

RISK MANAGEMENT SUMMARY 2021 - OVERSEAS EXPEDITIONS

Venture Force recognises the need for clients to assure themselves that the quality and safety of our activity provision and our risk analysis and management systems are suitably robust. The purpose of this document is to help organisers by providing the information usually required.

ACCREDITATION

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES LICENCE



Venture Force believes that the safety of outdoor activities is best assessed by the experience and expertise of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA). Venture Force is inspected on a triennial basis and holds a licence issued by AALA for the safe conduct of activities it delivers, as required by law. AALA is part of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who are the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.

The inspection process covers the safe management of activities and includes risk assessments, staff qualifications and the proper maintenance of equipment associated with the activities. The inspectors are experts in the field of outdoor activity delivery and the inspection is rigorous. Venture Force undertakes to conform to the requirements and guidance of the Licensing Service and its inspectors and is also subject to spot inspections. www.aals.org.uk

Venture Force Licence Number: L9111
Provider Reference Number: R1913

Venture Force is licenced to deliver activities within the following categories:

- Water Sports
- Climbing
- Trekking

In addition, AALS can (and does) include in their inspection, non-licensable activities to establish whether a “culture of safety” exists within the organisation.

EXPEDITION PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION (EPA)



“The Expedition Providers Association is the only awarding body of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom’s Quality Badge (LOtC QB) for overseas expeditions.

To be a full member represents, by independent inspection, proof of quality and safety across the business. This differs from and is justifiably more robust than all other LOtC QB accreditations.”

INSTITUTE FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING (IOL)



Venture Force is a member of the Institute for Outdoor Learning. ‘The Institute for Outdoor Learning supports individuals and organisations who use the outdoors to make a difference for others.’

EXPEDITION PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION & BRITISH STANDARD 8848



Venture Force is a full member of the Expedition Providers Association (EPA). We comply with, and in many instances exceed the requirements of BS8848 (British Standard for the provision of Overseas Expeditions). In 2016 we received the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge' for the provision of overseas expeditions.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Venture Force holds Public Liability Insurance, as required by law. It has a limit of **£10 million indemnity** for any one incident. Worldwide emergency rescue & evacuation cover is also provided for all clients.

SECURITY



Venture Force is ATOL registered giving clients (both groups and individuals) the highest level of protection possible.

EXPEDITION LEADERSHIP & STAFFING

2 X 2 LEADERSHIP TEAM POLICY

There are many companies working in the same field as us, so what is it that makes Venture Force stand out and sets us apart from the others? As well as our desire to meet our clients' needs, all our adventures and expeditions are designed and delivered in consultation with you. We believe it is our approach to safety and support whilst on expedition that really sets us apart from our competitors. We have a unique approach to leadership whilst on trips, whether it be with adults or school groups. In the case of school groups our two + two policy means that with teams of up to 16 we will always send a leadership team of four, two Venture Force leaders + two members of school staff. On adult trips, we will send two Venture Force leaders. This means that you should never be left on your own to deal with a difficult situation in a foreign country and the extra numbers give greater flexibility, a greater chance of achieving the expedition goals and greater security.

RESPONSIBILITIES

For school groups, the Venture Force expedition leader always has overall responsibility for the team while on expedition. Venture Force has responsibility for the programme, equipment and for ensuring that operating practices meet all legal requirements. Venture Force staff will be responsible for the safety and management of clients on all activities provided by Venture Force. It is essential that accompanying school staff provide information regarding individuals and offer appropriate support to enable Venture Force staff to properly perform their duties. School staff retain a duty of care at all times for participants under 18. If a participant is withdrawn from the "led" activity for any reason, then the responsibility for those withdrawn will revert to the school staff. If, at any time, school staff are unhappy about an activity it is essential that they make their concerns known to Venture Force staff at the earliest opportunity. School staff may insist that any activity does not continue on the grounds of physical or psychological harm, or that the activity is not commensurate with their planned outcomes.

STAFF COMPETENCE

All staff leading our activities will hold the relevant National Governing Body qualification or have been assessed as competent by an appropriately experienced and qualified person as required by the Licensing Service. Copies of certificates are available for inspection on request. All our leaders hold an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check or Disclosure Scotland Check and hold an in-date 16hr outdoor first aid certificate.

SUPERVISION WHEN NOT ON ACTIVITIES – SCHOOL GROUPS

Accompanying staff are responsible for the supervision of their groups when not in a structured session led by Venture Force staff. All Venture Force staff are first aid qualified and available to assist at all times. Rules regarding conduct of clients whilst on activity/expedition/adventure are discussed and agreed prior to the activity/expedition/adventure.

CHILD PROTECTION

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service and Disclosure Scotland Checks are carried out on all Venture Force staff including long-term and regular volunteers, trainees and student placements.

EXPEDITION & ACTIVITY SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

24HR UK BASED EMERGENCY OPERATIONS ROOM

For the duration of any Venture Force expedition our 'Emergency Operations Room' will monitor and support leadership teams in-country with advice and assistance. The Operations Room team is staffed by qualified and experienced personnel who have been members of the military, police or mountain rescue. They are therefore experienced and qualified to deal with emergency situations/major incidents and will take control and manage any incident to a satisfactory conclusion. This effectively leaves our leaders to manage the team on the ground.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS PACKAGE

Leadership teams have access to the latest technology that affords them international communications and a link with the VF Operations Room 24hrs a day. The package may include satellite phone, personal locator beacons and in-country mobile phones.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

All our clients complete a medical data questionnaire. The expedition manager and our medical advisor (a general practitioner and expedition leader) screen and discuss any current medical issues with each client. We then develop an expedition medical management plan for each client.

Venture Force work hand in-hand with 'Remote Medical Support' (RMS), run by experts in the field of expedition medicine. RMS advise us on medical kits specific to the team and location of each expedition, and during the expedition provide our expedition leadership team and operations room with 24-hour immediate access to expert medical advice and support.

TRAVEL INSURANCE AND REPATRIATION

From the outset Venture Force purchase comprehensive medical and travel insurance (with repatriation) for each client and member of the leadership team. This insurance is specific to the destination, environment, and activities of the expedition.

IN-COUNTRY AGENTS

To complement and add to our provision and capabilities, Venture Force liaise with and manage a group of in-country agents. Our agents supply us with important information prior to the expedition, a friendly face to teams arriving at any destination and offer our operations room and leadership teams with a local solution to problems on the ground.

TRAVEL SAFETY ADVICE

Venture Force expedition managers continually monitor the political and environmental situations in all countries to which we lead expeditions. Monitoring information supplied by the press and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office 'Travel Safety' department enables us to take a close look at the situation on the ground and in conjunction with our agents make informed choices as to the safety and suitability of each location at all times. In the months prior to each expedition and, during the trip, we make travel safety certificates available to all clients, schools and stakeholders.

EXPEDITION & ACTIVITY RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK ASSESSMENTS AND RISK BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Venture Force has a Health and Safety Policy and a Code of Practice that includes a generic risk/benefit analysis supported by activity specific risk assessments. These are held centrally and are available for inspection on request. They are updated regularly and reviewed annually by our technical advisors. Dynamic risk assessments are carried out by Venture Force leaders during the activity to account for local conditions and other continually changing factors. Risk assessments and risk management is a major part of the AALS inspection. All Venture Force clients are asked to acknowledge the residual risk inherent in adventurous activities prior to embarking on their adventure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK

We will take all steps to ensure the health and safety of you and your group whilst on Venture Force courses/expeditions. However, you must be aware that certain inherent risks remain, which are integral to the activity and these cannot be eliminated completely. The risk of serious injury is extremely remote, but some activities may result in minor injuries e.g. grazes, sprains and bruises. The level of risk in participation is no greater than that associated with, for example, normal play activity. This is not a 'disclaimer' but serves to provide information to group leaders and participants.

ASSESSMENT CREATION PROCESS

Annual Review: At the end of each calendar year and the termination our expedition season, all risk assessments are reviewed and amended in accordance with new guidelines issued by relevant NGBs and following any incidents that may have occurred during expeditions that year. Risk assessments are then signed off by our team of technical advisers in readiness for the forthcoming season.

Expedition/Programme Review: Prior to departure/commencement of Venture Force programmes or expeditions, and in consultation with VF technical advisers, our expedition managers review relevant assessments. This review will be cognisant of any up to date information available at the time including changes in client information and local conditions; both environmental and political.

On-site Assessments: VF Leaders are selected not only for their qualifications, but also for their experience and are required to carry out on-site risk assessments. If they are not entirely happy that the programme or expedition activity can be carried out safely in-line with provided risk assessments, they are authorised to amend or cancel the programme or activity.