

Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures

Snow Activities

Standard Operating Procedures: Snow Activities

Definition and Scope of Activities

The activities are low intensity experiential trips, taking place in areas with easy access to shelter and vehicles.

The major activities covered within this section are as follows:

- Snow Shoeing
- Sledging
- Igloo building
- Snow shelter construction

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.

Seasonal Constraints

All snow activities are dependent on sufficient snow depth and takes place in Scotland usually during the period January – April annually but may occur outwith these margins as a result of weather patterns.

Location Constraints

All venues should be within close proximity to vehicles or refuge.

A slope is required for sledging however the slope must not be such that a slip while walking would not result in a down hill slide / tumble. The slope must also have a safe run out and the slope must be free from obstructions such as protruding rocks.

All venues should be checked for adjective danger, e.g. avalanche from above / skiers and other users entering area

Tuition Ratios

The tuition ratios are: 1 instructor to 10 participants maximum.

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

Local parks / semi-urban environments: A responsible adult who holds a first aid certificate

Non remote terrain (generally less than 500m from refuge) A responsible adult who holds an outdoor leadership award (ML / TCL etc) and a first aid certificate. Also should have attended a winter workshop within 3years

Remote and/or mountain terrain: Winter Mountain Leader

Note: If a WML is using a more remote area they should ensure they have read and adhere to the winter walking SOP

Equipment - Participants

Participants must be adequately equipped for the activity and location in use. Boots should be worn while sledging and snow shoeing.

The equipment must be well maintained and serviced.

Participants under 16 years of age must wear helmets while sledging

All participants must have location access to

- Windproof / waterproof / protective clothing
- Gloves/mitts

Equipment – Group Safety

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

- First aid supplies
- Whistle
- Hot drink or means of making one
- Emergency rations
- Exposure kit / emergency shelter
- Torch
- Means of communicating with base/ emergency services

Weather / Snow / Piste / Ski Condition Forecasts

The following forecasts should be obtained:

Weather –relevant activity specialist forecast.

Scottish Avalanche Information Service – Tel 01479 861363 or www.sais.gov.uk

RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT REF NO: Snow 2

Activity: Snow - Snow Shoeing/IglooBuilding Sledging

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
	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Hypothermia		x	x	Participants should be given the appropriate equipment to ensure they are as warm and dry as possible. All leaders to have access to environmental protection e.g. bothy bag Venue generally less than 500m from a refuge	2	4	8	None				
Slips / trips resulting in a fall and Injuries from slip trip		x	x	Venue should be such that a trip or slip would not result in a downhill slide. Sledging venues should have adequate and safe 'run outs' Boots should be provided to give ankle support. Helmets to be worn while sledging	1	5	5	None				
Avalanche	x	x	x	Check forecasts prior to activity. Avoid avalanche prone slopes. Carry out assessment of conditions during day.	1	5	5	None				

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				Have access to a shovel. Probes, and transceivers are also available.								
Getting lost		x	x	Staff should run sessions within close proximity to the vehicle / base or occupied building. WML or above should operate within the remit of their award.	1	5	5	None				
Injuries from equipment		x	x	Robust safety brief. Leader observation and good group control. Correct equipment for the task	2	3	6	None				
Vehicle getting stuck	x	x	x	Good judgement on roads follow instructions given by police or traffic information. Drive according to road conditions	2	2	4	None				
Injuries from: collision and igloo collapse	x	x	x	Good group management, and correct venue selection. Helmets worn while sledging. Shovel available outside the igloo	3	4	12	None				

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	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Excessive speed / crash	x	x	x	Progressive sessions, assess each slope on the day and complete dynamic risk / benefit analysis.	2	4	8	None				

Further actions approved by:

Signature:

Date:

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

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