering

- Road Traffic sense and signals

- Knowledge of use of gears
- How to effect basic repairs e.g., replace/repair an inner tube
- Use of brakes e.g., not front brake by itself
- The problems and environmental impact of bicycles in sensitive areas.

Training should also be given where required in

- Coping with steep descents and ascents
- Packing and load carrying
- Individuals responsibility to the group

Environmental Considerations

The potential impact of bicycles on both the environment itself and on its other users should be fully considered at all times, particular care must be given to

- All parties should seek the approval of the landowner(s) of the ground on which they wish to travel
- Any request from the landowner to avoid particular pieces of ground, or any other request relating to the management of the party should be respected
- It is strongly recommended that cycling should be restricted to hard tracks and cycles should not be used on tracks or paths where ground is soft and prone to damage
- Activities should only be undertaken with minimal impact to the environment and groups should therefore be prepared to dismount and walk for a short section should the need arise.

Safety Procedures

The problems of a group quickly becoming spread out should be anticipated.

When on public roads groups should cycle in single file, a safe stopping distance apart.

Full and proper consideration should be given to other road users at all times.

In the event of mechanical breakdown or other delays and the possibility of the group having to return on foot, the base should be informed as soon as possible.

Where cycle journeys include hill or remote terrain, relevant requirements in Walking and Hill-walking should be met.

Equipment for all Group Members

General

- Size of cycle - care and time should be taken to measure individuals to cycle size. For trail cycling the size of cycle is generally smaller than for touring cycles.
- Helmets and gloves or mittens must be worn at all times.
- Reflective bandoliers, anklets and wristbands greatly add to the safety of all cyclists using public roads.
- Leaders should ensure that each cycle meets the legal requirements when used on the road.
- The nature of the journey and terrain
- Choice and care of appropriate common sense clothing.
- Staying warm and keeping cool.

Clothing

Specific clothing needs will be determined by:

- the time of the year, prevailing weather conditions and altitude
- likely changes in weather
- the nature of the journey and terrain

Consideration should be given to:

- waterproof and windproof clothing
- relevant footwear - to allow for walking as well as riding
- spare clothing.

If adequate clothing is not available, plans need to be modified.

Leaders Equipment

Leaders must always expect the unexpected. Consideration should be given to carrying or having readily available items such as spare clothing and food, first aid and other emergency equipment. According to the location being used and time of year a basic first aid kit should always be carried. Reference should be made to Walking and Hill-walking. (Section 5.4.4)

Leaders should ensure that they have a repair kit appropriate for the cycles being used. Bicycle repair kits should include:

- a spare inner tube
- a puncture repair outfit
- tyre levers
- an adjustable spanner or multi-holed spanner
- a screw driver
- correct size Allen keys
- a pump
- spare brake blocks, nuts and bolts, bulbs and batteries
- chain link extractor

Group Size and Supervision

The optimum ratio of staff to participants is 1: 6

The maximum group size must not exceed 12.

Ideally there should always be 2 adults.

Throughout the journey the leader should be in a position to direct each member of the party in order to achieve appropriate control of the party in any circumstances.

Consideration should be given to pace and energy expenditure in order that the group remains in contact at all times.

Cycling Expeditions

Consideration should be given to:

- The need for equipment to be carried on the bike rather than on the person, and the stable safe loading of the bike.
- The handling characteristics of a fully laden bike (balance, momentum, increased width).
- The planning for the journey should take account of the above particularly in relation to the choice of terrain.

Recommended Reading

Off-Road Cycling – Good Practice Advice	Scottish Cycling
Scottish Mountain Bike Leader Scheme Manual	Scottish Cycling
The Forest Cycling Code	Forestry Commission

9 - SNOWSPORTS

General Information

The modern sport of skiing is some 70 years old. It is a relatively recent development of the much older use of skis to aid travel across snow covered terrain. It is now enjoyed by great numbers of people throughout the world and offers an opportunity for self-expression through the combination of speed, grace and balance. All snow sports draw attention to environmental and land use issues as well as an appreciation of both the harshness and the beauty of the winter landscape.

The fixing down of the heel was the significant factor which led to the sport separating into the two disciplines of Nordic and Alpine (downhill) skiing, the latter receiving its major turning point with the invention of the ski tow.

Alpine skiing, or downhill skiing as it is often known, can be broadly described as skis equipped with fixed heel bindings, which is usually undertaken in areas with ski tows and chair-lifts.

Nordic skiing encompasses a wide range of disciplines with the primary feature being the free heel binding allowing a walking type of movement. Light touring takes place in a variety of low-lying terrain using narrow lightweight skis and soft boots. Ski touring at higher levels uses a stiffer boot and metal edged skis. Other branches of this sport include ski racing, Telemark and roller skiing.

Ski mountaineering, involving travelling in more remote or rugged terrain, uses both Alpine and Nordic equipment and requires additional winter mountaineering experience.

A recent addition to snow sports has been provided by the invention of the snowboard, originating in the U.S.A. in the late 1970s. It is characterised by the participant riding on a board using a diagonal stance, similar to a wave surfer, held in place by a fixed binding.

Highland is particularly well served by having 3 of Britain's 5 downhill ski areas namely Cairngorm, Nevis Range and Glencoe. Highland countryside and climate provides occasional opportunities for Nordic Skiing as well.

Qualifying Awards

Alpine Skiing

Highland Council Accreditation Scheme

[Snowsports Supervisor](#)

The Outdoor Education Resource Centre provides an in-house accreditation course for employees that wish to supervise snowsports.

A Snowsports Supervisor is responsible for the participants before, between and after; receiving instruction or being led by, appropriately qualified skiers / boarders.

There are many things to do either side of lessons, preparation, eating, resting and packing up. If there is an opportunity for the participants to have some time to practice what they have been taught, then the Snowsports Supervisor can provide supervision whilst the participants ski/board on a slope/run identified as suitable by a qualified snowsports instructor.

Snowsport Scotland

Alpine Ski Leader

The Scottish Alpine Ski Leader qualification is widely recognised throughout the UK as the most appropriate award for skiers taking sole charge of groups (often children) in the mountain environment. The Alpine Ski Leader is an award originally developed in the 1960's, for mainly teachers and youth workers wishing to introduce skiing to young people from their own organisation, often without direct financial remuneration. The award covers a range of responsibilities including; planning, organising, supervising, leading and instructing. The ASL award is valid in the mountains and also on dry slopes and indoor snow slopes.

Alpine Ski Leader Refresher

This course will update and inform participants of recent developments in the field of leading and instructing skiers. Additionally it will give participants direction and advice on how to improve their personal skiing performance.

British Association of Snowsport Instructors

Alpine Level 1 Instructor

This is the entry level course for students who wish to join the BASI Education System. The qualification is for those wishing to find employment in a non mountain environment, i.e. Dry Slopes and Indoor Snow slopes. It is also the 1st stage of the BASI Instructor Level 2

Alpine Level 2 Instructor

Successful students will be able to ski to a competent level, and have the knowledge, ability and understanding to safely teach alpine skiing up to and including parallel standard on marked pistes.

Alpine Ski Teacher ISIA

On successful completion of all training, students will have developed their technical competence and understanding of the underlying principles of ski teaching. The Ski Teacher (ISIA) licence qualifies the student to teach up to parallel skiing and beyond. This includes techniques and tactics for bumps, steeper terrain, higher speeds and variable conditions within marked pistes and off piste on marked routes.

[International Ski Teacher Diploma](#)

On successful completion of the International Ski Teacher Diploma training and assessment modules, students are qualified to the level required for mutual recognition in France, Austria and Italy. Students intending to work in these countries will still be required to apply and register to work in accordance with the relevant national authorities. The International Ski Teacher Diploma licence qualifies the student to teach up to parallel skiing and beyond. This includes techniques and tactics for bumps, steeper terrain, higher speeds and variable conditions within the marked pistes and off piste apart from on glaciated terrain.

Snowboarding

[Snowsport Scotland](#)

[Snowboard Leader](#)

The Snowboard Leader course is designed to train and qualify responsible snowboarders to safely lead groups of snowboarders within ski patrolled areas. The award is primarily aimed at teachers, youth group leaders and other responsible adults wishing to encourage and supervise young snowboarders.

[Snowboard Leader Refresher](#)

All those persons who hold the Snowboard Leader award will be required to attend a refresher course every 3 years to revalidate the qualification. This course will update and inform participants of recent developments in the field of leading and instructing. Additionally it will give participants direction and advice on how to improve their personal riding performance.

[British Association of Snowsport Instructors](#)

[Snowboard Level 1 Instructor](#)

This is the entry level course for students who wish to join the BASI Education System. The qualification is for those wishing to find employment in a non mountain environment, i.e. Dry Slopes and Indoor Snowslopes. It is also the 1st stage of the BASI Instructor Level 2.

[Snowboard Level 2 Instructor](#)

By the end of the course successful students will be able to ride to the level required and have the knowledge, ability and understanding to teach snowboarding in a variety of situations. On completion of the course students will be issued with a written report. The Snowboard Level 2 Instructor can teach all aspects of the snowboarding central theme up to and including basic turning within the confines of a patrolled area.

[Snowboard Teacher ISIA](#)

On successful completion of all Snowboard Teacher training and assessment modules students will be qualified to the highest level available in the UK. An international licence is issued at this level. The Snowboard Teacher licence qualifies the student to teach snowboarding on all terrain and conditions, including techniques for steeper terrain, higher speeds and jumping, within marked pistes and off piste within a resort area.

Nordic Skiing

[Snowsport Scotland](#)

[Nordic Ski Leader](#)

The Nordic Ski Leader (NSL) course is designed to train and qualify responsible skiers who are primarily interested in introducing, developing and encouraging Nordic skiing by leading groups through the countryside in winter using appropriate equipment.

[Nordic Ski Leader Refresher](#)

This course will update and inform participants of recent developments in the field of leading and instructing skiers. Additionally it will give participants direction and advice on how to improve their personal skiing performance.

[British Association of Snowsport Instructors](#)

[Nordic Cross-Country Ski Instructor](#)

Successful students will be able to ski to a competent level and have the knowledge, ability and understanding to teach cross-country skiing in a variety of situations.

[Nordic Cross-Country Ski Teacher ISIA](#)

On successful completion of all training, students will have developed their technical competence and understanding of the underlying principles of ski teaching. The Ski Teacher (ISIA) licence qualifies the student to teach up to advanced classic and skating techniques on demanding courses.

Telemark

British Association of Snowsport Instructors

Telemark Level 1 Instructor

Successful students will be issued a certification to work only on dry slope or indoor snow slopes. Students will be able to work with novice and early intermediate telemarkers. On completion of the Level 1 Instructor course students are individually debriefed and advised on the degree of preparation required before presenting themselves for the Level 2 Instructor Training Course, as well as to their competence to work in the controlled environments of dry slopes and Snow-domes.

Telemark Level 2 Instructor

On successful completion of all training, students will have developed their technical competency and understanding of the underlying principles of safe and appropriate ski teaching. Telemark Instructors can teach Telemark skiing within the confines of a patrolled ski area only and should not lead mountain tours without another qualification, e.g. Winter Mountain Leader in the UK.

Telemark Teacher ISIA

On successful completion of all training, students will have developed their technical competence and understanding of the underlying principles of ski teaching. The Telemark Teacher (ISIA) licence qualifies the student to teach up to parallel skiing and beyond. This includes techniques and tactics for bumps, steeper terrain, higher speeds and variable conditions within marked pistes and off piste on marked routes.

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute to the safety and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details, refer to the checklist contained in the Appendices.

Specifically, the following should be considered:

- Prior knowledge - seek prior knowledge of the location to be used. This should preferably be first hand knowledge, but if not, then from a reliable source
- Flexibility - build sufficient flexibility into planned programmes to allow for last minute modification or curtailment, due to changing conditions and unforeseen circumstances

- Know the group - have prior knowledge of the group. In particular, their experience and their physical capabilities, including any relevant medical problems
- Weather - obtain a weather forecast before setting out
- Ski Forecast - obtain a ski and access road report for the area. For all mountain touring an avalanche report should be obtained (included with most mountain and ski weather forecasts), to complement an awareness of snow build up for the preceding period

Other constraints:

- Be aware and take account of changing conditions e.g. weather, snow, daylight hours, and group well being
- As in all sports, people learn at differing rates and groups must be organised in such a way that each can learn at his or her own rate without impeding the progress of others.

Training

Students should be introduced to all snow sport activities through a structured and systematic approach using appropriate teaching techniques and progressions.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- the choice of terrain
- appropriate warm-up session
- proper use and care of equipment
- control of speed including how to fall safely
- appropriate ski safety codes of conduct
- proper use of ski tows when appropriate.

Environmental Considerations

Consideration should always be given to the problems of the environmental impact of skiers on sensitive areas, especially when the snow cover is light or incomplete

Equipment for all Group Members

Ski Helmets

The wearing of Ski Helmets is compulsory for under 13 year old participants (i.e. 12 year old and under) during snowsport activities i.e. Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding

Alpine Skiing

The skis should be about head height for novices and should be increasingly longer for more advanced skiers.

Ski bindings should be of the modern step-in type and must be adjusted by a trained person to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Brakes, Leashes and Safety Straps On piste, ski brakes must be used. When skiing off-piste or ski mountaineering, leashes or safety straps should be used according to the terrain.

Ski boots should fit well and should be chosen appropriate to the level of skier and must be compatible with bindings to DIN/ISO standard.

Ski sticks should be of the appropriate length and be in good condition.

Nordic Skiing

The skis should be of the light tour or steel edge type and about 20 cms above head height. It is not desirable to mix waxable and non-wax skis within the same group.

The bindings should be appropriate to the form of skiing and the nature of the terrain to be crossed.

Brakes, Leashes and Safety Straps On piste, ski brakes or safety straps must be used. When touring, leashes or safety straps should be used according to the terrain.

Boots For low level touring a lightweight boot is used, whilst at higher level a stiff mountaineering type of boot is necessary. Boots should always be comfortable and weatherproof and attention should be paid to preparing the feet against blisters.

Sticks should be of an appropriate Nordic type and be in good condition and generally no more than armpit height.

Equipment Carried when appropriate to the excursion, students should carry adequate spare clothing, food, drink and waterproofs.

Leaders Equipment

General

The equipment an instructor or leader chooses to carry, or have readily accessible, in order to ensure that the group is kept safe and comfortable will vary according to the following:

- nature of the activity
- location
- time of year
- age range of the group
- experience of the group
- aims of the session
- weather

It is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that their group is adequately and appropriately clothed for the type of activity and the prevailing conditions. Instructors should take account of the fact that several inner layers of clothing are preferable and more versatile than one or two thick layers. Also a one or two piece outer shell garment should be worn which must be wind and waterproof.

Alpine Skiing

Instructors should carry or have direct access to the following items:

- spare clothing (including hat, gloves, goggles)
- small tool kit
- piste map

Instructors should consider selecting other items from the following list as appropriate for the planned activity:

- First aid kit
- compass, map
- wax, ski file
- sun glasses, sun cream
- whistle, exposure bag

Nordic Skiing

Low level touring

Instructors should carry the following items:

- spare clothing (including hat, gloves, goggles)
- first aid kit, sun cream
- map, compass, and torch
- small tool kit, wax
- survival bag, hot drink
- Sleeping bag or duvet jacket.

Instructors should also consider selecting other items from the following list according to the planned activity:

- repair kit (basket, bale, tip, screws)
- spare high energy food
- group shelter, spare socks

Group Size and Supervision

There should be at least 3 group members including the leader or instructor for Nordic skiing. Whilst 8 may be considered to be the optimum group size for both alpine and Nordic skiing, 12 should be considered to be the maximum.

Skiing occasionally takes place outwith a recognised patrolled ski area i.e., road side, fields etc.) Such activity must be closely supervised and the instructor must remain in contact with the whole group at all times.

Indirect Supervision

The value for students of spending periods of time skiing in small groups not under the direct supervision of the instructor is recognised. The arrangements for such “free skiing” must be such that the safety of the students and other skiers is not compromised, and that the responsibilities of the instructor are fully discharged.

The arrangements must recognise and include the:

- ability level and experience of the individuals within the group
- students are briefed on action to be taken if the group becomes separated
- area or pistes are specified and are known to the students

- group size for free skiing will number between 3 and 5 and these will remain together throughout the session. Contact must be made with the main group at least once in every practice session
- report back times
- incident procedure

Consideration of Student Well Being

Alpine Skiing

Instructors must be conversant with the ski code and must actively ensure that students both understand and practise it. Particular attention should be paid to the safe organisation of activity on crowded ski pistes.

Instructors must co-operate with the ski patrol and know where the First Aid and Rescue Stations are positioned on the hill.

Nordic Skiing

Consideration needs to be given to the journeying element of Nordic skiing. Special attention should be paid to terrain, weather (especially wind strength and direction), pace and energy expenditure to enable the group to complete the journey comfortably.

Recommended Reading

BASI Generic Manual	BASI
BASI Alpine Manual	BASI
BASI Snowboard Manual	BASI
BASI Nordic Manual	BASI
BASI Telemark Manual	BASI
Free Heel Skiing	Paul Parker

10 – PADDLESPORT (CANOEING & KAYAKING)

General Information

Paddle-sport is a collective term to encompass canoeing and kayaking in its various forms. Features common to paddle-sport activities are that they take place in small craft propelled by paddles. Within this definition lies a wide-ranging and multi-faceted sport.

Kayaking

The modern kayak derives from the traditional Eskimo hunting craft. Usually a decked single seated and built using sealskins. The result was a light, fast and manoeuvrable craft which, once occupied was almost watertight and could be self-righted using the paddle. Kayaks now come in many different forms, although the modern sea-touring kayak still retains a close resemblance to the traditional shape of the Eskimo kayak. Whatever its shape and appearance; the features that identify a craft as a kayak are that the occupant or occupants sit and use a double bladed paddle.

Kayaking as a sport provides opportunities for adventure, relaxation, exploration, competition and investigation. The challenge of descending a white-water river or gracefully meandering on quiet lochs and canals are all part of its appeal. Kayaks are frequently used for expeditions at sea and represent the ideal vehicle for close investigation of rocky coastlines or riverbanks. Surf as well as river rapids can provide the thrills and excitement of white water, and a medium in which to learn new skills.

Kayaking has long been recognised as a useful medium for outdoor education, and is of particular value in building confidence, self-reliance and co-operation. Highland has a wealth of beautiful rivers and a host of inland lochs. Highland's coastline is one of spectacular cliff scenery with good potential for exploration and observation of wildlife, and interspersed with some excellent surf beaches.

Canoeing

Many indigenous peoples have developed 'Canoe' forms, most of which have been 'dug-outs'. The modern 'Canadian Canoe' derives from a canoe form evolved by the native North American Indians, who used native Birch bark to fashion a lighter and more versatile craft.

Modern 'open canoes', now used mainly for recreational touring, employ modern materials, but their shape remains virtually unchanged from the age-old designs of their ancestors.

Other forms of canoe have been developed, mainly for specialised use in competition, but regardless of shape, a craft may be identified as a canoe if the occupant or occupants would normally kneel and use a single bladed paddle.

Putting the competitive disciplines aside, (in which there is equal scope to that in kayaking) the traditional 'open canoe' is the form in most common use within the spheres of education and general recreation.

The open canoe is a relatively stable and immensely versatile craft which is normally paddled by two people but can equally be handled solo. To learn to paddle a canoe as a doubles pair requires effective communication and the development of good teamwork between partners. It is perhaps these characteristics which represent part of its worth as an educational medium, but it is the unique potential of the canoe as a 'journeying vehicle' which is responsible for its rapidly heightening profile both in education and recreation.

The Voyageurs of Canada established Trade Routes using canoes, which linked lake and river systems, frequently, involved portaging over watersheds and around other obstacles.

The Highlands are ideally suited to journeys of a similar nature, albeit on a somewhat reduced scale.

Canoeing is an adventure sport and therefore has an inescapable element of attendant risk. Canoeing activities taking place within the scope of this document should only be undertaken under the direct supervision of those qualified to assess and monitor risk, and thus maintain it at an acceptable level.

Qualifying Awards

The [Scottish Canoe Association](#) (SCA) is the National Governing Body for Kayaking and Canoeing. It administers within Scotland the [British Canoe Union](#) (BCU) [coaching scheme](#).

Level 1 Coach

The BCU Level 1 Kayak or Canoe Coach Award is aimed at coaches and youth leaders who wish to introduce others to canoeing at a 'taster' level, only, using small, sheltered, simple-water sites.

It is not a suitable level of qualification for canoeing leaders of clubs or groups for whom the pastime is a main activity.

For staff employed at Centres, it is suitable only for 'first session' introductory purposes and only when under the general supervision of a higher award holder.

Candidates must hold or be competent to the level of the relevant BCU 2-Star test. Level 1 Kayak Coaches are regarded as competent to operate closed cockpit kayaks, open cockpit kayaks, and open canoes within the terms of reference stated.

However Level 1 Canoe Coaches can only operate with canoes within the terms of reference stated.

The status is intended only as a very basic coaching award, but the holder should be able to transmit a basic understanding to all their charges to enable the purpose of the session to be achieved.

It must always be borne in mind that the sphere of operation of the Level 1 Award is restricted, and the overriding priority is safety with enjoyment.

It is relevant for use throughout the year, with the provisos listed.

Level 2 Coach

To provide a qualification for those wishing to introduce others to canoeing on simple waters only (or equivalent very sheltered coastal areas) in general purpose slalom kayaks or in open cockpit canoes or kayaks.

It is an indication of a level of competence for introducing groups (normally up to 8) to the standard of the BCU 2-Star Test.

It is implicit that training will be undertaken with students properly equipped to normal safety requirements.

It is not an expedition leadership award.

Sheltered water is a canal, small lake, sheltered area of larger lake, holiday beach close inshore on a calm day, or quiet river, not involving the shooting of weirs or grade II rapids.

Level 3 Coach (Inland, Sea & Canoe)

Level 3 Kayak Coach

The minimum age is 18.

Level 3 Coach is the correct grade for a person to be in charge of kayaking activities for a club or school which includes expeditioning and/or white water Grade II.

Testing for Star Tests is as outlined within the personal performance awards section of the Awards Coaching Directory.

Level 3 Canoe Coach

The minimum age is 18.

Level 3 Canoe Coach is the correct grade for a person to be in charge of canoeing activities for a club or school which includes expeditioning and/or white water Grade II.

Testing for Star Tests is as outlined within the personal performance awards section of the Awards Coaching Directory.

Level 3 Sea Coach

The minimum age is 18.

Level 3 Sea Coach is the correct grade for a person to be in charge of canoeing activities for a club or school which includes expeditioning on the open sea (including surfing).

Testing for Star Tests is as outlined within the personal performance awards section of the Awards Coaching Directory.

Coaches wishing to run specific Surf Coaching sessions need to be qualified to Level 3 surf standard.

Level 3 Sea Coaches are judged to be qualified to run launching and landing in surf condition sessions only.

Level 3 Coach Surf

Level 3 Surf Coach is the correct level of award for the instruction and supervision of groups in up to 3' surf conditions.

Level 4 Coach

At the time of publication the Level 4 (Inland / Sea / Canoe / Surf) Coach award is an indication of a coaches ability to deliver a Level 3 coach performance in an 'advanced' environment.

Currently there is no Level 4 training or assessment course.

The status of Level 4 Coach actively sought and awarded when a Level 3 Coach has gained 5 Star in their chosen discipline(s) and has undertaken a Coaching Processes course.

Level 5 Coach

The B.C.U. Level 5 Coach Award is a generic Award, the purpose of which is to identify within the system a cadre of competent, experienced, reliable, motivated persons with a depth and wealth of knowledge, who can be relied upon to provide practical coaching, advice and guidance up to a high level.

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details refer to the checklist contained in the Appendices.

Specifically, the following should be considered:

- Prior Knowledge - seek prior knowledge of the location to be used. This should preferably be first hand, but if not then from reliable source
- Flexibility - create sufficient flexibility into planned programmes to allow for last minute modification taking into account changing conditions and unforeseen circumstances
- Know the Group - have prior knowledge of the group. In particular their experience and their physical capabilities, include relevant medical problems
- Weather - obtain a weather forecast before setting out. Refer to Appendix
- Communication - notify relevant bodies of plans e.g., Coastguard, harbour master, landowner, colleagues at base
- River Levels - White Water Rivers are generally graded at medium levels. By their very nature, such grading systems are to some extent subjective and may change suddenly with fluctuating river levels
- River Mouths and Estuaries - the mouths of rivers often look placid but may be subject to strong rip currents extending considerable distance out to sea. Local knowledge should be sought and caution exercised against hazards caused by rapid 'drying out' of mud flats which may cause difficulties for groups
- Other Constraints - be aware and take account of any other constraints within which you will have to work e.g., tides, time, daylight hours.

Training

For all paddle sports participants should normally be able to swim 50 metres. In the case of non-swimmers, the instructor should be satisfied that the participant has a reasonable level of water confidence when wearing a buoyancy aid.

Kayaking and Canoeing

All participants should undergo some basic training on simple water.

Other Recommendations

Careful consideration should be given to the dangers associated with polluted or contaminated water. Instructors should be aware of the dangers of blue/green algae and the causes and early symptoms of [Weil's disease](#).

Reference should be made to Appendices.

Environmental Considerations

Special consideration should be given to the impact of paddlesport in respect of the following:

- Erosion to banks at access and egress points
- Disturbance to wildlife
- Disturbance to other water users

Equipment - General

The circumstances in which equipment is to be used will determine minimum acceptable standards in terms of its design and state of repair. Whilst safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude, the careful selection of the most suitable equipment will make a significant contribution to safety. All craft must be suitable in terms of their design and their condition for the purpose for which they are to be used.

There are certain basic minimum requirements with which all groups and their craft must conform before venturing out on any outdoor water activities. These are:

- All canoes and kayaks must have sufficient buoyancy (Min.25 kgm) distribution so as to allow the craft to float horizontally when waterlogged.
- All group members must wear an approved buoyancy aid or life jacket. Refer to Appendix
- All canoes and kayaks must have end grabs at bow and stern designed so as not to trap the hand and to which a karabiner can be quickly and easily attached.

In addition to the above, when operating on anything other than simple water, instructors should consider the following:

Kayaks

Foot-rests

A securely fitted and "failsafe" footrest is essential. A full plate bulkhead footrest with foam shock-absorbing pad is the best system currently available, and in conjunction with a "keyhole cockpit" and "back strap" is recommended for white water use and surfing.

Additional Buoyancy

This should be in the form of air bags fitted in the bow, forward of the footrest and in the stern are recommended, except where kayaks are already fitted with watertight bulkheads. On the sea and on other open water, the fitting of additional buoyancy makes deep water rescues quicker and easier to perform. On white water it significantly reduces the chances of the boat becoming pinned on an obstacle and of the paddler becoming entrapped.

Spray Decks

A tight fitting and secure spray deck will make a significant contribution to the safety of the paddler as well as improving their comfort.

Helmets

On rivers, for coastal rock hopping, surfing, and any other situation where capsize in shallow water is likely, a safety helmet is essential. On open water or sea journeys, a warm hat or sun hat is more appropriate.

Canoes

Additional Buoyancy

This should take the form of air bags or old inner tubes. These will significantly enhance the buoyancy of the boat when swamped.

Lines/Painters

In situations other than on simple water consideration should be given to fitting painters to each end of the canoe. If fitted it is important that the line should be stowed in such a way as to avoid entanglement in the event of capsize.

Spare Paddles

Each canoe should carry a spare paddle.

Helmets

In many open canoeing situations a warm hat or a sun hat is the most appropriate headgear. On journeys where moving water is likely to be encountered students must be provided with safety helmets. The sound judgement of a Level 3 Coach should be relied on as to when the helmet should actually be worn.

Bailer

Consideration should be given to carrying a bailer in each canoe particularly when operating on open water.

Leaders Equipment

General

The equipment that an Instructor chooses to take in order to enhance a group's safety and comfort will vary according to:

- nature of the activity
- location
- time of year
- age range of the group
- experience of the group
- aims of the session

Kayak and Canoe Instructors should carry or have direct access to the following basic items:

- spare clothing including hat and gloves
- survival bag
- first aid kit
- hot drink
- towing line
- spare paddle
- whistle
- throw line

Instructors should consider selecting other items from the following list according to the nature of the outing planned:

- map or chart, compass, whistle torch
- repair kit, knife, folding saw
- slings, karabiners and pulleys
- paddle hook, flares or radio

- emergency food, matches or lighter

Clothing

It is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that their group is adequately and appropriately clothed for the type of activity and the prevailing conditions. Instructors should take account of the following:

Wind and Waterproof shell

Most warm clothing will insulate the body even when wet, however this must be supplemented by a wind and waterproof shell if it is to be effective.

Wet suits

These are recommended in circumstances where frequent capsizes in cold water are likely. They also afford a level of protection against bumps and grazes, which frequently result from swimming in rapids. Wet suits for paddle sports should not restrict movement of the upper arms and shoulders.

Few wet suits are windproof in their own right. It is recommended they be worn in conjunction with a windproof paddle top.

Dry suits

These are beyond the budget of most groups. Dry suits are only effective if suitable thermal clothing is worn under them.

Paddle Sports in winter

Particular attention needs to be paid to suitable clothing during the winter months. Wet suits, dry suits or other specialised protective clothing should be regarded as essential where risk of capsizes exists.

Footwear

It is important that paddlers wear suitable footwear. Old trainers with thick woollen socks or wet suit boots with a sturdy sole are good options.

Group Size and Supervision

Minimum Numbers

For both Kayaking and Canoeing there should be at least TWO CRAFT on the water at all times.

Maximum Numbers

It is recommended that the total number of participants in any one group should not exceed twelve for both Kayaking and Canoeing.

Special Consideration for Surfing

During surfing activities there should always be an appointed shore party in 'signal contact' with the instructor. The shore party should act as lookouts to safeguard students on the water. A good way to achieve this is to organise the group in a 'buddy system'.

One competent paddler should be stationed seaward of the break line to act as 'sweeper'. They should be in signal contact with the instructor and the shore party.

Instructors should take the greatest care to ensure that conditions are well within their own capabilities and suitable for the ability of their students.

Recommended Reading

BCU Coaching Handbook	BCU
BCU Canoe and Kayak Handbook	BCU
Paddlesport Activity Cards	BCU
Canoe and Kayak Games	BCU
Scottish White Water	SCA
Scottish Canoe Touring	SCA
Surf Kayaking – The Essential Guide	Simon Hammond
A Practical Guide to Sea Kayaking	Howard Jeffs
Path of the Paddle	Bill Mason
White Water Safety and Rescue	Pesda Press

11 – SWIMMING IN NATURAL WATERS

General Information

It is recognised that on occasions, those taking part in an outdoor activity or those visiting the seashore or countryside may wish to swim in natural waters. Swimming in natural waters is fun, but it is important for leaders to understand the potentially serious nature of this activity.

Qualifying Awards

A competent and experienced leader who is confident that they can ensure a rescue if a swimmer gets into difficulty must supervise all swimming activities. The leader must hold a current and appropriate lifesaving or water safety and rescue award.

Awards currently recognised are:

Royal Lifesaving Society

- Bronze Medallion and Higher Awards (Award of Merit, Distinction)
- Pool Lifeguard Bronze Medallion

British Canoe Union

- [BCU Lifeguards Pool Endorsement](#)

These awards, which have a particular paddlesport focus, nevertheless contain a core of general lifesaving skills and techniques applicable to water activities generally.

Guidance for Leaders

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details refer to the checklist contained in Appendix

Specifically the following should be considered:

- Potential danger from polluted water

- Restrictions placed on swimming by landowners, local council, or Water Authority
- If swimming in the sea, the area should be free from strong tides or currents, rip currents or under-tows
- The weather at the time with particular attention to wind strength and direction
- If swimming in a river, attention should be given to the rate of flow of water and the potential of a rapid rise in level as a result of recent rainfall
- Potential danger from obstacles
- Problems which may arise due to the activities of other water users

Immediately Before Swimming

Double check the area to ensure there is no obstacles or obvious dangers. Only allow jumping or diving in clear water where there is enough depth.

Restrict the swimming area so that control can be kept in an easily managed area. Ensure that the entry and exit points from the shore or bank into the water are safe.

Only allow those who can swim into the water. Ensure that those who cannot swim remain on dry land and are adequately supervised or are involved in helping look after others.

Ensure that the group is given a thorough briefing.

During Swimming

The qualified lifesaver must remain on the bank keeping constant watch. A second person (over 16 years of age) must act as a "second pair of eyes" for the qualified lifesaver and alert them to any emergency situation. There should be no more than 10 people swimming at one time.

The qualified lifesaver should be particularly aware of the possible effects on swimmers of long periods in cold water.

Natural waters can be extremely cold even in summer and Leaders should be aware of the danger of sudden immersion in cold water.

12 - SAILING

General Information

Sailing is a long-established component of outdoor education, providing satisfaction from the handling of a small craft or from contributing to the effective functioning of a large vessel. As an activity it offers opportunities to develop physical skills, as well as the skills involved in planning, thinking and communicating. It can be used to provide experience in decision-making and leadership and to emphasise the importance of teamwork. It can enhance the development of self-confidence and self-reliance, and can help to stimulate an immediate awareness of and respect for the environment.

The importance of confidence when in and on the water needs to be reiterated, particularly for dinghy sailors who may be required to work in the water wearing sailing clothing and personal buoyancy in order to rectify a capsize. The ability of sailors to swim prescribed distances is of less significance than their general confidence in water, given that they are urged to remain with the boat in the event of a capsize.

Sailing can be divided into two broad areas defined by the principal types of craft used -namely dinghies and keelboats.

Within Highland Council Education, Culture & Sport participants are most likely to be introduced to sailing in dinghies owned or accessed by schools or through the Community Education Service's Outdoor Education Unit which has a fleet of 8 'Topper' dinghies for training purposes.

Qualifying Awards

Dinghy Sailing

[Royal Yachting Association Instructor Scheme](#)

[Assistant Instructor](#)

The assistant instructor (AI) award provides recognition for the 'in-house' training given to experienced sailors intending to qualify as RYA dinghy, keelboat or multihull instructors.

The AI is a competent small boat sailor who has been trained to assist instructors in teaching sailing up to the standard of the Level 2 or Stage 3 courses. They must work under the supervision of an RYA senior instructor (SI) or the chief instructor of a keelboat training centre.

As the AI's training is limited to assisting qualified instructors and does not include first aid or powerboat handlings.

AI's must never be allowed to work without direct supervision.

Instructor (Dinghy, keelboat & multihull)

Instructors teaching the National Sailing Scheme need to be qualified for the type of boat in which they teach, i.e. dinghies, small keelboats or multihulls. In addition the instructor certificate is endorsed to show whether you are qualified to teach on inland or coastal waters.

The instructor is a competent, experienced sailor capable of sailing a training boat in strong winds and handling small powerboats. The instructor has been assessed as competent to teach adults and children, beginners and improvers. See the 'who teaches what' link for exact details.

Although responsible for teaching individuals and small groups, the instructor has not been assessed as competent in running a sailing centre, and should always work under the supervision of an RYA Senior instructor (for dinghy and multihull courses) or the chief instructor of a keelboat training centre.

Advanced Instructor

The advanced instructor is an experienced instructor with a wide background of sailing experience who has been trained to teach the Performance Sailing and Sailing with Spinnakers courses.

Senior Instructor

The SI is an experienced instructor who has been assessed as competent to organise and manage courses within the RYA's National Sailing Scheme. They are qualified to organise and control group sailing tuition and to supervise and assist instructors. SI's must be confident, competent managers, capable of organising groups of all ages and directing the work of their instructors.

An RYA recognised dinghy/keelboat/multihull training centre must have a current SI as its Principal or chief sailing instructor, though a Yachtmaster Instructor may fulfil this role in a keelboat centre.

Rescue Boat

The Rescue Boat driver must hold R.Y.A Level II Powerboat award as a minimum standard.

Guidance for Leaders

This section refers to dinghy sailing only. For information on cruising and offshore sailing advice should be sought from the Outdoor Education Organiser.

Planning

Careful planning and preparation contribute greatly to the safe and enjoyable outcome of any activity. For general planning details, refer to Appendices.

Specifically the following should be considered:

- Prior knowledge seek prior knowledge of the location to be used. This should be first hand. Venues should be chosen for their appropriateness to the student's level of skill and the aims of the session
- Flexibility builds sufficient flexibility into planned programmes to allow for last minute modification or curtailment, to take account of changing conditions and unforeseen circumstances
- Know the group has prior knowledge of the group. In particular, their experience and their physical capabilities, including any relevant medical problems
- Weather obtain a local weather forecast and be aware of changing conditions. Refer to Appendix
- Notification notify relevant bodies as to your plans e.g., Coastguard, Harbourmaster, Landowners, Colleagues at base
- Tidal Conditions local knowledge should be sought and caution exercised in tidal areas, particularly in relation to sea state and tidal flow
- Other Constraints be aware and take account of any other constraints within which you will have to work e.g., time, daylight hours, wind strength and direction, overhead power cables etc.

Safety Procedures

It must be borne in mind that Highland sailing areas vary greatly in their nature and conditions and the above guidelines need to be carefully adapted to suit the conditions on the day and the chosen venue.

The defined sailing area must suit the circumstances and the fleet communication system must be clear to all concerned.

Many accidents happen through a failure to exercise control and it is implicit in assuming the role of person in charge that the responsibilities of the position are recognised and accepted.

Training

Participants should normally be able to swim 50 metres. In the case of non-swimmers, the instructor should satisfy himself or herself that the student has a reasonable level of water confidence when wearing a buoyancy aid.

In tidal situations capsize drill, should be well practised.

Training should be given progressively and should be conducted sensitively, with attention being paid to individual needs within the dictates of the activity. The experience should be enjoyable and safe and the target set should be achievable.

Equipment

The Dinghy

The craft should be sound and sea worthy, and with buoyancy sufficient to ensure flotation of waterlogged boat and of crew.

All craft except single handers should be capable of being reefed afloat.

Unless fitted with a dagger board, all craft must carry a paddle.

All craft except high performance dinghies must carry a bailer.

In tidal situations all craft which can reasonably carry an anchor and rope should do so.

The Safety Boat

There must be a safety boat present which must be powered and must be sufficient to meet the demands of multiple capsize, it should have enough equipment to render adequate assistance to a disabled craft.

The Rescue boat driver must hold as a minimum the R.Y.A. Level 2 Powerboat Certificate. In addition there must be a second competent person aboard.

It should also be recognised that overcrowding of the rescue boat may compromise effective operation.

It should carry or have direct access to:

- Anchor
- adequate ropes
- tow line
- First aid kit
- survival bag
- Flares or VHF radio

- Compass
- Whistle
- basic engine tools and spares
- oars and rowlocks or paddles

Consideration should be given to the selection of other items from the following list:

- VHF Radio transceiver
- Fog horn
- Large knife
- pliers or shackle key
- Spare buoyancy aid
- throw line
- Torch and batteries
- map or chart
- small stock of chandlery
- large bucket
- emergency food and hot drink

These requirements for a powered safety boat may not need to apply to dinghy cruising and certain junior sailing situations such as coaching on shallow enclosed ponds.

Equipment and Clothing for all Group Members

It is the responsibility of the Instructor to ensure that their students are adequately and appropriately clothed for the type of activity and the prevailing conditions. Instructors should take account of the following:

- All participants and instructors should wear appropriate sized buoyancy aids. Life jackets designed to BS3595 should be considered for extended dinghy cruising
- Clothing for sailing should be warm and be of a multi-layer system and have if necessary a wind and waterproof outer shell
- Wet suits are recommended in circumstances where frequent capsizes are likely. They should be designed so as not to restrain movement of the upper arms and shoulders e.g., long john type. NB few wet suits are windproof in their own right and should be worn in conjunction with a windproof

- It is important that sailors consider the importance of warm headwear and footwear
- Instructors may consider the use of helmets with beginners on 'Topper' dinghies.

Recommended Reading

R.Y.A. Sailing Manual	Bob Bond
Race Training Manual	Jim Saltenstall
Learn to Sail in a Weekend	John Driscoll
R.Y.A. G. Books: G4 - Dinghy Sailing logbook	
G7 - Dinghy Coaching Log Book	
G17 -Keel Boat Log Book	
G3 - Dinghy Sailing – Beginners	
G5 -Weather forecasts	
G12 - Dinghy Sailing – Advanced	
G14 – Dinghy Instructors Handbook	
G16 – Safety Boat Handbook	

13 – TOWARDS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC

It is not possible in this Chapter to produce a step by step guide to environmental good practice for each activity. Careful consideration should be given to the following general guidelines:

"Children have learned that nature possesses exquisite beauty, that she is fragile yet formidable, delicate yet omnipotent; bid all the same inevitably responds to the human touch. They discovered that their horizons expand with their senses that with feeling comes understanding and with time comes the vital realisation that there is both much to understand and much to lose. For a very small act of man can have devastating consequences."

Steve Van Matre - Institute for Earth Education 'Acclimatisation' 1971.

Over the last ten years there has been a considerable growth in the number of active participants and the variety of outdoor pursuits. As leisure time increases so too will the number of people active out of doors.

There has also been a heightening of awareness in society of the pressures that are being exerted on the environment. All those involved are increasingly being made aware of their responsibilities towards monitoring and protecting this most precious resource, planet earth.

Outdoor education largely takes place in the natural environment. In order to continue to enjoy outdoor pursuits in relatively unspoilt environments, leaders have a responsibility not only to participants but to the environment.

This responsibility goes beyond the promotion of skills and extends towards encouraging:

- A curiosity about, and an awareness of the environment
- A desire to care for the environment
- An empathy with the environment.

Leaders must endeavour through good practice, both personal and teaching, to establish within participants an acceptable Environmental Ethic. In this way establishing amongst outdoor enthusiasts an understanding that the land, water and air are not just a resource, but are vital, integral parts of life support systems.

Access

All outdoor activities rely on gaining access to a suitable environment. With ever increasing demands upon our natural environment there are potential and increasing conflicts of interests over the use of natural resources.

Much of Scotland's countryside including mountains, moorlands and rivers are in private ownership in the form of large estates. Estates of all sizes rely on a range of economic activity for their continued existence and maintenance. It is often with such commercial and sporting interests that conflict over access for other outdoor pursuits occurs.

Effective and practical resolution of this problem is an issue for the education service. Access to the outdoors is essential if we are to teach our children that the environment in its wild and natural state is part of our heritage that has to be respected and preserved.

The right to roam is asserted by many as fundamental to Scottish culture. Whatever the degree that this may apply to an individual, the rights and responsibilities of a led party are somewhat different. Parties have a more intrusive effect on both the environment and on other land users together with a greater potential impact upon any economic activity.

It is therefore essential that efforts are made to make proper arrangements with land managers, and that the needs of the environment and the rights of other land users are respected. In most cases land managers welcome such co-operative approaches.

Effective communication provides the basis for mutual respect and understanding, which in turn allows all parties to appreciate the needs and rights of each other.

The legal position is that private landowners have a common law right to remove unauthorised persons from their land using such force as is reasonably necessary. However, the land owner owes a duty of care to the unauthorised person, both at common law and under the occupiers liability legislation. Unauthorised entry onto private land in itself is not a wrong for which damages may be sought.

Special consideration must be given to avoiding over-use of particular sites, partially out of respect for other land users but primarily to avoid environmental damage. The potential for environmental damage should be a key consideration in the planning of all outdoor events.

Areas of significant environmental sensitivity or particular natural beauty are given designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) or National Nature Reserves. It is possible that the administering body for such areas will impose certain restrictions on their access and use.

Weather

Weather conditions can dramatically influence the success or failure of any expedition on land or water. Seasonal changes including temperature, wind strength or the amount of rain, snow or cloud cover can rapidly alter the nature of a locality.

Many people who live in cities and towns never experience the full impact of the weather and an expedition into the wilderness or out to sea may be their first experience of prolonged exposure to adverse weather.

With increasing altitude, the weather is always more extreme and its impact greater. In these circumstances, winds are stronger, temperatures lower and rainfall higher and a group's safety may depend on how well equipped they are to cope with these conditions.

The ability to recognise the signs of impending change in the weather is a valuable asset acquired through training and experience. The dangers associated with rapid changes in the weather which often bring conditions of extreme cold should not be underestimated and it is important that leaders take every opportunity to extend their knowledge of weather and weather forecasting.

The weather forecast should be obtained beforehand by means of television, radio, newspaper, telephone weather forecast, local weather centres and experienced local advice.

In the winter months many weather forecasts also contain information on avalanche conditions provided by the Scottish Avalanche Information Service.

Reference should be made to Appendix Useful Telephone Numbers, Appendix The Beaufort Wind Scale and Appendix European Avalanche Scale.

Well Being

A Duty of Care

Outdoor Education has great potential to contribute to the personal and social development of all involved. Failure to realise this potential would be regrettable. It is therefore important to take into account the wide range of aspects that must be considered in order to meet the duty of care that is owed to all participants.

Providing proper care for participants must be a major influence on the initial thinking of every event. Only in this way will the administrative links and systems considered in Management and Responsibility for Outdoor Education be created to effectively manage all aspects of care.

Leaders of groups out of doors are responsible for the safe conduct of activities. Highland Council will be vicariously liable for employees acting in the course of their duties. Therefore, leaders must take reasonable care to avoid dangerous situations having regard to age, knowledge, experience, health and physical ability of participants.

Legally speaking "foreseeability" is the test. Therefore, if leaders act reasonably given their expertise in the activity no liability should befall them or the Authority for any accidents or damage which might occur.

Whilst stressing the responsibilities of staff in providing this care the contributions and responsibilities of participants should not be ignored. A responsible approach to the care of oneself and others is required. The development of this in all participants is an integral part of the learning process.

A number of aspects within the consideration of care are examined briefly in the following sections.

Hypothermia (Exposure and Water-Immersion)

In normal conditions, the body maintains a balance between the heat generated by movement and other processes and the heat lost from its surface to ensure that the core temperature remains virtually constant at approximately 37 degrees C. When the loss of heat exceeds the body's ability to generate replacement heat then the core temperature will fall.

Hypothermia occurs when the core temperature is significantly lowered. In the outdoors this may be by either progressive heat loss by exposure to the elements or more rapidly by immersion in cold water.

Leaders of educational parties out of doors must take account of the potential for individuals to become hypothermic. This can happen in almost all situations and leaders should be aware of warnings and of how to respond.

Inadequate planning is "the most common cause of hypothermia".

Prevention is infinitely preferable to treatment and depends on diligent care by staff and attention to all the aspects considered below.

Mild and Profound Hypothermia

In the early stages of heat loss the condition is regarded as Mild Hypothermia and if recognised and promptly dealt with may generally be treated within the resources of the party.

If however heat loss progresses and the core temperature continues to fall then Profound Hypothermia ensues. The condition of the individual is then considerably more serious requiring considerable care in evacuation and re-warming in hospital.

The transition between these two states occurs at around 32 degrees C, and is most easily distinguished by the loss of the shivering reflex, i.e., a person who is cold but above this temperature will shiver whereas someone below this temperature will have stopped shivering (whilst getting colder).

Causes of Hypothermia

Hypothermia is caused by environmental conditions which cause heat to be lost from the body. This loss of body heat can occur rapidly for example following immersion in cold water. It can equally occur more slowly during exposure to "adverse" climatic conditions, including low air temperature, wind and rain or snow. In this respect the combination of cold + wind + wet is particularly dangerous.

In all cases there are other factors which predispose the individual or party to hypothermia, including:

- Fatigue and anxiety
- Illness or injury
- Lack of, or inappropriate food
- Inadequate clothing or equipment

Ultimately, the energy available to the body comes from food. It is therefore important to ensure that all members of a group have an adequate diet both immediately before and during the expedition or activity.

Symptoms of Hypothermia

The symptoms of developing hypothermia can vary considerably, but the following are typical indications:

- physical lethargy
- lack of enthusiasm
- slowing pace

- not responding to directions
- slow thinking
- failure to respond to and understand questions
- an inability to perform familiar tasks
- uncharacteristic behaviour
- doing quite unreasonable things
- becoming aggressive
- exhibiting sudden outbursts of energy
- loss of faculties
- speech may be slurred
- vision disturbed
- co-ordination may fail causing stumbling and falling
- fits of shivering
- loss of consciousness

Treatment of Hypothermia

Mild Hypothermia

In all cases the essential priority is to prevent any further heat loss from the body, recognising the need to consider the whole party as well as the individual who has succumbed.

When mild hypothermia is recognised at a sufficiently early stage it should be prevented from developing into profound hypothermia by immediate action to provide shelter, extra clothing, food and rest. From the day's plan the easiest return to base will be identified and executed.

Profound Hypothermia

If profound hypothermia is suspected the individual must be treated with great care. Evacuation is generally beyond the resources of the party, re-warming will normally only be undertaken at fully equipped hospitals.

The person should be insulated as well as possible and shelter created around them. They should not be moved, even after apparent recovery. The person must be kept at rest until a rescue operation can be organised.

If the person is conscious, easily digestible food and warm drinks may be given.

Unconscious casualties should be placed in the "recovery position" with the head slightly lower than the body and the airway maintained. In this respect someone other than fully conscious must be classed as not conscious i.e. unconscious and placed in the recovery position.

External or "artificial" warming (hot water bottles, alcohol etc.) should not be attempted.

While awaiting evacuation "treatment" should be extended to the whole party to prevent further casualties.

Prevention of Hypothermia

Before setting out ensure that:

- The event is properly planned in all aspects including obtaining the weather forecast
- The proposed activity is within the capabilities of all members of the party
- All members have eaten suitably prior to the activity and have adequate food for the day, and spare food when advised
- The clothing of the party is appropriate, particularly in terms of providing warmth and being wind and waterproof
- Equipment to deal with the unexpected and spare clothing is carried or readily available

During the activity the leader should ensure that clothing is used correctly. In fine weather, wind and waterproof garments should be carried rather than worn. On halting, sufficient warm clothing should be put on to conserve heat.

"Snack breaks" should be frequent to maintain energy levels.

A careful watch should be kept for the early signs of hypothermia. In potentially dangerous conditions, the "buddy" system should be used in which students are paired off. It is important in this case that the "buddy" should be aware of early indications of the onset of hypothermia.

Travel

Travel to venues to undertake activities often poses a far greater risk to participants than the activity itself. Careful consideration needs to be given to the following:

- If using a Highland Council minibus, the regulations and the conditions of use must be followed
- A check on the vehicle should be made before departure (lights, brakes, indicators, oil, fuel, window wash, mirror position etc.)

- If towing a trailer, a check should be made on the hitch system, the braking system if fitted and lights. The load carried on or in the trailer must be securely tied down
- For local events where a full days activity is planned consideration should be given to taking a relief driver particularly when the driver is also the leader or instructor
- If undertaking a long journey, plan the route carefully and ensure plenty of time is set aside for rest stops. Ensure there is a relief driver within the party
- Particular care needs to be taken when driving in winter conditions. It may be necessary to consider carrying a shovel, sleeping bag or bivvy-bag, spare clothing including socks, gloves/mitts and hat, emergency food, torch, jump leads and a tow rope.

Personal Rights and Discipline

The personal rights of individual party members must be maintained. Young people should not be exposed to the risk of abuse or harassment by adults or peers.

Good discipline, consistent with personal rights, is essential to the safe and successful outcome of any venture.

Codes of conduct must be clearly established and understood by all.

Health

Leaders of groups out of doors must be aware of the health status of group members. Consent forms (parental or adult) must be provided for sharing of health information in an effective and confidential manner. A pro forma is given in Appendix III. The relevance or otherwise of such information, in relation to the planned activity, must be clearly established well in advance of the activity.

Where a participant requires ongoing medication, arrangements for administration and storage of the medication must be clearly understood.

Transmittable Diseases

There is wide concern over transmittable diseases, particularly those such as H.I.V. and Hepatitis B.

It is standard practice for emergency services to use personal protection i.e., gloves and resuscitation masks. Such items should be made available to staff, who should be encouraged to use them.

Tetanus immunisation will normally be current for all children (routine inoculation pre-school and a booster dose at around 14 years of age).

Staff and other adults may wish to consider maintaining their immunisation with boosters at the recommended ten year intervals.

Information on Weil's Disease and Lyme's Disease is included as Appendix VII.

Fitness and Training

Clearly all participants should have an appropriate level of fitness for the planned activity. Conversely, an activity should not be planned that exceeds the fitness of the participants.

Some events will require elements of training and physical preparation in order that they take place successfully and safely.

Staff planning and leading activities must give consideration to the stage of physical development of the participants, particularly in relation to fitness and stamina levels. Adolescents may be very "fit" but typically will not have the physical reserves of a mature person for prolonged activity in a harsh environment.

Diet

Proper diet both before and during outdoor activities will, in many cases be essential to ensure a safe and successful outcome.

Considerations of diet and its importance will vary with the nature and duration of the planned activity, energy being the prime concern for day excursions with a balance of nutrients becoming of concern on longer ventures.

Leaders should have an understanding of nutrition, in relation to the activity with which they are involved. The role of the various forms of nutrient should be understood, as should the typical daily cycle of energy use and necessary replenishment.

Clothing

The clothing worn and carried by participants and staff must be suitable both for the activity and for the environment in which it is carried out. At the planning stage of the proposed activity, staff should check the clothing to be used whether supplied by the participant or by the establishment.

First Aid

The ability to respond effectively to emergencies is essential. The need for staff to be trained in first aid is considered in Training of Staff.

Staff should be clear in recognising the distinction between first aid and ongoing care.

Exposure to Sunlight

Concerns have arisen in recent years over the possible dangers from exposure to sunlight. Consideration should be given to protecting participants by ensuring that appropriate clothing is worn. The use of barrier creams is to be encouraged, as is the wearing of eye protection.

Psychological and Emotional Safety

The psychological and emotional safety of participants is of equal importance to their physical safety.

In certain well controlled circumstances an appropriate amount of stress or pressure may enrich the learning process. Likewise in excess, disproportionate damage can be caused. This will negate the value of all that might otherwise be achieved.

Reviewing after the event to build-on and complete the learning process is an important part of the out of doors educational experience.

Well Being of the Environment

Although separately referred to elsewhere particularly in Towards an Environmental Ethic, it must be remembered that part of the outdoor learning process is in learning to take care of the environment.

Indirect Supervision

Indirectly supervised events in any activity must be in situations or on types of terrain previously encountered by participants in a supervised session where the skills to undertake these tasks have been demonstrated.

Clear procedures must be established for the duration of the activity. The range of student activity must be clear, as must the boundaries of the activity site.

Arrangements for ongoing contact between staff and participants must be made together with proper contingency plans. Individuals must clearly understand these arrangements.

The form and level of staff support must be carefully considered, in order that the identified educational aims can be accomplished without compromising safety. Unobtrusive observation of participants at crucial stages of the activity may be essential in many cases to complement planned contact. Where a foreseeable potential error by participants exists the staff must be in a position to observe and if necessary intervene.

Group Size

The size of working unit will largely depend on the nature of the activity and the age and ability of the participants. In certain closely controlled forms of activities such as orienteering, participants may commonly work in pairs or alone.

Typically a larger working unit of about 4 participants is to be preferred, particularly in open terrain. Much larger groups mitigate against the educational advantages of such activities.

It would be unreasonable for a member of staff to indirectly supervise more participants than they would otherwise supervise in a more conventional manner.

Staff Expertise

Indirectly supervising activity out of doors effectively and safely is not an easy task. The skills and experience required of staff are often greater than those required to directly teach or supervise the activity concerned. In some cases a higher level of qualifying award may be appropriate as the training for basic awards rarely includes indirect supervision of such activities.

Indirectly supervised outdoor activities have a clear and valid role. When used well and at the correct stage of a participant's development it can considerably enhance the learning potential of other outdoor activities. This is of course provided staff are confidently in control of the outcome of the activity, both in terms of educational aims and of safe practice.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is promoted and actively encouraged by the Council. It can provide young people with opportunities for personal development and growth that are widely recognised and highly valued.

Fundamental to the scheme is its voluntary nature. Participants are to be strongly encouraged, but must participate of their own volition and be enthusiastic to commit their time and energies positively.

Groups operating the scheme through the Council as the Operating Authority will be bound by the Council's policies as contained within this document.

The underlying educational philosophy of the scheme and especially of the expedition experience is centred on student learning. Full learning potential of the experience is reached only if the student's training is such that those participating are able to be in full control of all aspects of the expedition from the initial planning onwards.

The expedition component of the scheme, which is an integral part of each level of award, is often the most remembered aspect of the scheme and certainly the best known.

All too often the emphasis is placed so heavily on the final expedition that preparation is neglected to the extent that the learning value is reduced or in some cases becomes a negative learning experience.

The importance of enabling young people to prepare for, and develop all the necessary skills and experience for the final expedition cannot be over-emphasised.

Young people must have the opportunity to prepare themselves technically, mentally and physically in order to fully benefit from participating in their expedition.

Staff assisting young people in preparing for expeditions and providing training should possess the necessary competences themselves, having experience in expeditioning and in the component skills.

The paragraphs overleaf refer to expeditions on foot and may well also apply in other circumstances in addition to other requirements.

The terrain used for Bronze and Silver Expeditions in the Highland Council area is usually in remote areas. All supervisors are therefore required to hold Highland Council's [Walking and Camping Accreditation](#), or an appropriate National Governing Body Award.

The terrain that meets the requirements of the Gold Award Expedition will require supervising staff to possess the [Mountain Leader \(Summer\) Award](#).

Staff should also note that the involvement or presence of an assessor does not remove any of the responsibilities of the supervisor.

He/she still retains full responsibility for the safe conduct of the expedition (regardless of the directness or indirectness of the supervision). Reference should be made to the previous section on Indirect Supervision.

Physical Recreation Section

A number of outdoor sports or activities may be used in the Skills section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and this is to be encouraged.

Activity included in this way will require to be taught systematically, progressing to a level of proficiency appropriate to the young people involved.

It should be recognised that this may exceed the training-based competency of staff with basic qualifying awards such as Highland Council Accreditation.

14 - APPENDICES

Outdoor Education Planning Checklist

1 At the time of initial approval from Head of Establishment

- Educational and other objectives clarified and agreed
- Accreditation of staff checked and staff roles provisionally agreed
- Nature of administrative and financial arrangements agreed

2 Initial Preparation

- Outline plan, venue, dates, and special consideration
- Make provisional arrangements - accommodation, equipment, and transport
- Establish financial arrangements incl. Insurance
- Prepare information to participants/parents

3 Later Preparation

- Participants established and parental consent/consent forms returned
- Individual and group needs identified. Detail plan finalised- incl. all contingencies - and communication back to base
- Plans within Safety Policy
- Confirm all resource arrangements - travel, accommodation, equipment etc.
- Prepare teaching material specific to event
- Clarify staff roles and interim tasks
- Ongoing briefing to participants

4 Final Preparation

- Final approval from head of establishment
- All admin and financial arrangements finalised - incl. contingency arrangements and role of "Establishment Co-ordinator" including contact arrangements confirmed

- Briefing to staff and participants
- Check on resources and equipment - party and individual
- Any new medical, dietary, another special needs

5 At the Start of the Event

- Weather and other related forecasts
- Review transport arrangements
- "Presence" of all participating - grouping and supervision arrangements
- Final equipment check Contingency plans understood by all

6 After the Event

- All parties returned - any incidents followed through
- Achievement of planned learning outcomes ascertained
- Resources returned, repaired, renewed
- Practical arrangements reviewed
- Reports (if any) prepared

Informing Parents

The importance of providing parents at an early date with full and explicit information about proposed outdoor activities must be clearly recognised. Parents will, in the final stages, decide whether their sons or daughters should participate and must have the essential information on which they can make a value-judgement. Teachers and leaders authorised to be in charge of an outdoor activity must send a communication as shown below to parents. This should contain information relating to the proposed activity and should be issued in advance of the time when the activity will take place.

Specimen Information Sheet

1. Name and designation of official authorising the activity
2. Name of organisation promoting the activity (School/Community Education etc.)
3. Name(s) and designation(s) of person(s) responsible for the planning and conduct of the activity
 - a. Relevant technical qualification(s) and experience of instructor(s)/leader(s)

- b. Name(s) and qualification(s) of any other adult accompanying the group
4. Number in group: Males Females
5. Age range of group
6. Detailed statement on proposed activity including location, duration and demand likely to be made on participants
7. Preparatory training undertaken or completed and level of ability which participant must possess before they are permitted to take part
8. Details of proposed programme including:
 - a. Transport (type, pick-up and dispersal points and timings)
 - b. Accommodation (location, description, telephone number)
 - c. Meals/food arrangements
 - d. Supervision
9. Clothing to be worn or carried
10. Equipment to be provided
11. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons designated as contacts between parents and party
12. Procedures to be followed in an emergency by parents, leaders or contact persons
13. Statement of insurance-cover provided for members of the group by the Council and/or School/Centre/Organisation
14. Medical services provided or available to the party during the course of the activity
15. Advice that the Safety in Outdoor Education report is freely available for inspection at the school/centre/college
16. Any other relevant information.

Note:

It is essential that the attention of parents be directed to the need for retaining all relevant information so that, in the event of an emergency, accurate information is readily available.

Highland Council Outdoor Education Parental Consent Form

1.	Name of Pupil/Student		Age	
2.	Home Address			
3.	Telephone Number(s) where Parent/Guardian may be contacted:-			
	Home:		Work:	
	Other (e.g. Neighbour/Friend)			
4.	In the event of an emergency, it is important that the person in charge of the group has the necessary information about any medical condition which could affect the treatment of your child. All information requested will be treated in strict confidence, and will not necessarily prejudice the inclusion of your child in the activity. It is in the interests of your child that full and accurate information be given.			
	(a)	Recent surgery for	Date	
	(b)	Any known allergy to medicine (e.g. penicillin)		
	(c)	Is your child undergoing treatment by a doctor?	YES/NO?	
	If so, please give details			
	(d)	Any medical condition which a doctor should know before carrying out treatment (e.g. Asthma).		
	(e)	Please state any restrictions you wish to place on emergency medical treatment		
	(f)	Please give details of any special diets e.g. vegetarian/diabetic/no specific "E" numbers etc		
	(g)	Any additional information e.g. bedwetting difficulties		

5.	Name of Family Doctor		
	Address		Tel No.
6.	For Water-based activities only:		
	I certify that my child/ward can swim 50 metres		
	Signature		Date
7.	Insurance Information		
	<p>Highland Council do not provide cover for personal accidents, illness, loss or damage incurred by participants. Further, the Council's Third Party liability policy will not necessarily indemnify participants in the event of a Third Party being injured solely due to the negligence of the participants. The Council's Third Party liability policy, will however meet claims for Third Parties arising from the negligence of the Council or its employees.</p> <p>Participants wishing to obtain cover for personal accident and Third Party liability are advised to contact an insurance company or broker.</p>		
8.	DECLARATION		
	<p>I have read the information issued concerning the Course and the statement of insurance. I understand the nature of the activity/activities to be undertaken and consider my child/ward fit to take part. He/she does not suffer from any medical condition not stated above. I hereby consent to the submission of the above-named to emergency medical or surgical treatment including the administration where necessary, of a local, general, or any other anaesthetic.</p>		
	Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)		Parent/Guardian
	Signature		Date

The Beaufort Wind Scale

Force	Wind Speed	Sea Conditions	Inland Conditions
0	Under 1	CALM No ripples on surface. Any swell is not caused by the wind	LIGHT Smoke rises vertically.
1	1 – 3	LIGHT AIR Patches of ripples on the surface.	LIGHT Smoke drifts. Stirring of flags.
2	4 – 6	LIGHT BREEZE Surface covered by ripples and waves up to 0.3 metre.	LIGHT Wind can be felt on face, rustles leaves and moves flags.
3	7 – 10	GENTLE BREEZE Small waves about 1 metre high and occasional white horses.	GENTLE Continuous movement of leaves, twigs and flags.
4	11 – 16	MODERATE BREEZE Waves increase to 1-2 metres and white horses are common.	MODERATE Dust and papers blown about. Smaller branches swayed.
5	17 – 21	FRESH BREEZE Crested waves of about 2 metres. Spray blown from crests.	FRESH Small trees sway about. Waves form on inland waters with crests.
6	22 – 27	STRONG BREEZE Waves of 2-4 metres with spray streaks and crests foaming.	STRONG Large branches swayed.
7	28 – 33	MODERATE GALE White foaming crests	STRONG Large trees swayed.

		on waves of 4-5 metres, broken away in gusts.	Difficulty in walking against wind.
8	34 – 40	FRESH GALE Sea rough and disturbed waves of 6-8 metres with “boiling” patches.	GALE Branches snapped off, small trees blown down. Extreme difficulty in walking against wind.
9	41 – 47	STRONG GALE Sea covered in white foam, waves 8-9 metres. Visibility reduced by spray.	GALE Chimneys and slates blown down.
10	48 – 55	WHOLE GALE 9-12 metre waves. Visibility badly affected.	WHOLE GALE Large trees uprooted. Buildings damaged or blown down.
11	56 – 63	STORM Air full of spray. Large vessels may be damaged by waves of 14 metres.	WHOLE GALE Large trees uprooted. Buildings damaged or blown down.
12	Greater than 64	HURRICANE Waves over 14 metres will damage large ships and may cause small craft to founder.	WHOLE GALE Large trees uprooted. Buildings damaged or blown down.

Note:

1 knot = 0.514 metres per second or 1.85 kilometres per hour

1 foot = 0.305 of a metre

European Avalanche Risk Scale

	Degree of Risk	Snowpack Stability	Avalanche Probability	Effects on Traffic lines and Residential areas. Recommendations	Effect on off-piste skiers. Recommendations
1	Low	The snowpack is generally well bonded and stable	Likely to be triggered off by high additional loads** on a very few steep extreme slopes. Only small spontaneous avalanches (slushes) possible.	No risk of avalanches.	Virtually no restrictions for back-country and downhill skiing.
2	Moderate	The snowpack is moderately well bonded on some* steep slopes, otherwise generally well bonded.	Likely to be triggered off by high additional loads**, mainly on the steep slopes indicated. Large spontaneous avalanches not expected.	Virtually no risk of spontaneous avalanches.	Often good conditions. Routes should be selected with care, especially on steep slope in the direction and altitude indicated.
3	Considerable	The snowpack is moderately to poorly bonded on many* steep slopes.	Likely to be triggered off by low additional loads** mainly on the steep slopes indicated. In some cases, mostly medium-sized and occasionally large spontaneous avalanches possible.	Traffic lines and individual buildings in risk areas at risk in exceptional cases. Precautionary steps should be taken when undertaking safety measures in these areas.	Back-country and downhill skiing should only be carried out by experienced people with good avalanche assessment abilities. Steep slopes in the directions and altitudes indicated should be avoided
	Degree of Risk	Snowpack Stability	Avalanche Probability	Effects on Traffic lines and Residential areas. Recommendations	Effect on off-piste skiers. Recommendations

4	High	The snowpack is poorly bonded in most* places.	Likely to be triggered off even by low additional loads* on most steep slopes. In some cases, many medium-sized and also large spontaneous avalanches expected.	This type of avalanche is usually spread over a wide area. Traffic lines and transport facilities in risk areas should occasionally be closed.	Back-country-skiing and downhill skiing should be restricted to moderately steep slopes; the foot of the slope may also be at risk.
5	Very High	The snowpack is generally poorly bonded and largely unstable.	Numerous large spontaneous avalanches expected, also in moderately steep terrain.	Extensive measures (closing facilities, evacuation) necessary.	No back-country and downhill skiing to be undertaken.

Explanation:

* Generally described in more detail in the avalanche situation report (e.g. altitude, direction, type of terrain etc.).

** Additional load: High : e.g. group skiers, piste vehicle, avalanche detonation – direction in which slope falls.

Low : e.g. skier, walker – spontaneous: without human assistance.

Steep slope: slopes with an incline of more than about 30.

Steep extreme slopes: particularly unfavourable in terms of the incline, terrain, proximity to ridge, roughness of ground.

Paddlesport River Gradings

GRADE I	GRADE II	GRADE III	GRADE IV	GRADE V	GRADE VI
Not Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult	Limit of Practicability
Passage clear	Clear line easy to follow.	Route easily recognisable but usually requires some manoeuvring	Route not easily recognised. Usually requires inspection.	Complex route requiring high level of technical skill. Inspection essential.	Cannot be attempted without high degree of risk
Small rapids. Regular stream. Regular small waves.	Medium rapids. Irregular stream. Irregular waves. Small stoppers, and pressure areas*.	Larger rapids. High irregular waves. Stoppers, sharp eddies, whirlpool and pressure areas*.	Heavy technical rapids. Large "holding" stoppers, whirlpools and pressure.	Extreme rapids. Large "holding" stoppers, whirlpools and pressure areas. Difficulty often sustained over considerable distance.	Usually only navigable at particular water levels.
Few obstructions or hazards.	Simple obstructions in stream. Small drops.	Isolated boulders. Drops and numerous obstructions in stream.	Large boulders obstructing stream. Often under cut and undertows. Significant "falls"	Narrow constricted passages. Steep gradients with falls. Difficult access and landing.	

* "Pressure areas" refer to water piling up against rock or other obstacle (sometimes called cushions)

NB: No attempt has been made to classify manmade weirs. Weirs should be treated with the greatest respect and are usually either easily navigable or extremely dangerous.

Weil's disease and Lyme's disease

Weil's disease

What is Weil's disease?

Weil's disease (leptospirosis) is a bacterial infection carried in rats' urine which contaminates water and banks of canals, ponds, rivers and ditches. The risk of infection is especially high in slow moving rivers or stagnant water.

The disease is spread to humans when broken skin or mucous membranes come into contact with water or mud contaminated by rat urine.

People at Risk

The people most at risk are those exposed to contaminated water or river banks due to occupation or leisure interests. These include practical conservation projects on slow moving water and habitat surveys on river banks as well as canoeing, sailing, water skiing and other water sports.

How serious is it?

The disease is serious and needs hospital treatment. The illness can quickly lead to kidney or liver failure which could be fatal. Recent statistics show that although Weil's disease is very rare, one infected person in nineteen will die.

What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms start 3 to 19 days after exposure to the contaminated water. The early symptoms are similar to "flu" with aching joints, raised temperature and muscle pains, especially in calf muscles. If these symptoms occur, contact your doctor immediately, advising him or her of your possible exposure to the Weil's Disease bacteria. Early diagnosis and treatment is essential for recover from the illness.

How to Avoid Infection

DO	DON'T
Cover with waterproof plasters or gloves all scratches, cuts, sores and skin affected by eczema etc.	Put wet fishing line, rope or other objects in your mouth.

DO	DON'T
Wash your hands before you eat. Always wash or shower after any water sports or conservation work.	Go in or near water without wearing footwear.
Avoid capsizing in canoes etc but if necessary use a mask or nose clip. Always wash or shower afterwards.	Pick up or touch dead animals, especially rats, without wearing gloves.
See your doctor if you feel unwell following involvement in water sports or conservation work.	Leave food bait or ground bait on river banks. Leave take your rubbish home.

Lyme's disease

What is Lyme's Disease?

Lyme's Disease is caused by infection from a sheep tick which carries the bacillus borrelia burgdorfen. Only a small proportion of ticks actually carry the disease.

People at Risk

The people most at risk are those who spend time in the vicinity of sheep and deer. These include hillwalkers, farm and forestry workers.

How Serious is it?

It is a serious illness and left untreated people with the infection are at risk of late complications.

What are the Symptoms?

The disease progresses through three stages. The first stage – usually within a month of infection – produces a bullseye-shaped rash often accompanied by joint pains and flu-like symptoms. The second and third stages can produce a wide range of symptoms including arthritis, serious neurological disorders, loss of memory, heart problems, meningitis and ultimately serious psychiatric disorders.

Lyme's disease can be difficult to detect both because it imitates other illnesses and because the course it takes may involve any or none of the three stages which may also overlap.

How to Avoid Infection

Conduct a daily body examination if operating in areas where there is a possibility that ticks exist.

Sources of Weather Information

There is a wide range of weather forecast sources both for general weather conditions and for mountain conditions in specific areas of the country.

General Weather Forecasts

Television

- BBC1 (Scotland) at 6:55pm
- Ceefax BBC1 page 402.

Radio

- Radio 4 at 5:55pm
- Radio Scotland forecast at 6:55pm.

Newspapers

- Herald
- Scotsman
- Press and Journal

Telephone

- Weathercall (7 day general forecast)
- 09068 232 794 (East)
- 09068 232 795 (West)

Fax

- Metfax (5 day forecast for Scotland)
- 09060 100 418

MOUNTAIN WEATHER FORECASTS

Television

- BBC1 Scotland at 6:55pm Friday evenings.

Radio

- Radio Scotland "Outdoor Conditions" at 6:55pm.

Telephone

- Mountain area forecasts
 - 09068 500 441 (West)
 - 09068 500 442 (East)
- Ski Reports
- 0891 654 654

Fax

- Metfax Mountain
 - 09060 100 405 (West)
 - 09060 100 406 (East)

Avalanche Information Service

Telephone

- Freephone 0800 0960 007

Internet

- [Avalanche Information Service](#)

Marine Weather Forecasts

Telephone

- 09068 110 010 (451) (East)
- 09068 110 010 (464) (West)