



Hillary Outdoors' Safety System

15 May 2023

How we keep you safe at Hillary Outdoors

Hillary Outdoors understands the need for assurance at this time and would like to reiterate the systems and processes we have around all our outdoor activities.

Auditing and certification

We are audited by AdventureMark and have demonstrated conformance with the requirements of the New Zealand Safety Audit Standard for Adventure Activity 2017 and are a registered provider with WorkSafe as an Adventure Activity Operator.

We are certified to conduct the following activities:

- Abseiling
- Canoeing - open water
- Canoeing - white water
- Caving
- Cliff Jumping
- Coasteering
- High ropes
- Kayaking - Open water
- Kayaking - White water
- Other white water – river rescue
- Mountaineering
- Other snow activities – avalanche education, snow shelters, snow shoeing
- Rock climbing
- Other climbing - Via ferrata
- Waka Ama
- Zipline

We have strong and robust processes in place to ensure the safety of our clients and staff, which are outlined below.

Documents and policies

Hillary Outdoors has a Three-Tier Safety Management System which is reviewed yearly and/or updated when a major organisational change occurs.

Tier One – Fundamental Principles of Safety Management

These principles make up the over-arching tier of our Safety Management System. Each principle is accompanied by a description of how it is to be interpreted and applied. These principles describe the way that we approach all aspects of managing safety for our clients.

Tier Two – Instructor Handbooks

Instructor Handbooks are always carried by instructors working in the field with groups, and by the Duty Manager. This waterproof document contains policies, briefing points, crisis response information and hazards. The Instructor Handbook and AMPs (see below) together comprise our complete Hazard Register. This handbook focuses on documenting hazards that apply to particular outdoor environments (e.g. caves, or the bush) and to particular activities (e.g. surf kayaking, or mountaineering).

Tier Three – Activity Management Plans (AMPs)

AMPs record site-specific hazards. AMPs for outdoor sites must be read in conjunction with the Instructor Handbook. Our AMPs for outdoor sites are a 2-sided laminated A4 sheet, and are carried by the instructors when they visit a site to participate in an activity. They are often very detailed, with FLASH ratings, photos, and maps to clearly communicate other information such as radio dead zones, escape routes, safe zones and so on.

We document safety updates and bring them up in subsequent morning meetings.

Staff Competencies

We have a comprehensive and detailed competencies system that clearly outlines what skills and abilities staff need to be allowed to operate in the field. This is activity specific to a specified level and complexity, and most of our activities have site-specific components. Staff are trained in the activity then observed running the activities before they are signed off to conduct the activity without supervision.

What our operational morning meetings cover

Weather

Every morning we meet in the staff room at 8am to discuss the weather forecast for the day and the rest of the week in detail. Our weather analysis includes the following:

- The Met Service Situation Statement (a description of the weather systems affecting New Zealand weather for that period)
- The surface pressure charts for the Tasman Sea. This shows the isobaric conditions and frontal systems for the 24hr previous and a forecast for the next 24hrs.
- The rain radar for the past 24hrs which can show us real time images and any fronts that have passed which may affect river levels, and any fronts yet to arrive.
- The five and three-day rain forecasts. These show weather systems developing in that period, the intensity of winds, and rainfall expected. These longer forecasts allow instructors to plan their weeks around the weather to choose the best days for their activities.
- The Met Service National Watches and Warning page to get details of any severe weather effecting the country and in particular our operational area.
- The Met Service Thunderstorm Outlook. This captures information about any convergence that could result in thunderstorms forming. These risks have 2 components: likelihood and severity.
- Met Service Weather Forecast for the Tongariro National Park. This is a written forecast and will reference specific mountain weather hazards. It gives a detailed forecast of the winds at different elevations and what the free air freezing level is forecast to do. This page contains another visual reference for any weather watches or warnings for our operating area, has a visual of the avalanche danger, and a link to avalanche advisory.

Weather information that we also check as required.

- Met service marine forecast for Lake Taupō (if any groups are using Lake Taupō).
- Windy if there is a complex weather system or if instructors or management want further detail.
- NIWA (National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research) may also be used in addition to the above.

Other Environmental Conditions

Other conditions that affect activities in operational areas are also checked daily as follows:

- River levels are checked via the Genesis Energy – Generation page. This details real time river levels and trend analysis for rivers in our area.
- Avalanche Forecasts for Tongariro National Park.
- Volcanic Alert Levels for Mt Ruapehu.

This information is then used to decide a weather state - which will be Green, Yellow or Red. See below.

STABLE WEATHER

Unlikely affect on activities during operational period
No weather watches or warnings apply to operational areas

Field staff to be contactable



UNSTABLE WEATHER

Weather is uncertain or unstable
Possible affect on activities during operational period
Closures possible at short notice
Field staff to be contactable

DEFAULTS IF: Severe Weather Watch exists or Thunderstorm Outlook is Moderate or greater



DETERIORATING WEATHER

Direct affect on activities during operational period
Closures will exist. May affect Rivers, Caves, Campsites,
Ropes Courses, Mountain or other environments
Field staff to be contactable and DM to provide updates through operational period

DEFAULTS IF: Severe Weather Warning exists

Intentions and Peer-review

The instructors share their intentions for the day at the morning meeting. These intentions are peer-reviewed by management and staff. The duty manager will ask for comments on intentions, this gives management and any other staff member an opportunity to seek clarity, voice any issues they may have with the proposed intentions, and raise concerns if they feel intentions are not appropriate for the conditions, instructor experience or group. This is a supportive process which is used give constructive feedback to each other on proposed intentions. This is also a time where, as a team, we sort any final logistics for the day. After all the intentions have been approved, staff are asked to share any learning or safety notices they might have. This is where there may be new relevant field information that is shared amongst the staff team and is where an instructor will share details of any incidents they may have had from the days before, so everyone learns from these events.

Other Safety meetings

Teachers meeting

This is an important part of our Safety Management System. The instructors meet with their teachers after the operational morning meet and talk with them about the weather state and details of the forecast. The instructors will then discuss their intentions with the teachers and answer any questions the teacher may have about their intentions. This is a chance for any teacher or staff member to voice any issues they may have with the proposed intentions or raise concerns before they and the instructors meet their students for the day.

Field Meeting

Every Friday we have a field meeting where we discuss details of any incident or near miss that that occurred during the week. This ensures learnings are shared with everyone. We discuss any corrective actions or training that may help prevent this happening again in the future.

Management meeting

In a monthly management meeting, Hillary Outdoors management staff meet to discuss field meeting notes, and ensure these actions and potential training opportunities have been followed up.

SAC (Health and safety advisory committee)

The Hillary Outdoors Safety Advisory Committee (SAC) meet four time a year to provide the Trust and management at Hillary Outdoors with objective, external guidance and a platform for critical analysis of Hillary Outdoors safety systems and practices by both Hillary Outdoors staff and external experts.

Specifics of our Safety Management System in relation to caving

Caving is covered in several areas of our Safety Management Systems.

In our Tier 2 you will find the Caving section on pages 36-37.

On page 36 under Environmental Hazards relating to flooding, it states Caving is not permitted when weather warnings in place for rain or when environmental conditions indicate a likelihood of flooding. Duty Manager must authorise access immediately prior to entering, and be informed upon exiting, local caves. Non-local caves, follow away programme procedures, refer AMP

Communications Intentions and supervision is also outlined in our Tier 2 instructor handbook on pages 4-7

On page in relation to Intention approval it states "All activities are approved and peer reviewed at operational meetings according to Weather State, competence of instructor, group ability, access requirements, suitability of trip and logistics Duty Manager or Centres Manager has right to refuse approval for any reason"

Hillary Outdoors emergency response is outlined in our Tier 2 Safety management Systems under Crisis Management Systems pages 46-49.

In our Tier 3 our most used caves is AMP 31 for Okupata Cave.