

Field Safety

OCR Off-site Safety Management

Course Content

1. Planning off-site events.
2. Legal framework surrounding off-site activity.
3. Risk Assessment procedures.
4. Administration of off-site activities.
5. Managing off-site activities.
6. Contingency planning and incident management.
7. Post-event evaluation.

Seminar aim: To pass on the key issues and recommendations covered by the course.



Lyme Bay tragedy, March 1993

Four teenagers died during a sea kayaking trip.

“the immediate cause of the tragedy was the lamentable failure of the St Alban’s Centre to organise and supervise the canoeing activity, to employ suitable staff and to have prepared and operated sensible and pre-determined procedures when difficulties arose.”

Devon County Council Inquiry

1. Planning

1. Set clear objectives for the trip.
2. Know your group...

Students

Number
Previous experience
Capability
Fitness for activity
Social/cultural background
Behavioural issues
Special needs (mobility, medical etc)?

Staff

Qualifications (1st aid, driving, outdoor skills)
Experience
Special needs
Ratio?

Legal responsibility:

“Higher Duty of Care”

Planning Advice

Can seek helpful advice at this stage from:

- DFES.
- RGS-IBG (Expedition Advisory Centre)
- RoSPA (e.g. advice for minibus drivers)
- Young Explorer’s Trust
- British Mountaineering Council
- Met. Office
- Colleagues
- Previous risk assessments and evaluations.

2. Legal Framework

Fundamental Principles

“Duty of Care”

- Everyone has a duty of care to prevent foreseeable harm.

“Higher duty of care”

- Higher standard of care and vision associated with someone with experience/expertise.

“Standard of care”

- Level of competence associated with the proper discharge of one’s professional duties.

Statute vs Civil Law

Statute Law (associated acts)

- Law of the land (varies according to country)
- Created by Parliament in UK, establishes criminal liability.
- Cases brought by crown, police, HSE etc.
- Prison or fine.

Civil Law

- Based on judges' past decisions.
- Cases brought by private individuals.
- Financial compensation (“damages”)

Relevant Statute

Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)

- Overall responsibility for Health & Safety rests with the employer.
- Can still be charged with negligence

Management of Health & Safety Regulations (1999)

- Require planning, organising, controlling, monitoring and reviewing of arrangements for management of health & safety.
- Risk assessment and appropriate action a requirement.

Negligence

What we're ultimately seeking to avoid:

*“Acts or omissions by someone with **duty of care** in which **breach** falls below the expected standard of care in the circumstances to protect others from reasonable risk of **harm**.”*

- Having responsibility
- Being careless
- Results in injury or death

Negligence easier to refute if...

- Supervisor is competent to instruct or lead the activity (trained and experienced).
- Supervisor is aware of the abilities and special needs of the groups (students and staff).
- Group has been systematically prepared for the fieldwork being undertaken (e.g. correct clothing).
- Taught about need for safety and warned against foolhardiness.
- Group is given appropriate and adequate supervision.
- Supervisor has prepared and shared a risk assessment.
- Clear crisis management plan in place.

3. Risk Assessment

What is risk assessment?

“The conscious process applied to the identification of hazards, the subsequent evaluation of associated risks and the implementation of a series of control measures to minimise the risks highlighted.”

Why?

- To minimise risk to staff and students.
- Legal obligation (risk assessment is a legal document)

Process of Risk Assessment

1. (Review previous risk assessments).
2. Identify the hazards.
3. Who could be affected?
4. Evaluate the level of risk.
5. Identify and implement control measures.
6. Record process.
7. Review.

Consider...

Travel arrangements, venue, programme and environmental conditions.

Risk Levels

	<i>Minor</i> <i>Cuts, sprains, bruises etc.</i>	<i>Major</i> <i>Non-life threatening</i> <i>Fractures, dislocations etc.</i>	<i>Severe</i> <i>Life threatening</i> <i>Hypothermia, major fracture etc..</i>
<i>Unlikely</i>	Very Low No action required	Low No action required	Medium Further action required
<i>Possible</i>	Low No action required	Medium Further action required	High Urgent action
<i>Likely</i>	Medium Further action required	High Urgent action	Very High Suspend!

5. Managing Off-Site Activities

- Brief staff and group prior to the event.
 - *Event objectives.*
 - *Risk assessment.*
 - *Contingency plans.*
- In the field, monitor and react to:
 - *Groups response to the activity (especially participants with health/mobility issues).*
 - *Changing environment.*
 - *Be prepared to alter plans.*
- Effective deployment of staff and supervision of students.

6. Contingency Planning

- Ensure sound procedures in place before leaving.
- Adequate staffing?
- Plan and brief staff prior to event (aware of contingency plans, personal role).
- Staff & students aware of emergency procedures.
- Procedures for contacting base/next of kin.
- Take all relevant documentation (+ photocopies).
- Establish code of behaviour.
- Contingency fund.
- Spare field kit.

6. Incident Management

Minor Incident

- Deal with incident.
- Manage group.
- Assess the situation – continue or return to base.
- Report forms.

Major Incident

- STOP & THINK
- Make sure you're safe, then the rest of the group.
- Emergency services.
- Treat the injured.
- Keep rest of group occupied.
- Info for emergency services.
- Where casualties being taken?
- Contact base/insurance/home police.
- Report forms.

RIDDOR - Report of Injuries, Disease or Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1992)

Requires the reporting of serious injuries to HSE.

7. Post Event Evaluation

Essential element of the risk assessment procedure.

- Learn from the experience.
- Achievement of objectives?
- Effectiveness of planning.
- Review of any “near misses” and other safety issues.

Changes required for future years?



Case Study: School river walking trip to Stainforth Beck

Inquiry following the drowning of two children:

- No official risk assessment.
- Teachers hadn't read guidance booklets.
- No relevant qualifications.
- Continued with activity despite earlier incidents and rising water levels.
- No safety rope.
- No contingency plans.

What can we do?

1. Prior to the fieldcourse

- School safety documentation (staff and students).
- Comprehensive risk assessment – involve students in the procedure.
- Contingency plans.
- Next of kin forms (contact details, medical issues, special needs).
- Review group each year – part of the School’s risk assessment procedure.
- Safety briefing (staff and students).
- Provide any necessary training (staff and students).

Fieldcourse Checklist

- Risk assessment.
- Contingency/crisis management plans.
- Student details:
 - *Next of kin.*
 - *Medical details.*
- Accident report forms.
- First aid kits.
- Tickets/insurance documentation.
- Home contact details.

2. On the field trip

- Staff aware of roles, contingency plans.
- Monitor the activities and the response of students:
 - *Students adequately prepared/equipped.*
 - *Any students showing signs of difficulty (especially those with declared problems)?*
 - *Deteriorating conditions?*
 - *Plan B?*
- Be prepared to deal with an incident at any time.

3. On returning to Keele

- Documented evaluation of the trip.
 - *Achievement of objectives.*
 - *Domestic arrangements.*
 - *Appropriateness of risk assessment – any modifications needed?*
 - *Review “near misses”.*
- Any changes required in future.
- REMEMBER – Risk assessment is a continuous procedure, need to review and revise every year.