

# Abernethy

## Safety Standards for Outdoor Activities



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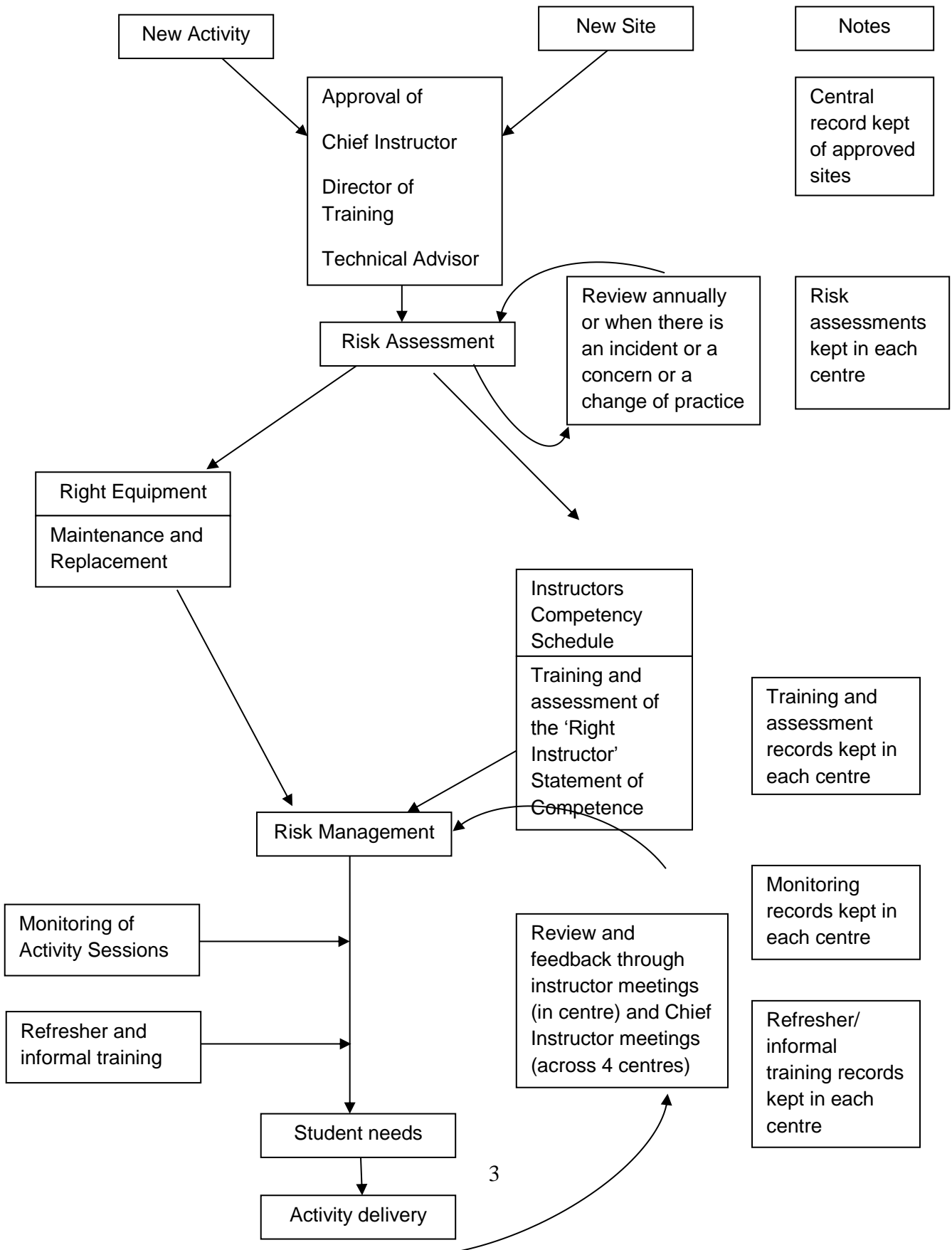
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## **The Abernethy Risk Management System**

An element of risk is inherent in adventure activities. Abernethy is committed to providing adventure activities within a risk management system designed to reduce the risk of harm arising from adventure activities. Risk management is proportional to the consequences of the risk.

Appropriately trained and qualified instructors are the basis of risk management for Abernethy. Abernethy's risk management system consists of having the right instructors, with the right equipment, engaged in the right activities for the client group at the right site, one with which the instructor is familiar.

# The Abernethy Risk Management System



## Right Instructor\*

Appropriately trained and qualified means:

1. National Governing Body (NGB) awards, where applicable, will be held by the instructor of each activity.
2. Technical Advisers, as understood by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, will be designated for each activity.
3. Where NGB awards are not available the Technical Adviser will oversee a training and development programme leading to the instructor being designated competent before leading an activity. Refresher training will take place at least annually.
4. Instructors holding NGB awards will remain current as required by the appropriate awarding body
5. In addition to the above training of instructors will take place:
  - (i) On request from an instructor in order to maintain competence.
  - (ii) Due to changed circumstances at the site or in the planned delivery of the activity.
  - (iii) To provide opportunity to improve practice following an analysis of near misses or incidents, to allow instructors to pool knowledge and experience.

## Right Equipment

Implicit in the training and development of instructors is their ability to undertake risk assessments of equipment for a particular activity session. This is underpinned by a regime of inspection and record keeping as part of the safety framework in which adventure activities take place. An inventory is held in each Centre in which the age and replacement dates for critical equipment is recorded.

All safety critical equipment will be visually inspected at the start and end of each session. A more detailed inspection will be completed and documented monthly, by a suitably trained person. All activity structures will also receive an annual inspection by a suitably qualified inspector. Buoyancy aids will be annually float tested in line with BCU policy.

If an item of equipment is found to be unfit for purpose it will be immediately removed from service and labelled. It will then either be disposed of, or repaired as appropriate.

In addition to the above, equipment will be removed from service once it has reached the end of its serviceable life. The lifespan for a piece of equipment will be determined as follows:

- The manufacturers recommendations; found in the documentation when the item is purchased. This information will be recorded on the inventory and monthly check records at the date of purchase
- If manufacturers' recommendations are not available the Abernethy Replacement Policy for safety critical equipment will be used. This is in line with current recommendations by the Adventure Activity Licensing Service (AALS) and the relevant technical advisers. See Appendix 2

## **Right Activities**

The activity programme offered to the guests will be one that the Centre's Chief Instructor and administrative function have agreed with the group organiser or individual guests as a programme of activities suitable for the individual participants and to meet their aims and objectives. It follows therefore that by the time the instructor meets their group the activity and location in which it will take place is already a part of the safety framework. Notwithstanding this the instructor is empowered and required to make a risk assessment at the time of meeting the group or seeing the site on the day and changing the activity and site if necessary. To this end part of the planning of the activity for each instructor is to know what alternatives they will put into place if necessary. This strategy has the benefit of reducing risk by making it easy for the instructor to abandon an activity if the risk level is deemed too high because the alternative is not 'to do nothing', but to do something previously planned.

## **Right Site**

Each site in which adventure activities will take place will be chosen to correspond with the level of competence through training and assessment of the instructor. Where this competence is assessed through the holding of an NGB award the parameters in which the instructor can operate are very clear. Where an NGB award is not the measure of competence then the chief instructor and site-specific risk assessment will determine whether the site is right for instructing those particular students in that particular activity.

## **Risk assessment and the unpredictable.\***

Fundamentally risk assessments in Abernethy are developed from the asking of 'what if' by suitably experienced team members. The 'what if' question is applied to activities, venues, students and situations where the judgment, experience and imagination of the risk assessor form the basis for a reasonable prediction of a risk arising from a hazard. By such means risks are identified and steps taken to manage them.

It is recognised that some courses of events are not predictable, however extensively the risk assessor asks 'what if'. In attempting to plan for something that is unpredictable, i.e. what if something happens that the risk assessor cannot imagine or predict as a possibility, Abernethy has put into place a system by which team members are helped to respond to an emergency and can call on senior staff.

## Definitions of Key Personnel

In establishing these standards for the safe delivery of adventure activities the following criteria have been adopted:

**Director of Training:** an experienced Chief Instructor or Operations Director with NGB awards in a wide variety of activities.

**Chief Instructor:** a mature outdoor practitioner, with a broad range of outdoor instructional qualifications, trained in risk assessment and hazard analysis. The Chief Instructor's appointment as technical adviser for each activity in the matrices that follows will be approved by the Director of Training.

**Activity Manager:** an experienced team manager holding relevant outdoor instructional qualifications and trained in risk assessment and hazard analysis. The Activity Manager's appointment as technical adviser for each activity in the matrices that follows will be approved by the Director of Training.

**Competent Assistant:** a person comfortable in the environment, capable of supporting an instructor in leading the activity and in helping a weaker member of the group. The competence of the assistant will be assessed at the time by the Chief Instructor.

\*see appendix

## Introduction of new activities

As a dynamic organisation the activities offered by an Abernethy centre are subject to change and new activities will be introduced and developed. Whilst encouraging change and development new activities will be subject to a regime of risk assessment and the development of appropriate safety standards.

1. Prior to the introduction of a new activity already included in Abernethy's Safety Standards for Outdoor Activities but not offered at a particular centre.
  - 1.1 The Chief Instructor will carry out a site and activity specific risk assessment. This will be discussed with the appropriate Technical Adviser. If the Technical Adviser is designated as the Chief Instructor then they will refer to the Director of Training. All risk assessment issues will be discussed and resolved.
  - 1.2 The Director of Training will approve the new activity.
  - 1.3 If it is an activity not recognised under a National Governing Body qualification scheme then the training and experience of the person delivering the necessary staff training will be reviewed and confirmed with the Director of Training and the Technical Adviser.
  
2. Prior to the introduction of a new venue for an activity already offered by the centre for which the staff hold nationally recognised qualifications.
  - 2.1 A member of staff with the appropriate qualification to lead the activity will carry out a site and activity specific risk assessment. This will be discussed with the appropriate Technical Adviser. All risk assessment issues will be discussed and resolved.
  - 2.2 The Director of Training will be notified and approve the new venue.
  
3. Prior to the introduction of a new venue for an activity already offered by the centre for which the staff do not hold nationally recognised qualifications.
  - 3.1 The Chief Instructor will carry out a site and activity specific risk assessment. This will be discussed with the appropriate Technical Adviser during a site visit. If the Technical Adviser is designated as the Chief Instructor then they will refer to the Director of Training. All risk assessment issues will be discussed and resolved.
  - 3.2 The Director of Training will be notified and approve the new venue.
  - 3.3 If it is an activity not recognised under a National Governing Body qualification scheme then the training/experience of the person delivering the staff training will be reviewed and confirmed with the Director of Training and Technical Adviser.



4. Prior to the introduction of a new activity not already included in Abernethy's Safety Standards for Outdoor Activities.
  - 4.1 The Chief Instructor will carry out a site and activity specific risk assessment. This will be discussed with the Director of Training who will arrange a consultative site visit with the appropriate Technical Advisers. All risk assessment issues will be discussed and resolved.
  - 4.2 Abernethy's Safety Standards for Outdoor Activities will be amended to include the new activity and an appropriate Technical Adviser appointed.
  - 4.3 If it is an activity recognised under a National Governing Body qualification scheme then it will be adopted. If it is not recognised under a National Governing Body qualification scheme then the staff training / assessment programme will be approved by the Director of Training and the Technical Adviser.
  
5. Prior to any variations to activities already established and included in Abernethy's Safety Standards for Outdoor Activities.
  - 5.1 The Chief Instructor will carry out a site and activity specific risk assessment. This will be discussed with the appropriate Technical Adviser. All risk assessment issues will be discussed and resolved.
  - 5.2 The Director of Training will be notified and approve of the new variation.
  - 5.3 Abernethy's Safety Standards for Outdoor Activities will be adhered to or amended as necessary through consultation with the Director of Training.
  - 5.4 If the variation is not recognised under a National Governing Body qualification scheme then the staff training / assessment programme will be approved by the Director of Training and Technical adviser.

The Director of Training will keep a database of all activities offered, the venues used and the date s/he visited and approved them.

# ABSEILING

Situation:	Sites where the instructor exercises independent judgement and makes their own anchor selection.	Sites where the instructor uses predetermined anchor points as directed by the Technical Adviser	
Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award (MIA)		
Instructor:	Single Pitch Award (SPA)	Trained and assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.	Single Pitch Award (SPA)
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:8 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.	

## **AERIAL RUNWAY**

### **and similar or associated activities e.g. kingswing**

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Instructor:	Trained and assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction & Risk Assessment	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

## **ARCHERY**

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager holding GNAS Archery Leader
Instructor:	GNAS Archery Leader
Site Induction & Risk Assessment	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

## **ASSAULT COURSES**

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Instructor:	Trained and Assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction & Risk Assessment	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The trainee will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

# CANOEING AND KAYAKING

Technical Adviser: The Technical Adviser will be qualified as appropriate to the level of canoeing and coaching award held by the instructor i.e.:

Level 2 coach as Technical Adviser for coaches operating as Level 1 coaches.  
 Level 3 coach as Technical Adviser for coaches operating as Level 2 coaches.  
 Level 4 coach as Technical Adviser for coaches operating as Level 3 coaches.  
 Level 5 coach as Technical Adviser for coaches operating as Level 4 coaches.

Instructor: BCU / SCA coach award according to the water.

Site Induction & Risk Assessment: The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.

## Ratios and instructor qualifications for Coaching

Environment	Former coaching Awards	New System	Ratio
Swimming Pool	BCU Level 1 or BCU Level 2 Trainee	BCU UKCC Level 1 plus site specific training	1:8 students in kayaks
Very Sheltered Water	BCU Level 1 Discipline Specific or BCU Level 2***	BCU UKCC Level 1 plus site specific training	1:8** students in kayaks 1:6 students in open canoes paddled solo 1:12 students when paddling tandems
Sheltered Inland, Tidal Water and Sea	BCU Level 2 Discipline Specific	BCU UKCC level 2***	1:8** students in kayaks 1:6 students in open canoes paddled solo 1:10** students when paddling tandems

<b>Inland Water – White Water Kayak</b>			
Moderate White Water (grade 2(3) and equivalent weirs) Moderate Inland Water (open water no more than 500m from shore and winds below force 4)	BCU Level 3 (inland)	BCU Moderate White Water Endorsement or BCU UKCC Level 3 (White Water)	1:6 students or 1: 8* students when working with a competent assistant
Advanced White Water (grade 3 to grade 4(5)) Advanced Inland Water (open water more than 500m from shore and/or winds above force 4)	BCU Level 4 (inland)	BCU UKCC Level 3 with Advanced White Water Endorsement	1:4 students
<b>Inland Water – Open Canoe</b>			
Moderate White Water (descents up to grade 2, and equivalent weirs) Moderate Inland Water (no more than 500m from shore and winds below force 4)	BCU Level 3 (canoe)	BCU Moderate Water Open Canoe Endorsement Or BCU UKCC Level 3 (Open Canoe)	1:5 students or 1:6 students when working with a competent assistant , in open canoes paddled solo 1:6 students or 1:10** students when working with a competent assistant when paddling tandem
Advanced White Water (grade 3) Advanced Inland Water (very large lakes/lochs)	BCU Level 4 (canoe)	BCU UKCC Level 3 with BCU Advanced Open Canoe Endorsement	1:4 students (solo or tandem)
<b>Sea</b>			
Moderate Tidal Water/Sea	BCU Level 3 (sea)	BCU Moderate Water Sea Endorsement Or BCU UKCC Level 3 (sea)	1:6 students or 1:8* students when working with a competent assistant

\*\*\* The instructor will also hold the appropriate 3 star award for the craft they are coaching in.

\*\* Risk assessments on the day will allow the above ratios to increase by up to two students.

\* Risk assessments on the day will allow the above ratios to increase by one student. See below for BCU definitions of water.

Ratios and instructor qualifications for Leading:

<b>Environment</b>	<b>New System (to Lead)</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Inland Water – White Water Kayak</b>		
Moderate White Water (grade 2(3) and equivalent weirs) Moderate Inland Water (open water no more than 500m from shore and winds below force 4)	BCU 4* Leader Award (White Water)	1:4 competent paddlers
Advanced White Water (grade 3 to grade 4(5)) Advanced Inland Water (open water more than 500m from shore and/or winds above force 4)	BCU 5* Leader Award (White Water)	1:4 competent paddlers
<b>Inland Water – Open Canoe</b>		
Moderate White Water (descents up to grade 2, and equivalent weirs) Moderate Inland Water (no more than 500m from shore and winds below force 4)	BCU 4* Leader Award (Canoe)	1:4 competent paddlers in open canoes paddled solo 1:6 competent paddlers when paddling tandem
Advanced White Water (grade 3) Advanced Inland Water (very large lakes/lochs)	BCU 5* Leader Award (Canoe)	1:4 competent paddlers (solo or tandem)
<b>Sea</b>		
Moderate Tidal Water Sea	BCU 4* Leader Award	1:4 competent paddlers

## **BCU Environmental Definitions**

**Where wind strengths or wave heights are mentioned these are as forecast, as it can be expected they may be encountered during the session/journey.**

### **Very Sheltered Water**

Quiet canals with easy bankside access and egress; small lakes, which are not large enough, and do not have difficult landing areas for problems to occur if there is a sudden change in conditions; specified sites on gentle, slow moving rivers. The definition implies weather conditions that are not in themselves likely to cause problems. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low. At any point the paddler will not be more than 50 metres from the bank

### **Sheltered Inland Water**

Flat water rivers, faster flowing, but not involving the shooting of, or playing on weirs or running rapids. Discretion and commonsense must apply when considering the use of lakes/lochs. To operate further than 200 metres from shore on a large lake can be a serious undertaking. To paddle in offshore breezes on large lakes requires the same degree of caution as for the sea. Water temperature (especially in Scottish lochs) must always be a consideration. Suitable lagoons or sections of sheltered bays of larger lakes can sometimes be designated "Sheltered" or even "Very Sheltered" water by careful and sensible selection. The definition implies normal conditions. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low.

### **Moderate Inland Water**

Large areas of open water that exceed the sheltered water definition, that are no more than 500 metres off shore and in wind strengths that do not exceed force 4.

### **Moderate White Water**

Grade 2 white water or equivalent weirs. (This is extended to Grade 2(3) when using whitewater spec Kayaks).

### **Advanced Inland Water**

Large areas of open water which exceed moderate water and have winds in excess of force 4.

### **Advanced White Water**

Grade 3 white water for canoe. Grade 3 to 4(5) for kayak.

### **Sheltered Tidal Water/Sea**

Small enclosed bays, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore; enclosed harbours, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore; defined beaches (a short section of beach with easy landing throughout, no tide races or overfalls beyond the beach), in conditions in which swimmers and beach craft could be happily operating – winds not above force 3 (force 2 if offshore when greatest caution must be exercised); the upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving estuaries during neap tides. In all cases the wind and weather conditions must be favourable.

### **Moderate Tidal Water/Sea**

The definition involves; A stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with available landings at every 1-2 miles / 1 hour and areas where it is not easy to land. Up to a maximum of 2 knots tide but not involving, tidal races, or overfalls, winds not above force 4 beaufort sea state 4 (if offshore the greatest of caution must be exercised), or the upper reaches of some estuaries; launching and landing through moderate surf.

### **Advanced Tidal Water/Sea**

Any journey on the sea where tidal races, overfalls or open crossings may be encountered, which cannot be avoided; Sections of coastline where landings may not be possible or difficult; difficult sea states and /or stronger winds (force 4 or above), launching and landing through moderate surf.

### **Moderate Surf**

Beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips or undertow, tidal streams, rocks or groynes). An area of beach must be marked out to contain the group and prevent any loss of communication. The area selected must not interfere with other beach users – swimmers and surfers in particular; small to moderate waves – 3 feet maximum.

### **Advanced Surf**

The surfing of reefs, points and offshore features; surfing from beaches where the surf height exceeds 3 feet or where stronger winds, cold conditions, rips, long shore drift, rocks or other potential hazards are involved.

### **Measurement of surf**

The “surfers” measurement is used throughout both this document and the BCU awards in surf. This is also used by surf forecasts obtained from telephone surf lines, the internet or wave buoys. It is in feet and refers to the ride-able mid section of the wave, not the peak to trough height. As a bench mark “4 feet “ is head height for a board surfer and on an average British beach break would provide conditions only suitable for the most experienced and capable kayak surfer. A swell of 6 inches to 1 foot is both appropriate and more than adequate for any novice group. Intermediate kayak surfers would find 2 feet of surf more than suitable for a learning experience.

### **Wave Character**

The physical height of a wave is only part of the picture. The following factors all individually have a profound effect on a wave but combined can change swell dramatically; wind direction and strength; beach shape; type of break; height and state of tide; swell character (age, period, speed). All of these contrive to make 1 foot of swell a potentially serious and dangerous environment to take inexperienced client groups into. Although the current awards give the Level 3 Surf Coach a remit to operate in up to 3 feet of surf, it would be very unusual indeed if anything but expert groups were taken into such conditions. Although if appropriate the “reform or secondary break” might prove a suitable site for inexperienced or novice groups to work.



## CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES

These include Spiders Web, barrel walks, Treasure Quest, problem solving team events and the like.

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Instructor:	Trained and Assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction & Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

## CLIMBING WALLS

Climbing walls and other structures having the defining feature that the instructor will be operating in an environment that is uniform from session to session, in which they are using belay points and systems established by the technical adviser.

Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award (MIA)	
Instructor:	Single Pitch Award (SPA)	Trained and assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction & Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.	

## COASTEERING

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor.
Instructor:	Trained and Assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction & Risk Assessment	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:12. The instructor will work with a competent assistant.

## GORGE WALKING and POOL JUMPING

Situation:	Gorges and pools where equipment or special techniques similar to those of rock climbing are used to protect the student from falling.	Gorges and pools where equipment or special techniques to protect the student from falling are not used. Hazards are everyday hazards that would be obvious to and surmountable by someone with no previous experience of rock climbing.
Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award (MIA)	Chief Instructor
Instructor:	Training and assessment by the Technical Adviser.	
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.	
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group. The instructor will work with a competent assistant.	

# HIGH ROPES COURSE

## and associated activities e.g. crate climbing

Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award (MIA).
Instructor:	Trained and Assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction & Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Advisor. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser (for instructors not holding the SPA) or the Chief Instructor (for instructors with the SPA).
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

## MOUNTAIN BIKING AND TRAIL CYCLING

Situation:	Routes including considerable technical difficulty more than 30 minutes walk from the nearest shelter with communication. To any height above sea level. In normal summer conditions during daylight On multi-day trips where the group does not require to be self sufficient.	Public highways, identifiable routes, tracks and trails with obvious navigational features. Routes with low to medium technical difficulty, rideable for 90-95% of their total length. No more than 30 minutes walk away from a shelter with communication and to be no more than 600 metres in height.
Technical Adviser:	Mountain Bike Tutor	
Instructor:	Mountain Bike Leader	Trail Cycle Leader
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:8 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:8 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

Risk assessments on the day may allow the above ratios to increase by up to two students and only if the instructor is working with a competent assistant.

## ORIENTEERING

Situation:	The Centre grounds.	Restricted sites local to the Centre
Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager	Chief Instructor
Instructor:	Training and assessment by the Technical Adviser.	BOF Level 2
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site induction will include an inspection of the course and assessment of risks arising from the grounds being used for orienteering. Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site- specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:12 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.	

Risk assessments on the day may allow the above ratio to increase to 1:20 and only if the instructor is working with a competent assistant.

## OVERNIGHT CAMPING

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Instructor:	Qualification according to the mode of travel.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Camping specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a camping specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will be in accord to the mode of travel.

## **POWERBOATS and BOATS UNDER POWER**

Technical Adviser:	Powerboat Instructor
Driver:	Powerboat level 2.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Plated capacity of vessel

## **RAFTING – IMPROVISED**

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor.		
Instructor:	SCA open canoe coach according to the water and working from an open canoe.	Dinghy sailing instructor with powerboat level 2 and working from a powerboat.	Powerboat/safety boat level 4 and working from a powerboat.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.		
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.		

## REMOTELY SUPERVISED EXPEDITION GROUPS (DofE)

Technical Adviser:	Appropriate to the activity being supervised (refer to the specific activity standard)
Supervisor:	Appropriate to the activity being supervised (refer to the specific activity standard)
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The supervisor will undertake familiarisation with the route being undertaken and operate within the framework of the generic Abernethy Remote supervision risk assessment, (see appendix 3) In addition, the supervisor will carry out a dynamic risk assessment prior to the trip and throughout the expedition
Ratios:	Normally there will be a supervisor for each expedition group.  Informed by the risk assessment and where the appropriate level of supervision can be maintained in-line with the D of E guidelines on supervision, on a qualifying expedition, this can be extended to the supervisor looking after two groups. When an expedition is taking place a designated member of the Abernethy Leadership team should be available by telephone to provide support to the supervisor.

## ROCK CLIMBING

Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructors Award (MIA)
Instructor:	Single Pitch Award (SPA)
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:8 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.

### **Learning to Lead**

#### **Learning to Lead 5 day course**

Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award
Instructor:	Technical Adviser working on the course with Single Pitch Award (SPA) holder(s) assessed and deemed competent by the technical adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor : student ratio will not exceed 1:2

Those who have successfully completed the 5 day course are deemed competent to climb with others who have also successfully completed the Learn to Lead course.

# ROPES ADVENTURE COURSE

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Instructor:	Trained and assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The trainee will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser
Ratios:	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group. (A buddy system that halves the numbers actually on the ropes course could take this ratio to 1:20).

## SAILING - Dinghies

Technical Adviser:	RYA Senior Instructor
Instructor:	RYA Dinghy Instructor as the lead person on-site. RYA Assistant Instructors as additional instructors.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	<u>For RYA courses</u> Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1: 9 (maximum 6 boats) for Picos or similar.  For beginners in Wayfarers or similar boats the ratio will not exceed 1:3 with instructor on board. If competent sailors, the 1: 9 ratio applies.  <u>For Intro Taster Sessions</u>  As above. Risk assessment on the day may allow the ratio to increase to 1:10 (maximum 5 boats) for Picos or similar.
Safety cover:	The above ratios only apply once safety cover is in place at the ratio of 1 safety boat for 1-6 craft and 2 safety boats for 7-15 craft. The safety boat will be manned by a dinghy or windsurfing instructor holding Powerboat L2 or a Powerboat level 2 with a safety boat endorsement.

## **SAILING - keelboats**

Technical Adviser:	RYA Senior Instructor with induction to type.
Instructor:	RYA Dinghy Instructor with induction to type (overseeing the session).
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:9 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group.
Safety cover:	The safety boat will be manned by a dinghy or windsurfing instructor holding Powerboat L2 or a Powerboat level 2 with a safety boat endorsement. The safety boat and driver will be available for rescue duty whenever sailing takes place but need not accompany the keelboat but will be available to offer assistance should it be requested.

NB. When a keelboat is being used as a boat under power see page 17.

## **SNOWSPORTS at a recognised ski area or on a DRY SLOPE**

Technical Adviser:	BASI Level 2 Instructor Award.
Instructor:	Snowsport Scotland Alpine Ski Leader overseeing the day. BASI Level 1 instructing each ski group
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10.

## **SNOWSPORTS OFF PISTE within a recognised ski area**

Technical Adviser:	BASI Level 4 Ski or Snowboard Instructor.
Instructor:	BASI Level 2 Instructor
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10.



## SWIMMING – INDOOR

Situation:	Public swimming pool with pool attendants	Abernethy Nethybridge swimming pool.
Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager	RLSS Tutor
Lifeguard:	As provided by the operator	RLSS Pool Lifeguard or NaRS pool attendant
Instructor:	Adult deemed competent to look after a group who are going to use the pool	None.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students	
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / leader if the group is a school group.	The number of swimmers in the pool will not exceed 35.

## SWIMMING – OUTDOOR with buoyancy aids

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Instructor:	Canoe or kayak coach appropriate to the water.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / leader if the group is a school group.

## TREE CLIMBING

Situation:	Trees climbed using belay anchors on the ground	Trees climbed without a fixed anchor and with potential falls being arrested through winding the rope around the tree.
Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award (MIA).	Chief Instructor
Instructor:	Trained and assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.	
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.	
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an additional teacher or youth worker appropriate to the group.	

## TREE TOP TRAIL

Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructor Award (MIA)
Instructor:	Trained and assessed to standards established by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an additional teacher or youth worker appropriate to the group.

# Walking and Scrambling

## Low Level Walking

Technical Advisor:	Chief Instructor/Activity Manager
Situation:	Terrain below 600m and walks less than 30 minutes walking time from an accessible road.
Instructor:	Training and assessment by the Technical Advisor.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site Specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain experience and familiarisation with a site specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher/youth leader appropriate to the group.

## Hill and Mountain Walking

Technical Advisor:	MIA
Situation:	Hills or Mountainous routes in summer conditions not requiring the planned use of a rope, which may include sections of scrambling up to grade 1. [see definitions below for terrain criteria for hill walks containing sections of scrambles]
Instructor:	Summer Mountain Leader Award
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The Instructor will conduct a dynamic risk assessment throughout the walk.
Ratios	Instructor: student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher/youth leader appropriate to the group.

## Mountain Scrambles

Technical Advisor:	MIA
Situation:	Hills or Mountainous routes in summer conditions requiring the planned use of a rope. [See below for definitions of hills and routes].
Instructor:	MIA
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The Instructor will conduct a dynamic risk assessment throughout the walk.
Ratios	1:2

# Definitions

## **Terrain for Mountain Leader Award:**

Travelling in any place which is moorland [open cultivated land at any height above sea level] or on a mountain above 600m and from which it would take more than 30minutes travelling time, using the standard Naismith's Rule, to walk back to accessible road or refuge.

Reference: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l177.pdf> page 24 paragraph 23

## **Hill and Mountain walking including sections of scrambling, up to grade one:**

Sections of up to grade one scramble can be part of a mountain walk if the situation criteria above are fulfilled and the participants are deemed to be 'experienced hill walkers'.

SMC describe grade 1 scrambles as 'easy scrambles: experienced hill walkers will find routes of this grade reasonably straightforward. The moves themselves will not be difficult, and although there may be some exposure, it will only be on easy sections.' (SMC guidebook)

BMC description 'classic grade one scramble is essentially an exposed walking route, and very popular examples include the north ridge of Tryfan and Crib Goch in Snowdonia. Moving up the scale, grade 2 scrambles will usually include sections where a nervous scrambler would want a rope to protect them'

Reference; <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/hill-skills-scrambling>

## **WEASELLING**

Technical Adviser:	Chief Instructor
Instructor:	Training and assessment by the Technical Adviser.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The instructor will gain instructing experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another instructor until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10 plus an accompanying teacher / youth leader appropriate to the group. The instructor will work with a competent assistant.

## **WINDSURFING**

Technical Adviser:	RYA Senior Windsurfing Instructor.
Instructor:	RYA Fast Forward Start Windsurfing Instructor.
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will undertake familiarisation with a site and make a visual site-specific risk assessment before working there with students.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:10.
Safety cover:	The above ratios only apply once safety cover is in place at the ratio of 1 safety boat for 1-6 craft and 2 safety boats for 7- 15 craft. The safety boat will be manned by a windsurfing instructor holding Powerboat L2 or a Powerboat level 2 with a safety boat endorsement or dinghy instructor with Powerboat Level 2.

## **WINTER MOUNTAINEERING**

Technical Adviser:	Mountain Instructors Certificate (MIC)
Instructor:	Winter Mountain Leader
Site Induction and Risk Assessment:	The instructor will conduct a dynamic risk assessment throughout the session.
Ratios:	Instructor:student ratio will not exceed 1:6.

## WIDE GAMES

Technical Adviser: Chief Instructor/Activity Manager

Instructor: Games Leader (who may be a visiting teacher or leader)

Site Induction and Risk Assessment: Site-specific training will be led by the Technical Adviser. The games leader will gain experience and familiarisation with a site-specific risk assessment by working with another games leader until assessed as competent by the Technical Adviser.

Ratios: For games where students go out of sight of the games leader(s) the leader:student ratio will not exceed 1:15. For games where students are within sight of the games leader e.g. on the playing field or in the sports hall, the leader:student ratio will be as agreed with visiting staff.

## **Notes on Risk Assessments**

Flowing from the above safety standards for outdoor activities are written activity and site specific risk assessments for all activities undertaken and all sites normally used. These risk assessments are working documents and are retained in a loose leaf folder in each Centre.

Although all sites normally used have a written risk assessment, in activities where an NGB award is held instructors are deemed competent to make dynamic site specific risk assessments. They may therefore occasionally operate in locations where a written site specific risk assessment is not held.

The safety standards and risk assessments identify the competencies needed by each instructor. This includes the competence to make dynamic risk assessments.

### **Staff training, trainee and apprentice instructors**

Competence schedules derived from each risk assessment are used to induct instructors and to guide and implement their initial activity specific or site specific training.

Experienced instructors may undergo a shorter period of activity/site specific training before being assessed as competent to lead a particular activity at a particular site. Less experienced instructors may undergo a longer period of training.

Records of induction training and assessment of competence are kept in each Centre and used to maintain the standards established and to manage the risks identified.

Initial specific training is supported by further training to ensure the 'right instructor' is leading the session. Further training will take place:

- i. On request from an instructor in order to maintain competence.
- ii. Due to changed circumstances at the site or in the planned delivery of the activity.
- iii. To provide opportunity to improve practice following an analysis of near misses or incidents, to allow instructors to pool knowledge and experience.
- iv. Informal training arising from monitoring visits by more senior instructors will be provided as necessary.

Records of informal training and monitoring visits are kept in each Centre.

Further Experience. It is recognised that instructors as part of a group of peers need to gain experience 'above' their qualification in order to progress in skills development and the exercise of sound judgement. To that end it is acceptable that staff are undertaking activities and adventures above their qualification and in unfamiliar venues with the permission of the Chief Instructor based on his/her assessment of their previous experience and activity proposal.

APPENDIX 2

**Abernethy Replacement policy**  
for safety critical equipment (if no manufacturers guidelines)

**Serviceable lifespan in years**

**Abseiling/climbing/high ropes elements/king swing/crate climb/zip wires**

ropes	5
slings	5
helmets	5
harnesses	5
karabiners	10
lead climbing kit (metal work)	10
lead climbing kit (extenders, tapes, etc)	5
fig 8's	10
belay devices	10
maillions	10
ascenders	10
fixed ropes/in situ rope anchors	1

**Canoeing/sailing/windsurfing/gorge walking/rafting**

canoe helmets	VIS
buoyancy aids	VIS

**Mountain biking**

helmets	3
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**Skiing**

helmets	5
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**Activity structures used for abseiling/climbing/high ropes elements/king swing/crate  
climb/zip wires**

steelwork	VIS
woodwork	VIS
woven lifting strops	5
wire strops	5
shear reduction blocks	10
maillions	10
in-situ extenders/woven slings	1
steel cables	5
shackles	10
karabiners	10
underground anchors	Pull test annually
zip trolleys	10
wire clamps	10
eye bolts	10
threaded steel bar	10
in-situ fixed ropes	1
turn buckles	10
<b>All other structures</b>	VIS

VIS = If a visual inspection warrants replacement

APPENDIX 3

**Generic Risk Assessment for remote supervision of groups**

<p><b>Risk:</b></p> <p>Clearly state risk and who it may affect.</p>	<p><b>Control measures:</b></p> <p>What will be done to reduce likelihood of risk occurring or reduce severity of risk.</p>
<p><b>Overall risks.</b></p> <p>Group and instructor</p>	<p><b>Context of Risk and Assessment to be carried out on a group by group basis, and an on-going dynamic risk assessment made throughout the expedition.</b></p> <p>Abernethy SSOA's applied at all times.</p>
<p><b>Pre-assessment of people:</b> Poor capabilities, skills or lack of experience; group attitude and behavior leading to poor decisions or inability to safely return or complete. <b>Group and instructor.</b></p>	<p>Relevant experience and qualification of person making judgment regarding ability of group to undertake the trip.</p> <p>Asses physical and skill capabilities relative to the journey to be undertaken.</p> <p>Reference must be made to the qualifying practice expedition and skills learned.</p> <p>Behavior contract and clear briefing on behaviors, hazards and responses to situations to be made by relevant Expedition Supervisor.</p> <p>Expedition Supervisor to hold relevant NGB award or in-house training and assessment in line with the SSOA (hillwalking, canoe, mountain bike etc)</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of group to be relevant to terrain, weather, behaviors and skills of the group.</p>
<p><b>Pre-assessment of equipment:</b></p> <p>Poor, unsuitable or lack of equipment leading to physical harm.</p> <p><b>Group and instructor.</b></p>	<p>Check suitability of PPE and any general equipment worn or used is 'fit for purpose' relevant to possible weather, terrain and remoteness.</p> <p>Appropriate briefing or prove skills on specific equipment relevant to navigation, camp craft, nutrition, country and highway code, first aid and emergency procedures.</p>
<p><b>Pre-assessment of venue &amp; environment:</b></p> <p>Remoteness; terrain risks on-route; weather and stranger danger leading to physical or emotional harm.</p> <p><b>Group and instructor.</b></p>	<p>Relevant experience and qualification of person making judgment regarding ability of group to undertake the trip.</p> <p>The route choice should be informed by the people and equipment check.</p> <p>Alternative routes, escape plans and safe havens should be considered and planned by group.</p> <p>A suitable weather forecast should be sought and shared with all.</p>

	<p>Water crossings or routes along water courses should be particularly carefully considered, and the additional capabilities and judgments required assessed by the Expedition Supervisor.</p> <p>Consider the possibilities of group engaging with members of the public and any issues likely.</p> <p>Supervision and intervention may be tighter or looser as the situation, environment and group behavior varies.</p> <p>Supervisors to employ a range of styles e.g. shadowing, fixed check points, letter drops or accompanying group.</p>
<b>On Expedition Risks</b>	
<p>Falls resulting in injury</p> <p><b>Group and Instructor</b></p>	<p>Good route planning choices relevant to group competency; awareness of risk through training and briefing; suitable footwear and equipment.</p> <p>Clear briefing on possibilities of falls on styles, fences, stream crossings etc. 'Spotting' encouraged where needed.</p> <p>Use strategies to increase supervision or group control where likelihood or severity of risk increases.</p>
<p>Drowning</p> <p><b>Group and Instructor</b></p>	<p>Awareness and assessment of water features and water hazards on route during planning.</p> <p>Consider campsites away from bodies of water likely to cause an issue.</p> <p>Group to be trained in judgments about moving or deeper water crossings; group to be trained in specific techniques as required.</p> <p>Awareness of streams and rivers in spate by group and supervisors.</p> <p>Use strategies to increase supervision or group control where likelihood or severity of risk increases.</p>
<p>Hypothermia/Exposure/ heat disorders.</p> <p><b>Group and Instructor</b></p>	<p>Suitable clothing and waterproofs to be carried and worn when required, good diet and nutrition (including hot meals and drinks), drinking enough water, using shelter breaks and where to find warmer locations, including using tents or campsites.</p> <p>Sun cream carried and used as needed.</p> <p>Group awareness of basic problems likely to occur and emergency response. Monitored by supervisor and assessor on expedition as required.</p>
<p>Stranger danger.</p> <p><b>Group and Instructor</b></p>	<p>Under normal conditions group to stay together at all times.</p> <p>Discussion about how to be aware of potential risks and how to deal with situations – usually leave location or strangers location asap.</p> <p>Consider likelihood of stranger danger issues on route, possible locations and how supervision strategy may need to change to take account.</p>

Getting lost <b>Group and Instructor</b>	Group to be trained and assessed on navigation skills and briefed properly. Agreed group response if lost; consider timing's of remote supervision and location..
Injury/illness/ or emergency. <b>Group and Instructor</b>	First aid kit with prompt cards carried. Sufficient camping equipment and food for overnight camp Medical conditions disclosed Group to have planned emergency response procedure. Mobile phones carried.
Injury from extreme weather conditions (Wind and ice) <b>Group and Instructor</b>	Get daily forecast, Suitable PPE carried and worn as required. Awareness of lee-slopes, windward slopes  Escape and alternative routes planned.
Food poisoning <b>Group and instructor</b>	Do not take meat or other high risk foods on expedition. Good food hygiene standards. Food cooked thoroughly. Supply pot wash kits including antibacterial wash. Washing up done immediately after meal.
Burns <b>Group and instructor</b>	Awareness of cooking and using open fires are hazardous, by group and instructor.  Clear cooking techniques and management of cooking area; a system for fuel storage and topping up stoves.  Restriction and careful thought over use open fires with groups; good management of fire area, size and behaviours if open fires used.
Car or rail accidents <b>Group and instructor</b>	Route planning to minimise travel along any roads or rail on foot; care by all crossing roads or rail or travelling along; use of luminous rucksack covers or vests in poor visibility; close supervision likely.
Emotional stress and inappropriate physical contact. <b>Group and instructor</b>	Group briefing and vigilance. Single sex tent and sleeping arrangements. Careful toileting arrangements. Instructor awareness of Child Protection issues and individual's emotional stress.

Activity specific	<b>Walking expedition</b>	Grid Reference	<b>Various</b>
Nearest Mobile Reception	<b>Variable</b>	Instructor Qualification	<b>SSOA's apply</b>
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Control measures:</b> What will be done to reduce likelihood of risk occurring or severity of risk.		
No additional risks <b>Group and Instructor</b>	Reference to Abernethy SSOA's and Abernethy Hillwalking, Camping and Cooking and Fieldwork Risk Management forms as needed.		

Activity specific	<b>Paddlesports</b>	Grid Reference	<b>Various</b>
Nearest Mobile Reception	<b>Variable</b>	Instructor Qualification	<b>SSOA's apply</b>
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Control measures:</b> What will be done to reduce likelihood of risk occurring or severity of risk.		
Drowning <b>Group and Instructor</b>	<p>Reference made to Abernethy SSOA's, Abernethy Risk Management forms for Paddlesports (flatwater) or Paddlesports (Whitewater) as appropriate.</p> <p>Particular care taken when deciding on supervision level and distance on water, which will be dynamic and ongoing throughout the whole trip.</p> <p><b>When the supervisor is deciding the level of supervision a group requires (on the water) they should use their own judgement based on:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Group experience</b></li> <li><b>2. Weather</b></li> <li><b>3. Type of water (open, canal, sheltered, river...)</b></li> <li><b>4. Features groups have not experienced before (canal gates, weirs...)</b></li> </ol> <p><b>It is important that if the supervisor is out of sight that the group have a way or means to contact the supervisor as the safety net for the group.</b></p>		