

Adventure Activities Licensing Authority

AAALA Note: 6.13

AAALA notes are produced by the AALA to provide information and guidance to adventure activity licence holders and other interested stakeholders

Date: August 2013

Subject: Emergency action plans

Issue: The Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations 2004 require that Licence holders shall maintain suitable and sufficient arrangements for "the provision of first aid, for the summoning of medical and rescue services in the event of an emergency, and for otherwise dealing with an emergency" (Regulation 9 (b) (v)).

1. The Guidance from the Licensing Authority, Paragraph 41, expands this, stating, "Providers should also maintain written procedures for accidents and emergencies."
2. The Licensing Authority and Licensing Service inspectors take the view that the usual written Emergency Action Plan is only one part of the "suitable and sufficient arrangements" which are required under Regulation 9.
3. A vital part of these arrangements is staff training. This training should cover, as a minimum, the implementation of the Emergency Action Plan. Ideally the training should include practical exercises in dealing with emergencies and other difficult situations in the locations used. This training should be recorded by the licence-holder. Other aspects may include base contacts, overdue group procedures, etc.
4. The following provides a framework for emergency arrangements, incorporating the essential element of staff training;
 - prevention: policy/procedures on containment of an incident in order to prevent it becoming an emergency;
 - general eventualities covered;
 - who is needed to execute the plan - their roles;
 - how sufficient cover is maintained;
 - specific procedures and minimum reaction times necessary;
 - access and rescue craft/vehicles;
 - rescue equipment - throw lines, flares, radios;
 - first aid and survival equipment;
 - lines of communication and how they will operate - between instructor and licence holder, between licence holder and emergency services; or direct between emergency services and instructor;
 - staff training requirements - external or in-house;
 - ensuring staff safety during rescues;
 - how the effectiveness of the plan is verified - drills and practice sessions;
 - liaison and co-operation between others users of the same site.

5. A licence holder will need to decide which parts of this framework are appropriate to his operation, and which parts need to be included in a written emergency action plan.

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