

Guidance for developers of activity safety guidelines

Activity Safety Guideline (ASG) development should be guided by the ASG principles as outlined in the ASG description document.

Ideally all ASGs will have a similar look, feel and overall structure of contents. Where an activity has existing guidance material the need for change in its format will be assessed. Change should be focused on achieving a useable guideline that covers all the necessary safety information and enables clear differentiation between safety recommendations and any other guidance offered.

Care should be taken with the style and content of the guidelines to ensure they encourage reflective judgement. The guidelines are not a substitute for experience.

The guidelines are aimed at assisting operators to develop the activity specific aspects within their safety management system — particularly the standard operating procedures. Developing the generic aspects is addressed in the guidance on the SupportAdventure website.

The guidelines are to provide recommendations on practicable steps for managing safety requirements, particularly managing significant hazards and preventing serious harm and death.

Information should be provided in a way that is easy for operators to interpret and use.

The guidelines are focused on recommendations around the 'norm' rather than trying to make space for the 'exception'. A particular operation may meet practicable steps for safety requirements in ways other than those offered by the guideline. This is acceptable due to the varied nature of activity provision.

Level of information/guidance

The guidelines are not designed to train operators in the specifics of the activity. It is assumed that operators have, or have access to someone with, a sound understanding of the adventure activity they provide. This understanding will be needed to apply the ASG guidance to a particular operational environment.

Generally this means that guidance should be on the 'what' rather than 'how'. For example:

The incorrect level of guidance:

Where the swim/wade exit point is difficult and exiting at that point is integral to safety, the guide/instructor should be clipped to a support line to enable them to assist the client's exit, and should be at least 2 meters upstream from any significant hazards.

The level of guidance required:

Where the swim/wade exit point is difficult and exiting at that point is integral to safety it should be directly managed by a guide/instructor.

The use of examples should be indicative only; they should not attempt to give a definitive set of options.

Examples of 'how' may be used when it is felt there is a need to provide clarification on the intention of a particular recommendation. For example it may be useful to clarify that a communication system could be walking to a nearby phone, particularly if you feel that operators would otherwise think they needed to carry a satellite phone even though there was an easily accessible farm house with a land line.

Examples of 'how' may also be used if the working group feel that extra guidance is required to assist with safety on a particular topic.

Guidance on structural topics

Many activities involve structural and design aspects to managing safety. Guidance on these topics should be informed by suitable professionals, such as engineers or builders. Where guidance is easily available and within the budget of this project it will be supplied in the ASG. Where this is not the case operators will be directed to seek suitable professional advice.

Staff competence section

Attendance based courses (those that do not include assessment) will not be listed as a qualification.

ASG content will be guided by activity technical experts as to suitable qualifications, as long as cost is not the sole differentiating factor.

Where there is a qualification that is commonly used and supported by the activity group this will be stated in the guideline, alongside its scope. Where there is more than one, a list will be provided.

If a national activity specific qualification exists but is not viewed by the technical experts as commonly used or supported, it will not be recommended in the ASG. This situation will be dealt with on a case by case basis and will likely need justification.

Providers of nationally recognised but not recommended activity specific qualifications will be listed, as will links to their websites.

Where there is no qualification that is commonly used and supported by the activity group, safety related competence outcomes will be listed for guide/instructor roles.

Where there is a role for which the activity group recommends a qualification should be used this will be included on a case by case basis. For example, when guiding/instructing in non-pre-rigged caves that require single rope techniques guides/instructors are recommended to hold NZOIA Cave 2 or an equivalent qualification.

International qualifications will be considered on a case by case basis – the main issue to be aware of is the possibility of a lack of robust assessment and moderation systems. Expert advice will be sought.

Where there is a new national activity specific qualification (i.e. a qualification that has yet to have time to establish a track record with industry), it will be mentioned in the ASG as a new qualification alongside a link to the provider's website.