

Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures

Adventure Water Activities

Standard Operating Procedures: Adventure Water Activities

Definition and Scope of Activities

The activities involved are undertaken on foot and can involve the traverse of sea cliffs, journeying up and down gorges or crossing water obstacles by swimming or wading.

Locations are hill or coastal based and accessed/egressed on foot or marine craft from designated locations. The activities can involve scrambling, climbing, wading, swimming, abseiling, jumping or crossing obstacles by the use of ropes.

The major activities covered within this section are as follows:

- Canyoning
- Coasteering
- Gorge walking
- Burn walking
- Rock pooling

Precautions to Minimise Hazards

It is essential that the Standard Operating Procedures are followed and that personnel leading the Group fully brief the group to pay attention to hazard warning information, remain in control of the activity and follow accredited tuition and activity progression.

The specific hazards above are not exhaustive and additional hazards or combinations may arise during the course of an activity necessitating ongoing attention to minimise or control the risk(s) to a manageable level.

Seasonal Constraints

The activities can take place all year. The water / air temperature will have an impact on the activity session and forms part of the dynamic risk assessment prior to and during the activity.

Local Constraints

Access to inland sites may be subject to restrictions due to commercial, military restrictions or disease prohibition.

Tuition Ratios

Coasteering and Canyon

- 1 lead guide to 8 participants
- 1 lead guide and an assistant guide to 12 participants

Non Technical Gorge / Burn Walk

- 1 lead guide to 10 participants

Leader Qualification

Activity	Minimum Leading Qualification	National Governing Body
All	First Aid Accreditation (minimum 2 day)	Accredited first aid agencies
Plus		
Gorge Walking / Canyoning	In-House instructor Competency including SRT (or similar award)	Dundee City Council / Leisure & Culture Dundee
Coasteering	In-House Lead guide Competency – Guide registered with the NCC In-House assistant guide	Dundee City Council / Leisure & Culture Dundee and National Coasteering Charter NCC
Burn Walks	Site induction and hold relevant leadership awards	Dundee City Council / Leisure & Culture Dundee

The National Governing Bodies contact data relevant to this section are as follows:

- National Coasteering Charter www.nationalcoasteeringcharter.com
- Scottish Canoe Association – www.canoescotland.org.uk
- Mountain Leader Training Scotland – www.mltuk.org
- British Rock and Water Association
- Surf Life Saving UK

Equipment - Participants

Gorge/ Coast/ Body Board

- Wetsuit
- Boots
- Helmet
- Buoyancy Aid

Burnwalk

- Legs covered
- Boots
- Helmet

Equipment – Group Safety

The group must have access to: -

- A First Aid Kit
- Shelter (to be carried with group if not in close proximity to a shelter)

In addition, depending on the activity, the Group may require on activity access to:

- Watch
- OS map / Topo for gorge / coast environment (1:50000 scale) / compass
- GPS
- VHF radio
- Mobile phone
- Hot drink or means of making one
- Emergency rations
- Throw line
- Knife
- 2 metre tape sling and HMS Karabiner
- Snorkel / mask

Access / Environment

Gorges being of nature damp and moist have delicate eco systems which can be easily disrupted under foot. It is, therefore, helpful to tread carefully and keep to established paths. Over use of specific sites should be avoided.

RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT REF NO coast 1

Activity: Coasteering
Generic including Rock
pooling

Location: various

Assessor: DS, JL

Hazard	Who might be harmed?			Existing controls What makes the hazard less risky? What makes these controls effective?	Risk			Further actions Avoid Control at source Take advantage of technology Protect all Make what you have more effective	Target date dd-mm-yy	Responsibility	Completion Date	New Residual Risk
	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Falling rock / collision with rock		x	x	Participants should be given the appropriate equipment, and follow all instructor briefs, staff trained in First aid, Dynamic risk assessment of venues and suitable route choice. Progressive sessions taking conditions into account	1	5	5	Staff to continue to update 'info-log' for any changes to venues				
Weather / sea conditions		x	x	Staff should monitor weather conditions prior to and during trip	2	3	6	Staff should particularly aware of increasing Swell (coast) or rising water levels.				
No communication		x	x	Poor network coverage, Look to use of VHF or PLB, Consider contacting the coast guard when coasteering	5	1	5	None				
Drowning / hypothermia		x	x	Use of relevant equipment, staff judgment on route and conditions, staff trained in rescue techniques, progressive sessions	1	5	10	None				

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	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Injury from jumping		x	x	Good technique/ jump appropriate to client / location choice / safety brief / progressive jumps	1	5	10	None				
Injury from creatures / plants		x	x	Staff training, safety brief, avoid problem areas	1	4	4	None				
Improper / ill fitting equipment / equipment failing		x	x	Staff to check participants before entering water / equipment regularly inspected and maintained	1	5	5	None				
Panic		x	x	Progressive sessions/ group control judgement on conditions / session should be well within leaders own comfort zone	2	4	8	None				
Poor Judgement from instructional staff		x	x	Staff to attend regular CPD appropriate to the venue. Technical advisor to maintain communications with national developments.	2	5	10	Attendance on local and national CPD				
Slip trip fall from height	x	x	x	Appropriate route choice, group management and robust safety brief, appropriate equipment	1	5	10	Participant should wear suitable closed toe and secure footwear.				

 CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE				RISK ASSESSMENT				ASSESSMENT REF NO coast 1				
Activity: Coasteering Generic including Rock pooling				Location: various				Assessor: DS, JL				
Hazard	Who might be harmed?			Existing controls What makes the hazard less risky? What makes these controls effective?	Risk			Further actions Avoid Control at source Take advantage of technology Protect all Make what you have more effective	Target date dd-mm-yy	Responsibility	Completion Date	New Residual Risk
	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Rip tides / high winds / hazardous water features e.g.pour over		x	x	Staff training, weather / tide forecast, dynamic risk assessment. Leader should be very familiar with the venue and have experience of a variety of conditions.	2	5	10	Where the group is being led by a leader and an assistant, the assistant should follow the leaders guidance as to suitable routes, jumps, caves etc.				

Further actions approved by: Derek Napier	Signature: D Napier	Date: 9th April, 2026
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Urgency of Action = (20>Very High) (16-20 High) (9-15 Moderate) (4-8 Low) (1-3 Very Low)
Severity = 1. Damage 2. Minor Injury 3. +3 Days/Hospitalised 4. Major Injury/Permanent Disability 5. Fatality
Probability = 1. Very Unlikely 2. Unlikely 3. Fairly Likely 4. Likely 5. Very Likely

Review Date: April 2027

RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT REF NO:

**Activity: Gorge walking
inc. Canyoning**

Location: various

Assessor: DS, FO

Hazard	Who might be harmed?			Existing controls What makes the hazard less risky? What makes these controls effective?	Risk			Further actions Avoid Control at source Take advantage of technology Protect all Make what you have more effective	Target date dd-mm-yy	Responsibility	Completion Date	New Residual Risk
	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Falling rock / collision with rock	x	x	x	Participants should be given the appropriate equipment, and follow all instructor briefs	1	5	10	None				
Weather / river levels		x	x	Staff should monitor weather conditions prior to and during trip and carry out dynamic risk assessments	1	5	10	None				
Drowning / hypothermia		x	x	Issued with relevant equipment, staff judgment on route and conditions	1	5	10	None				
Injury from jumping		x	x	Good technique/ jump appropriate to client / location choice / good safety brief	1	5	10	None				
Panic		x	x	Progressive sessions/ group control	2	4	8	None				
Entrapment		x	x	Participants shown correct swimming techniques	1	5	10	None				
Slip / trip / fall from height	x	x	x	Good route choice, robust safety brief	1	5	5	None				
Slip / trip / fall on same level	x	x	x	Good route choice, robust safety brief	1	3	3	None				
Equipment failure / ill fitting equipment		x	x	Regular checks and staff to visually check equipment and fitting on day	1	4	4	None				
Slip while jumping		x	x	Progressive jumps and robust safety brief	1	5	10	None				
Changes to river e.g. trees falling		x	x	Staff to carry out dynamic risk assessments	2	5	10	none				

Further actions approved by:

Signature:

Date:

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Severity = 1. Damage 2. Minor Injury 3. +3 Days/Hospitalised 4. Major Injury/Permanent Disability 5. Fatality

Probability = 1. Very Unlikely 2. Unlikely 3. Fairly Likely 4. Likely 5. Very Likely

Review Date: April 2027

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