



**National Coasteering Charter**  
promoting safe coasteering

## **Normal Operating Procedures**

Dated: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024 – Version 1

Includes Guidelines for Safe Practice and Activity Risk Assessment



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## Foreword

The risk assessment for general Coasteering activities exists as a written document and is available for inspection and should be read in conjunction with this document.

- This booklet is not copyright, and colleagues are welcome to use any relevant material, However;
  
- This is the product of risk assessment and normal operating procedures through development by the NCC committee and is thus directly relevant to that institution.
  
- The NCC cannot be held liable for any of the contents, nor for any incident arising out of their misuse or misinterpretation by any third party.



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## **National Coasteering Charter Normal Operating Procedures**

### **Our Responsibilities.**

As an organisation that allows independent Coasteering guides (providers) to deliver activities solely related to Coasteering there are a number of obligations regarding Health and Safety to those deliverers, participants and the general public.

These responsibilities include:

- ❑ Fulfilling legal requirements under H & S at Work Act 1974, Management of H & S at Work Regulations 1992, and Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995.
- ❑ Developing a shared understanding of risks, risk control, safe practice and a concern for wellbeing.
- ❑ Systematically identifying hazards and controlling risks in all areas of our operation.
- ❑ Responding to internal and external events or change, thus the need for a reviewing mechanism employed at appropriate intervals.
- ❑ Developing a management system that firstly records incidents that result in injury 'or near misses' and secondly that reviews and learns from those experiences.
- ❑ Improving the quality of delivered subject matter.



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## **The Safety Review**

The manner in which sessions are delivered involve a consideration of safety together with concerns regarding education, ethics, equipment and environmental responsibility. Safe practice and good practice are at the same time inextricably linked, therefore there is a logic in examining all these areas, where appropriate, under a focus of risk assessment.

The purpose of any safety review or risk assessment is to produce a useful and workable written form of our common understanding of how and why we run our activities and structure the experience. It is not the intention of the review to produce a list of rules that protect the NCC whilst undermining the integrity, qualification or experience of any guide or tutor leading a session.

It is thus important that all providers are actively involved in any review, thus sharing the responsibility for any policy, and the implementation and updating of that policy on a regular basis.

Future reviews and updating should become relatively straight forward, as they will involve the examination of accident and near miss reports and any recommendations feedback from providers, thus provoking changes as a result.



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## **Introduction to the Normal Operating Procedures**

This document is the product of many hours of meetings involving, at times, all members of the current NCC committee. It acts as a number of indicators outlining the following:

- A set of guidelines for providers to support their delivery of NCC workshops, award courses and related activities.
- As a visible form of our systems and procedures available to any interested party.
- It should be remembered that any guidelines are intended to support the verbal systems of risk management in the delivery of courses, not to replace them.
- Each concerns section outlines some of the procedures, structures and safety concerns under the following individual headings of:

Operational/Administrative, Instructional/Qualifications, Participant, Equipment, Environmental.

## **Mission Statement**

The National Coasteering Charter strives to 'Promote Safe Coasteering' through the development and delivery of safety guidance documents, training, educational and environmentally awareness.



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## **Risk Management**

The NCC has developed a comprehensive set of documents that act as guidance to Coasteering Providers in the delivery, administration and risk management for the delivery of Coasteering activities.

This document should be read in conjunction with the current 'Safety Advice for Coasteering Providers' that can be found at:

<https://www.nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safety-Advice-for-Coasteering-Providers-V4-Feb-2024.pdf>

The Safety Advice for Coasteering Providers document consists of two main parts:

- Part One - Key Principles
- Part Two - Managing Risk in Practice

This set of Normal Operating Procedures expand upon the Normal Operating Procedures section in the safety advice document.

## **The Safe Person Concept**

The Safe Person Concept is a method where-by Guides and Providers direct their efforts into making the person safe. This usually takes place outdoors as the nature of the outdoor industry is to work and play in an inherently dangerous location. People go to such places for adventure and it's not always possible or desirable to take all of the dangers out of the activity.

For the 'Safe Person Concept' to work effectively it must be understood that all Guides and Providers, at whatever level, have the authority, as well as the duty to take immediate action in the interest of safety. This is a fundamental part of the 'Safe Person Concept'.

The Health and Safety Executive sets out a simple step-by-step guide to conducting a risk assessment (RA):

1. Identify hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate risks, evaluate existing precautions, and determine if more is required.
4. Record findings.
5. Review or establish a review process.

Irrespective of the risk-assessing model undertaken, providers must have a clear methodology for managing the risks associated with coasteering. Written documentation that outlines the steps taken to identify, manage, review, and, importantly, act upon significant risks gives the most auditable mechanism to prove that a provider has been



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diligent.

It is of paramount importance that any and all Coasteering guides, in a paid or voluntary role continuously carry out a dynamic risk assessment whilst undertaking any National Coasteering Charter (NCC) workshop, training or assessment course delivery or any NCC related activity.



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## **NCC Normal Operating Procedures for Coasteering**

These guidelines are for all coasteering sessions run in accordance with the NCC award or any session under the NCC banner.

### **Purpose**

Each individual course, workshop or session will have its own purpose whether that is the delivery of the NCC guide award syllabus, upskilling of participants or the delivery of new skills.

### **Outcomes**

If we were to undertake activities without understanding a notion of outcome or desired results, then in terms of assessing and justifying the risks, our actions would be at least questionable, if not unprofessional.

An idea of outcome besides pure skill acquisition is usually developed at the planning stage. This/the outcome is to be shared with all participants at the beginning of the session or series of sessions.

### **Operational/Administration concerns:**

All delivery staff of any NCC event or course are to be familiar with and adhere to the guidelines outlined in the current NCC document: Safety Advice for Coasteering Providers-V4-Feb-2024

<https://www.nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safety-Advice-for-Coasteering-Providers-V4-Feb-2024.pdf>

### **NCC Guide Award**

The Guide Award is overseen by the NCC award administrator with a well-documented and transparent structure of course authorisation, reports and support.

Information for the award structure can be found at:

<https://www.nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk/coasteeringguideaward/>

### **Open assessment cover**

All award providers when overseeing an Open Assessment, where the assessee does not work for any organisation or provider, must ensure that the assessee is aware of their responsibility to themselves, their participants and the general public, and that they are working under the NCC structure and covered by the NCC insurance policy. There should also be documented evidence that they have seen, read and understood the following relevant documents:

- The current NCC NOP's
- The current Generic coasteering risk assessment
- The current NCC Emergency Action Plan





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## NCC Workshops

Any provider, regional rep or qualified guide who wish to promote and deliver a coasteering workshop under the NCC banner are to adhere to the following administration procedure:

1. Complete and submit a workshop authorisation form, this must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the workshop delivery date.  
This form will include risk assessment information and an indication that each individual delivery member has read and understood the following documents:
  - ❖ The current NCC NOP's
  - ❖ The current Generic coasteering risk assessment
  - ❖ The current NCC Emergency Action Plan
2. Obtain participant participation/health forms from each individual participant prior to the event using the NCC dedicated form.
3. Complete the NCC participant registration form.
4. Submit the following documentation to the workshop admin following the event:
  - a. Completed participation/health forms
  - b. The participant registration form
  - c. A post event report including the acknowledgment that Any incident/accident and witness statement forms, if necessary

## **Instructional/Qualification Concerns**

All NCC course/workshop delivery is to be undertaken by suitably qualified/experienced providers. The provider's qualifications and/or experience will be checked and confirmed prior to the event by the submission and confirmation of the event authorisation form.

## NCC Guide award

All NCC guide award courses are to be delivered under the direct supervision of an NCC approved award provider.

The guide award has its own syllabus and guidelines which providers are to follow at all times ensuring that any relevant information for assesseses on an open assessment is read, understood and adhered to.

## NCC Workshops

The delivery of NCC workshops is to be undertaken by suitably approved, via the workshop authorisation form, NCC members, regional representatives, or external subject matter experts.

It is the event delivery staff responsibility to ensure the safety of all those participants, both NCC providers and participants. This can be achieved by ensuring the following procedures are carried out:

## Pre event admin

- Ensure and record that all delivery guides have read and understood the following NCC documents: NCC Generic risk assessment, NCC NOP's, NCC EAP.
- Ensure all participants have completed and returned a health and participation form.



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- Any questionable information of any form is investigated and actioned if necessary.
- Appropriate site specific risk assessments are carried out and recorded.
- Weather and tide information is collected and assessed to be within reasonable limits for the venue to be used. (This information will be required for the post event report).

Pre activity briefing:

- Explain the route and potential hazards.
- Physically check all safety equipment.
- Ensure that all participants have indicated that they are willing to take part in the activity on the basis of informed consent and acknowledgement of the risks involved.
- Conduct a headcount and ensure all participants are fit for the activity.

Safety Checks

- Workshop providers are to ensure they have sufficient safety equipment for the number of participants, this equipment is to include:
- Two means of emergency service communication i.e. VHF radio, PLB
- Throwlines for each member of the delivery staff
- Safety knives
- An appropriate first aid kit and suitable safety items for the venue

Pre Activity Checks

- Inspect all personal and participant safety equipment for serviceability.
- Ensure all participants are wearing the correct safety equipment.
- Check weather and tide conditions.

During the Activity

- Maintain a manageable group size.
- Keep constant communication with participants.
- Monitor participants for signs of fatigue or distress.
- Continuously carry out a dynamic risk assessment

Post-Activity

- Conduct a headcount.
- Collect and inspect equipment (if required).
- Provide feedback and address any issues.
- Ensure any incident or near miss reports, and any relevant information, are completed in full and returned to the workshop admin within 24 hours of the event completion.
- Complete and return an event report to the workshop admin.

Ratios

Workshop/event providers are to establish a safe working ratio of participants to qualified guides. These ratios are to be recorded on the workshop/event authorisation form and adhered to on the event.



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All Instructors, coaches and/or guides are to undertake dynamic risk assessments throughout the activity relating to the safety and wellbeing of themselves, all activity participants and members of the general public.

### **Participant Concerns**

Participants are to wear appropriate equipment for the event, this equipment will be directed by the lead Guide but will include:

- Appropriate activity helmet.
- Appropriate adjustable buoyancy aid.
- Appropriate wetsuit.
- Closed-toe footwear that is secure to the foot.

Briefing requirements, participants are to be briefed on the following:

- No jewellery or glasses (unless securely tied in place) are to be worn
- Ensure all relevant medical conditions are notified to the event provider
- Clear instructions are adhered to at all times.
- The provider's recommendations, briefings and guidance are followed at all times.

### **Equipment concerns**

Due to the active nature of coasteering all equipment must adhere to recognised safety standards.

Event staff are to ensure that any equipment used, either by participants or staff, is of a good quality and is in a serviceable condition for the activity to be undertaken.

### **NCC Guide Award**

All delivery staff are to ensure they have serviceable equipment for the syllabus section being delivered.

### **Workshops**

Delivery staff are to ensure they visually, and where necessary physically check, all participants equipment, paying particular attention to personal equipment brought in and worn by participants ensuring it is all in a serviceable condition.

- Safety equipment to be carried on an active water session by the guides includes:
  - Safety bag including group shelter, spare clothing and anything else deemed necessary for the practical location/venue used.
  - Two means of emergency service communication i.e. VHF radio, PLB
  - Throwlines for each member of the delivery staff
  - Safety knives for each member of delivery staff
  - An appropriate first aid kit and suitable safety items for the venue
  - An open-ended sling and karabiner
  - Waterproof notebook and pencil
  - Emergency Action Plan information
  - Watch and Whistle
  - Rescue tube (only if deemed necessary by the lead Guide).



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## **Environmental Concerns**

As part of the NCC's commitment to the environment in which coasteering takes place and the wider impact the activity has, all guides, providers and deliverers are asked to adhere to the Coasteering Code of Conduct for Guides 2024.

<https://www.nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Coasteering-Code-of-Conduct-for-Guides-2024.pdf>