

Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures

Mountain Biking

Standard Operating Procedures: Mountain Biking

Definition and Scope of Activities

The activities involved use cycle equipment of various types to tour on an unprepared surface usually designated by paths, fences, markers or trees.

The unprepared surface is usually sand, gravel or compressed soil / grass.

Locations are countryside based usually forest trails, routes up glens or over moorland paths. Some routes can be purpose built and incorporate technical challenges to the participant's level of cycling competence.

The major activities covered within this section are as follows:

- mountain biking
- cycle touring off road
- orienteering on cycle (see Section 8)
- expeditioning (including Duke of Edinburgh's Award)

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 identified 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

Mountain biking can take place all year.

Location Constraints

Use of remote mountain routes or exposed ground in winter conditions is prohibited with participants under 16 years of age.

There are no further location constraints outwith military training / disease prohibition restrictions.

A second adult should be present at the group location with participants under 18 years of age.

Tuition Ratios

The tuition ratios are: -

- 1 instructor to 10 participants maximum
- 1:8 in remote ground
- 1:6 remote technical ground
- 1:6 after dark.

Participants requiring increased leader supervision or possessing certain disabilities may require additional staffing or reduced participant ratios.

A second adult should be present at the group location with participants under 18 years of age.

Tuition Leader Qualifications

All leaders must hold current first aid certificate, and should operate with the remit of their own qualification.

The following information is for guidance only. Please see relevant governing bodies for complete remit information.

Hazard Level	Group Instructor/Leader	Technical Adviser
Mountain Country - winter conditions, where snow and ice is prevalent and / or forecast.	BC Level 3 MTB leader or equivalent Plus The relevant on-foot qualification (i.e. ML (W))	British Cycling MTB Tutor or equivalent Plus The relevant mountaineering qualification (i.e. MIA with MLTB Leader Award - Winter)
Mountain Country - Intermediate Conditions Some snow (e.g. a light dusting or avoidable patches) or lightly freezing conditions (e.g. overnight frost) prevalent or forecast.	BC Level 3 MTB Leader or equivalent	British Cycling MTB Tutor or equivalent
Mountain Country - Summer Conditions	BC Level 3 MTB Leader or equivalent	British Cycling MTB Tutor or equivalent
Lowland Country - Off-road cycling cycle routes, bridle ways or other technical routes in open country more than a 30 minutes walk (or 2 km whichever is the less) from a refuge or accessible road	BC Level 3 MTB Leader or equivalent	British Cycling MTB Tutor or equivalent
Lowland Country - trail riding (non-licensable) public highways, cycleways, forestry tracks and non-technical routes no further than a 30 minutes walk (or 2 km whichever is the less) from a refuge or accessible road.	BC Level 2 MTB Leader or equivalent	British Cycling MTB Tutor

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

British Cycling MTB Leadership Award - www.britishcycling.org.uk/mtbleadership

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – www.thaward.org.uk

Mountain Leader Training Scotland – www.mltuk.org

British Association of Ski Patrollers - www.basp.org.uk

Equipment - Participants

Participants must be adequately equipped for the activity and location in use.

The equipment must be well maintained, serviced and set to the individual operational needs of the participant by experienced accredited personnel e.g. gears and brakes and cycle size.

Participants must be helmeted on all mountain bike activities.

On multi day expeditions

- Access to sleeping bag
- Cooking utensils
- Stove / fuel, torch
- Sufficient food
- Tent and
- Spare Clothing

Equipment should be carried via panniers or cycle trailer on multi day routes or via small back packs on day routes.

In bright sunshine access to sunglasses is advisable.

Equipment – Group Safety

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

- Watch
- First aid supplies
- OS map (1:50000 scale)/ compass
- Hot drink or means of making one
- Emergency rations
- Group emergency shelter
- Repair kit and tools (capable of dealing with puncture repairs, inner tube replacement, chain link replacement and brake / gear adjustment).

Access / Environment

As locations can be mountain based there may be access restrictions due to land use. Access permission should follow national access codes of practice – **see below**.

The use of high plateau should be avoided due to the vegetation and delicate moss/lichen eco systems.

Group Leaders should respect conservation in management requests to minimise the impact of cycles on fragile path surfaces especially in wet weather.

RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT REF NO:

Activity: Mountain bike

Location: Various

Assessor: LJ

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 Score
	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Falling from bike and hitting head		x	x	All participants to wear an approved cycle helmet that has passed EN 1078	2	5	10	None				
Falling from bike injuring other part of body		x	x	Progressive sessions and route choice appropriate to clients and weather	2	5	10	None				
Colliding with other participants / members of public / objects	x	x	x	All participants briefed on group riding. Leader qualified in MTB leadership. Progressive sessions and route choice appropriate to clients and weather Instructors to brief about safe riding distances where appropriate.	2	5	10	None				
Receiving injury from bike itself eg foot slipping from pedal		x	x	Platform pedals fitted. Appropriate footwear to be worn. Group instructed in correct use of gears and brakes	3	3	9	None				

Losing control of bike because of terrain eg tree roots, rocks etc.	x	x	x	Location and activity relevant to group's ability. Difficult sections walked over. Group instructed on correct riding techniques where appropriate.	2	5	10	None				
Equipment failure	x	x	x	Equipment checked prior to use by leader, checked when returned to stores, Inspected regularly by competent person	1	5	5	None				

Further actions approved by: Derek Napier

Signature: D Napier

Date: 9th April, 2026

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

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