



National Coasteering Charter promoting safe coasteering

NCC Guide Award Training Notes

Version 10 1st January 2025

Technical Syllabus

Environmental remit of the NCC Guide Award

The training course is to be delivered in a coasteering environment that would allow the trainer to explore all aspects of the syllabus with the candidates. Where conditions or sea states mean this is not possible the trainer will use alternative methods.

Part A – Personal Coasteering Skills

A.1 Swimming over a distance of 200m, in a proactive and continuous manner, this is to be undertaken in full coasteering kit.

Training could include a variety of ways to do this so that the swimmer can swim the distance, whilst taking safety equipment with them. The aim of training is to explore the level of fitness required by a coasteering guide.

A.2 Be fit and healthy enough to operate as a lead guide over a 3-hour coasteering session.

Training will explore the level of fitness required to work as a coasteering guide, not only leading, but also while dealing with a variety of scenarios, without being a danger to themselves or their group. A Guide may be expected to run 2 coasteering sessions in one day

A.3 Entering and Exiting in a variety of locations / conditions

Sharing of techniques to enable safe entry and egress on wave-washed ledges, murky water, steep climbing exits, and through waves.

A.4 Be confident in their movement over all types of terrain that present themselves such as rocky, steep or slippery ground and features.

Training will cover techniques and strategies to enable candidates to develop skills to move around confidently, at times at speed, over a variety of terrain, whilst undertaking the guiding of a group, and to demonstrate the ability to coach group members over said ground.



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A.5 Make appropriate decisions about the way that a variety of features can be used, or not, or navigated along the way.

Developing skills to enable candidates to read the water and pass on information about how water works over a variety of features, including a pour-over, a funnel, a wash through, and a swirl. Explore how these features work, to allow themselves to immerse themselves and play within them. A dynamic risk assessment and good judgement are key principles to develop.

Part B – Safety, Leadership and Group Skills

The training will give Aspirant Guides the chance to explore and discuss all the elements which make up a coasteer. This will involve a variety of skills being used to help make the coasteering session a safe enjoyable learning experience.

B.1 Skilful application of leadership principles

Training will give opportunities to try out different group strategies such as CLAP, to ensure safe group management at/in an appropriate coasteering site and/or situation.

- Communication
- Line of Sight
- Avoidance
- Position (best place)

B.2 Appropriate leadership and decision making

Training will aim to develop within candidates a range of strategies and leadership styles to suit the Group, Site and Situation which are flexible and clear in their communication and application. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Concise briefings
- Autocratic leadership style
- Democratic leadership style

B.3 Safety awareness and risk management

To follow any strategies to their final point when put in charge of a rescue situation, including being able to execute an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) correctly.



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B.4 Working with multiple guides and other people

The NCC acknowledge that providers have many different models of working dependant on the terrain, environment and types of clients and the training should reflect this. Providers may work as solo guides, assistant guides working with lead guides, multiple guides and use of trip leaders. The training courses will discuss the implications and increased responsibilities of these roles. Emphasis will be placed upon but not limited to the following:

- Implications on the supervision of clients
- Role identification and responsibilities
- Trip leader role

B.5 Exercise appropriate group control and management and show concern for the general welfare of other group members

All of the above is about the Aspirant Guide being able to effectively lead a group in the coasteering environment. The training will cover all the elements that make a coasteer and develop the skills to enable a guide to lead a successful coasteering session as a whole, in line with the aim of the NCC to promote safe coasteering. This will include but not limited to:

- Welcome
- Medical checks
- Water confidence check
- Environmental/wildlife awareness
- Good group briefings that are concise, short, and appropriate to the stage of the coasteer
- Identifying hazards
- Exits and entries - the guide should be able to show groups methods of entry and exit.
- Swimming techniques in waves and near rocks
- Venue selection
- Choosing suitable routes for the group/conditions including the supervision and guidance
- Movement on rocky or slippery ground, including basic spotting.
- Use of the group where appropriate
- Prompt and suitable decision-making
- Jump Management
- Climbing and traversing above deep water
- Spotting
- Positioning during communication and pre-empting issues
- Use of signals for communication



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- Play Spots
- Emergency exits

It is important that the Aspirant Guide learns how to add to the group dynamic, which enables swift decision-making, clear communications, and positive outcomes.

Training should start to develop the ability to judge the conditions, the route, with the ability of the group (both physically and mentally), to make appropriate decisions along with the need to modify plans as required.

B.6 Demonstrate the capability to manage a range of incidents

Training should look at a wide variety of incidents and enable Aspirant Guides to work on the practical aspects of dealing with the situations, both selecting and using the appropriate equipment. Thus, preparing them to manage any incidents which could occur during the course of a journey.

Training should highlight:

The process of maintaining an overview of the situation so that the safety and well-being of the whole group are never forgotten, including:

- Various strategies for group control, communication, leadership styles and positioning, keeping a group together e.g. group huddle.
- Moving groups in more challenging situations e.g. rips, waves, caves, zawns, boulder fields.
- Incidents e.g. a broken limb, hypothermia, unconsciousness, spinal injury, stings, foot entrapment, panic, incidents in caves, fishing line etc.
- Incidents that involve rescue in different circumstances and conditions, thereby requiring a working knowledge of a variety of approaches, which may include the use of the Group and/or Assistant Guide.

The necessity of carrying and having easily accessible equipment in line with the minimum requirements of the 'Safety Advice for Coasteering Guides' document. This will include equipment carried

- On Person such as: a throw line, knife, whistle etc.
- Essential safety equipment to be within immediate reach
- A suitable first aid kit and familiarity with the use of its contents whilst in the coasteering environment
- At least 2 reliable communication methods (e.g. Phone, PLB, VHF)



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B.7 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

Training should develop the ability to pass on tips to group members to improve their coasteering ability and confidence, as well as giving sufficient information in order to achieve a successful outcome for the session. For example, the Guide may need to give coasteerers top tips to allow them to travel across a wide gap as a group.

B.8 Be able to connect how we can learn from coasteering activities to the challenges that are threatening our coastlines and communities

Coasteering connects people to nature in ways that are more visceral than many other outdoor activities and provides an opportunity for understanding risk, challenge, and response. The candidate is expected to demonstrate ways of using coasteering and the environment they are moving through to make connections between climate-related sea-level rise, pollution, plastics and personal response to risk. As a result of this, clients will be able to better connect personal action wherever they are, to the protection of the ocean and coastal environment we treasure so deeply. Done well, all education elements to coasteering will enrich the client's experience, not dim it.

Part C – Rescue Skills

Training should provide Aspirant Guides with a broad awareness of the challenges and problems associated with leading coasteering. The candidate should be knowledgeable of the 'self/team/casualty' principles in all incidents and rescue settings"

C.1 Have knowledge of and demonstrate the skilful application of appropriate rescue skills

Aspirant Guides should work with a range of rescues and be shown how to adapt them to the prevailing conditions and features, including dealing with incapacitated coasteerers.

C.2 Understand the limitations of solo guiding and the use of group members as part of an emergency action plan

Training should explore the challenges and limitations of working as a lone guide as well as the roles and responsibilities within groups.



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C.3 Be conversant with different methods of towing

To be trained or exposed to a variety of tows in the coasteering environment, such as (but not limited to):

Foot tow
Shoulder strap tow
Husky tow (two person tow)
Chariot tow
Safety bag tow
Rescue tube tow
Towline tow
Towing using a throwline
Towing the line and not towing the casualty.

A variety of tows should be trained, in context and relevant to conditions. The trainer must make coasteerers aware of clean line and quick release methods.

C.4 Be conversant with different methods of using throw lines

Understand how to use a throwline with a rescue, including throwing rescues and throwline management, reaching rescues, and using a throwline to tow.

As well as being able to:

- Throw accurately
- Complete an unpacked Re-throw
- Use of line to cross a zawn
- Use a throwline as a swim line
- Use others/wider group to help with throwline methods

C.5 Be conversant with the use of Tape/Sling/Rope

The training should help Aspirant Guides to understand and use this as a method of rescue and or support. Discussions should be held around the advantages and disadvantages of slings vs tapes vs short length of rope/floating rope vs full throw lines. Length of tape 3- 5 M.



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Part D – Theory

Training should provide Aspirant Guides with an awareness of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups to the upper end of the remit.

D.1 Equipment, design and maintenance

The Trainer should endeavour to provide Aspirant Guides with knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment, including the most up to date. The Trainer should also provide Aspirant Guides with an understanding of how and why modern equipment has evolved, and which equipment best serves the situation. This should allow the Aspirant Guide to decide on the best pieces of equipment for their location and use.

D.2 Safety (includes Coast Guard and other Marine / Land Rescue Services)

Training will introduce the candidate to a working knowledge of how the national and local emergency services function.

D.3 Planning weather, waves, and tides

Aspirant Guides should be aware of a variety of sources of weather, wave, and tidal forecasts. Through training, they should be able to interpret weather, wave and tidal forecasts and be mindful of the conditions actually experienced. Enabling them to show an understanding of the impact of weather, tide, and sea on the conditions that they encounter at the venue.

Training should ensure Aspirant Guides have the ability to decide on the correct location for the conditions of the day given all macro and micro forecasts available; the group dynamics; and any external factors i.e. access issues and if necessary go to plan B or C.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Linked with sound judgement, Trainers should ensure Aspirant Guides are trained to deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of coasteering. It should be evident that Aspirant Guides can deal with an incident and see it safely through to its conclusion (including simple evacuations, dealing with emergency services and group care). This training should complement any other first aid training where it exists. Aspirant Guides should be encouraged to hold a current recognised two-day first-aid certificate.



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D.5 Group awareness and management

Training should develop an awareness of the full spectrum of responsibilities whilst being a Coasteering Guide.

Training should cover:

- Personal, legal and ethical responsibilities
- Conduct
- The role of the NCC and working knowledge of the Important Documents (found on the website) e.g. 'Safety Advice for Coasteering Guides' & 'Coasteering Code of Conduct for Guides'
- National and local rescue services
- Access
- Environment

D.6 General knowledge

Aspirant Guides should have a knowledge and awareness of the development, both current and past, of coasteering and the National Coasteering Charter.

D.7 Water features and hazard

Training should cover dynamic risk assessments as well as an understanding of hydrology and how to use this while leading in the coasteering environment. This will include, for example, understanding the characteristics of swell, tidal height, and surf on a range of features.

Part E - Environment

E.1 A knowledge of codes of conduct/legislation relating to local native marine life and coastline ecology.

- For additional notes regarding environmental impact and education, please see the NCC Coasteering Code of Conduct for Guides
- We recommend sitting a WiSE course to upskill your marine environmental knowledge



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Delivery of an NCC Guide Training course:

The training can be run to the requirements of the group and the conditions. It is expected to involve a mixture of classroom learning, professional discussions, and pre-course preparation, with the majority of learning done experientially, in a wetsuit, with the appropriate equipment, practising the scenarios, in the coasteering environment.

This learning will be reviewed and captured at suitable times during the day, with individual feedback given to each guide to help prepare them for assessment.

Course ratios: A maximum of 8 candidates can be trained by one trainer. If the number of candidates goes beyond this, to a maximum of 12, then a second NCC Guide Award Provider will need to be employed to support the training.