

What Are ASGs?

Background

In 2009, in response to several serious incidents in the adventure and outdoor commercial sectors, the Department of Labour (DOL) was tasked to determine if changes were needed to strengthen safety management systems.

In 2010, DOL released the [Review of Risk Management and Safety in the Adventure and Outdoor Commercial Sectors in NZ final report](#). The review recommended a number of actions including that:

- A tool be developed to offer generic safety guidance to the sector.
- Additional guidance be developed and disseminated widely to better inform operators about their current responsibilities, particularly activity safety guidance.

Original guidance

In 2012, Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA) was contracted to manage the development of these recommendations in consultation with the sector. This resulted in the SupportAdventure website and the Activity Safety Guidelines (ASGs).

Updates

Revisions to the ASGs were made sporadically through TIA and Recreation Aotearoa contracts.

In 2024, Register of Outdoor Safety Auditors (ROSA) was contracted to revise the SupportAdventure website.

In 2025, ROSA was contracted by WorkSafe to manage the development of new ASGs and revise existing ASGs.

Purpose

The ASGs provide practical guidance for commercial operators to manage the safety of their activities. The guidance is based on the sector's recommendations for good practice.

The ASGs aren't statutory standards imposed by law. Instead, they're guidelines that reflect good practice. Alternative practices may be acceptable as long as they're at least as good as the practices detailed in the ASGs. Operators need to be able to justify alternative practices.

Following the guidance will help operators meet their legal requirements to take all practicable steps to identify and manage hazards and risks.

Audience

The primary audience is operators in the commercial outdoor sector, which includes adventure tourism and outdoor education centres.

The secondary audience is safety auditors and regulators.

The ASGs are also useful for other people involved in the activity, eg trainers, people involved in providing the activity non-commercially such as volunteer organisations and schools, and providers of activities that involve similar hazards and risks.

Outcomes

Direct outcomes

The ASGs will:

- Provide operators, auditors, and regulators with consistent and clear recommendations on good practice for managing hazards and risks.
- Give assurance to government and the public that operators have access to current good practice.

Indirect outcomes

The development process will:

- Promote a strong safety culture by enabling and role modelling the sharing of sector safety information.
- Assure operators that they have access to, and can contribute to, information on good practice.
- Encourage the forming of activity--based communities and greater collaboration within the sector.
- Assist with establishing consistent levels of safety within and across activity groups.
- Instill confidence in stakeholders that the guidelines are driven by technical experts.

Principles

Thes following principles will guide the development and use of the ASGs.

Purpose

- ASGs will provide good practice for managing safety. They'll focus on managing significant hazards and the prevention of death and serious harm.
- ASGs will help inform decision making – they don't remove the need for site-specific hazard identification and management.

Development

- ASGs will be developed as described in the *ASG Development* document.
- The guideline development process will be used to identify activity groups who don't have a nationally recognised qualification — the group will be encouraged to engage in a qualifications development process.
- ASGs will be developed in an efficient manner, including avoiding duplication of work and using a collaborative approach with relevant organisations whenever practicable.

Content

- Content will be aimed at assisting operators develop the activity-specific aspects of their safety management systems, particularly the standard operating procedures.

- The guidelines will refer readers to www.SupportAdventure.co.nz for guidance on generic aspects of their safety management plans.
- Content will represent most commercial situations. Due to a range of sites and conditions, some operators will meet safety requirements in ways other than those recommended in the ASGs.
- ASGs will recognise other current industry-accepted guidance material. They'll refer to it or incorporate it whenever practicable.
- Content will be responsive to changes in sector knowledge and good practice.

ASGs will be hosted on the WorkSafe website and the SupportAdventure website will link to them. They're a sector resource that is freely available to everyone.