

# Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities



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This is the first edition of a factsheet providing guidance to groups wholly aged 18 and over participating in adventurous activities. Where any participant is aged under 18, the activity must be led or supervised in accordance with the Adventurous Activity Authorisation Scheme (see POR Rule 9.7). The publication of future editions will be notified in *Talking Points* and the *Activities Newsletter*.

The term POR refers to the document *Policy, Organisation and Rules*. The numbering for Rules relates to the October 2003 edition.

## Introduction

Taking part in adventurous activities helps to fulfil a number of goals, including personal development or enjoyment, a desire to develop skills that will help young people, and to participate in a group experience. There is also the challenge of successfully managing the hazards faced. However, there should be no illusion that the prospect of personal injury, or even death, may result from even very simple situations and that 'being prepared' plays an essential part in minimising any risk.

Much of the work of the Movement is directed to providing activities for young people. In respect of adventurous activities, an Authorisation Scheme operates, requiring assessment of those wishing to lead or supervise such activities.

It is recognised that provision also needs to be made to support groups made up wholly of adults, albeit that the support would need to differ. It is also recognised that while adults are in a position to provide consent to take part, there must be a framework to allow that to be 'informed consent',

based on the knowledge of the potential hazards, the risks associated with them and the various means of reducing or removing them.

This guidance note sets out the general areas that could be covered to help all participants to form an informed opinion as to the activity. More specific advice and guidance for particular activities is contained in various Association factsheets, in publications produced or recommended by relevant National Governing Bodies, or through your Assistant Area/County Commissioner (Activities).

It should be kept in mind that communication is a two-way process and that there should not be a sole reliance on the information given. Every participant, as an adult, has the responsibility to question what measures have been taken for safety and well being. Particular attention must be paid to, and by, those with little experience.

## Rules in POR that apply to adult groups in adventurous activities

### Rule 9.1 Activity Rules - Application

The relevant District or County Commissioner is responsible for approving all activities for all groups of adults (i.e. where each individual is aged 18 and over). This will usually be by means of an informal system agreed between the relevant Commissioner and the County Scout Network Commissioner (in respect of Scout Network), Assistant Commissioner (Scout Fellowship) or other person recognised by the relevant Commissioner.

### Rule 9.7d Adventurous Activity Authorisation Scheme

a) Those wishing to lead or supervise adventurous activities must be authorised where any Member participating is under the age of 18 or has a special educational need that places their mental age below 18. Where groups/parties are entirely aged 18 and over, Rule 9.8 applies.

### Rule 9.8 Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities

- a) An adventurous activity is defined in Rule 9.7a.
- b) Where any participant is aged under 18 or has a special educational need that places their mental age below 18, Rule 9.7 Adventurous Activity Authorisation Scheme will apply.
- c) Rules within Chapter 9 regarding adventurous activities should be taken as guidance except Rules 9.3 – 9.6, 9.9, 9.12 and 9.64 (except a) which remain as Rules irrespective of age.
- d) Any activity that is banned applies to all age groups.
- e) Each activity must have a co-ordinator.
- f) Each participant must sign an 'acknowledgement of risk' statement and have read the guidance set out in the fact sheet FS120087 *Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities*.

Implementation of this Rule is to be determined by each Area/County no later than May 2004. Until implementation, Rule 9.7d will apply irrespective of age.

### **Acknowledgement of risk statement**

The ideal position for this is at the bottom of the form giving details of the activity, such as the form at the back of this factsheet.

***I am aware that adventurous activities ('adventurous activities' may be substituted with the specific discipline e.g. climbing, hillwalking, caving, canoeing) contains hazards which may present me with the risk of personal injury. I have read and understand***

### **The Scout Association's factsheet Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities.**

#### **Other Rules in POR that apply to adventurous activities irrespective of age:**

- Emergency Procedures, as set out in Chapter 7 and Rule 9. 5
- Rule 9.3 Home Contact
- Rule 9.4 Risk Assessment
- Rule 9.6 Large Scale Events
- Rule 9.9 Use of Professional Centres and Instructors
- Rule 9.12 Air Activities - Public Liability Insurance
- Rule 9.64 Visits Abroad (except section a)

#### **Guidance**

The following is not an exhaustive list, but sets out certain broad areas for consideration. They could be used as part of a checklist and in a Risk Assessment.

##### i) Co-ordinator

The role of the co-ordinator is to ensure that the following steps are taken

a) All administrative aspects have been dealt with, including:

- Details of the activity are published
- The acknowledgement of risk statement is signed and copies of this factsheet are made available to all participants
- All participants have a copy of the guidance card 'Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities'
- A Risk Assessment is conducted and discussed by all participants
- A Home Contact is appointed
- Relevant medical information is obtained
- The relevant Commissioner is advised

b) Liaison with an activity adviser

ii) Seeking advice

Consideration must be given to seeking technical advice where this is not available within the group. One, or more, person could be approached, for example; a person authorised under the Association's Authorisation Scheme, an experienced member of an Area/County team or an active and informed member of an appropriate club.

iii) Group management

Each group should have an adult clearly nominated to act as a focal point for group decision making. This is particularly important for communication where there are two or more groups undertaking the activity.

iv) Group size

The size and experience of the group plays an important factor in safety management. Allowance needs to be made for the safe operation of the activity in changing circumstances. The Rules and factsheets produced by The Scout Association give indications of the appropriate size for those leading groups of young people with little experience.

v) Risk Assessment

A Risk Assessment should be conducted and the conclusions shared with all participants. The factsheet FS120000 *Activities - Risk Assessments* may be used as a prompt, but bear in mind it is by no means exhaustive.

Consideration should be given to the dynamic nature of the activity. It may change due to such factors as weather conditions, progress by groups or performance by individuals. Points at which the activity might be stopped or amended should be considered as part of the Risk Assessment.

Where there is no local knowledge within the group, consideration should be given to seeking local or specific advice and incorporated within the Risk Assessment.

Consideration should be given to external factors and their impact on the activity. For example, driver fatigue and late nights.

vi) The capacity of the individual and group

The objective or task should take into consideration the experience and personal limitations of each individual. Medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, heart and breathing disorders) and fitness need to be established beforehand. It is recommended that medical information is recorded but each individual is responsible for communicating any such limitations to the co-ordinator.

vii) Appropriate technical knowledge

Common sense dictates that absolute novices should not participate in intermediate or advanced levels of activities without briefing, preliminary and progressive training.

viii) Suitable personal equipment

Primarily this relates to suitable clothing and any necessary 'spares' to deal with the operating environment. Where novices or those with little experience are involved, or the activity is complex or extended, attention should be given to providing kit lists.

ix) First Aid

Appropriate First Aid equipment should be available within the group. Every participant should have access to a person with sufficient knowledge to administer First Aid in the relevant environment. The identity of those who are to act should be advised to all participants. With activities in Terrains Zero or One, and inland water activities, the minimum knowledge is The Scout Association's First Response (or equivalent) training. For more adventurous or remote activities, a full First Aid qualification is recommended.

x) Safety equipment

The requirement for safety equipment greatly depends on the activity. Advice given should comply with the recommendations of the relevant National Governing Body

Attention should be paid to ensuring that everyone is aware of how to use safety equipment and that it is checked as functional.

If individuals are required to bring their own equipment, this should be expressly stated, together with any specifications.

**xi) An alternative plan**

Focusing on a single task, or objective, may lead to pressure in accomplishing it. An alternative plan should be considered in the run up to the activity so that a switch can be made without too much difficulty – there is always another day!

**xii) Emergency plan**

It should be clear about 'who does what' in the event of an emergency. Continuous evaluation during the activity may prevent a real emergency arising.

Where an activity is in a remote location, a route plan should be left with a responsible person in the locality, who is able to act in case the party is late returning. The Scout Association produce a Route Card template, although others that contain similar information could be used.

**xiii) Briefings**

These should be conducted irrespective of the size of the group.

Apart from a preliminary briefing given well in advance of the activity, one should be conducted

immediately before the event. This is so everyone is aware of the agreed and defined objectives, the possibility of changes and limitations, and the procedures in the event of emergencies.

**xiv) Thinking 'outside' of the activity**

Consideration should be given to any adverse environmental impact or to the effect of the activity on other people.

**Further advice and information**

This may be available via your Assistant Area/County Commissioner (Activities), the relevant National Governing Body, or by contacting the Scout Information Centre at Gilwell Park.

**Publications cross reference**

The current editions of:

*Policy, Organisation and Rules* of The Scout Association.

*Scout Led Activities Index* – FS120084

*Activities - Risk Assessment* – FS120000

*Home Contact* – FS120078



# Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities

Information and acknowledgement of risk sheet

Activity:

Date:

Venue:

Co-ordinator:

Co-ordinator address:

Co-ordinator phone number:

Co-ordinator email:

Home Contact:

Home Contact address:

Home Contact phone

Other notes:

## Acknowledgement of risk statement

*I am aware that ..... contains hazards which may present me with the risk of personal injury. I have read and understand The Scout Association's factsheet Adult Groups in Adventurous Activities.*

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....