



**THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH**  
**TOURISM & CULTURE DEPARTMENT**

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**GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION / RENEWAL OF  
ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATORS (ATOs)**

**1. Introduction:**

Adventure Tourism is a **niche** domain involving travel or exploration to remote, exotic and sometimes hostile areas. The traveler steps out of his/her comfort zone to experience nature with some degree of risk be it real or perceived.

Ladakh has great potential for Adventure Tourism. However, the absence of Adventure Tourism specific Guidelines has hampered the growth of this sector otherwise having immense potential.

Taking a step forward to open opportunities and encourage local travel trade to undertake these activities for employment generation, and to ensure the safety of the adventure travelers, the Department of Tourism, Ladakh has formulated the Guidelines for Registration/ Renewal of Adventure Tour Operators willing to undertake the following activities in UT Ladakh.

**Land based:**

- All Terrain Vehicles.
- Cycling.
- Motor Cycle Tours.
- Mountaineering.
- Rock Climbing/Artificial wall climbing.
- Skiing/Snowboarding.
- Trekking.
- Zip wires.

**Air based:**

- Paragliding.

**Water based:**

- Rafting/ Kayaking etc.

These Guidelines which covers the above activities are the outcome of the due deliberations and consultation with Director Tourism Ladakh and the suggestions and recommendations of Adventure Tour Operator Associations of All Ladakh Tour Operator Association (ALTOA) and (AKTTA).

Guidelines of MOT, GOI & Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and other globally prevailing good practices have been referred while framing the guidelines for registration/renewal of Adventure Tour Operators for Ladakh.

1. **Aims and objectives:** The aims & objectives of the scheme for recognition of Adventure Tour Operator (ATO) are to encourage quality standard and service in this category so as to promote Adventure Tourism in Ladakh . These Guidelines are open for all bonafide Tour Operators/Applicants to bring them in organized sector.
2. **Definition:** An **Adventure Tour Operator (ATO)** is the one who is engaged in activities related to Adventure Tourism in Ladakh namely, **Land based** like Mountaineering, Trekking, Hiking, Zip line, ATVs, Motorcycle & Cycle Tours, Skiing, Snowboarding or any other, **Water sports** like Rafting, Kayaking or any other, **Aero sports** like Paragliding, Hang Gliding etc. or any other Adventure activities, in addition to that he may also make arrangements for transport, accommodation etc.
3. **The application for approval:** shall be submitted in person to Assistant Director Tourism/Tourist Officer of concerned area or prescribed Authority/Authorized officers of Tourist Resorts having defined jurisdiction as defined under **Ladakh Tourist Trade Act or Rules or Government order.**
4. **The Registration as an approved:** Adventure Tour Operator shall be granted by the prescribed Authority of Department of Tourism for one year initially following the laid down procedures as in the case of Travel Agency.
5. **Advisory Committee:** constituted by Tourism Department Ladakh comprising the following members namely:-

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Director Tourism Ladakh.   | Chairman         |
| Assistant Director Tourism, Leh.   | Member Secretary |
| Assistant Director Tourism, Kagil.   | Member           |
| 02 Volunteers/Expert(s) from Adventure Activity to be nominated by the Chairman. | Member           |

#### **6. Functions of Advisory Committee:**

The Technical committee shall meet at least once in three months every year. The committee is responsible for the following:-

- a. To identify the new Adventure area and also to fix carrying Capacity of Area for particular activity to avoid mushrooming keeping in view the ecological balance of that destination.
- b. To suggest the measures for identifying new tourist destinations and to develop versatile adventure circuits for tourists.

### **Establishment of Regulatory Committee:**

The committee comprising the following members.

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Assistant Director Tourism Leh and Kargil.<br>(in respective districts)                | chairman |
| Officer In charge tourism at Sub - Division and Tehsils                                | Members  |
| SHO / Choki officer of the area concerned.   | Member   |
| 01 Volunteer/Expert from adventure activity to be nominated by Director Tourism Ladakh | Member   |

### **7. Regulatory Committee constituted shall be responsible for:-**

- I. To inspect and certify the equipment both quality and quantity wise and also recommending if any extra equipment like rescue kiosks, etc are required.
  - II. To scrutinize the bio-data and certificates of operators/Guides/Staff of Adventure Tour Operator and recommend the case(s) for registration to the prescribed authority.
  - III. To ensure that ATOs shall follow the safety guidelines in letter and spirit.
  - IV. Regulating operation and surprise inspections and also ascertain that the rules and guidelines/SOPs are being implemented.
  - V. Any other function assigned by Authorities from time to time.
8. **The renewal/extension:** thereafter shall be granted for two years after inspection conducted by the **Regulatory Committee** on an application made by the registered ATO along with the requisite fee & documents.
  9. **The inspection for first approval/renewal:** shall be conducted by the **Regulatory Committee** within a period of thirty working days from the receipt of complete application.
  10. **The following conditions must be fulfilled:** by Adventure Tour Operator (ATO) for grant of registration/renewal or extension by Directorate of Ladakh:-
  11. **The application for grant of registration/renewal:** or extension shall be in the prescribed form and submitted in original along with the necessary documents.
  12. **ATO should have a minimum:** paid up capital of Rs. 01.00 lakh duly supported by the latest Bank Balance Sheet or firm's Statutory Auditor's certificate.
  13. **The minimum office space:** should be at least 100 sq.ft for Leh and Kargil cities and 150 sq.ft for hilly areas. The office should be located in neat and clean surroundings and equipped with telephone, fax and computer etc. there should be sufficient space for Reception and easy access to toilets.
  14. **ATO / Qualified staff (Guide):** ATO should have a minimum of one qualified staff above 18 years of age, should have Certificate of Advance/Method of Instructions from National or International Adventure Institutions like JIM&WS Pahalgam, IISM – Gulmarg, NIM –Uttarakhand, NIWS – Goa any other National / International Institute or having three years of practical experience. The proprietor must have 10+2 as educational qualification.

15. **The Operator / Agency**: must clearly indicate its specialization of activities or activity it wishes to pursue as business like Trekking, Water sports, Aero sports, Safaris etc.
16. **The operator must**: have his/her own Adventure equipment (whether purchased or hired) along with accessories required but at no point shall he be operating in absence of any equipment to ensure safety.
17. **Technically Trained Staff / Field members**: (Guides) of the company must be qualified in ***First – Aid / C.P.R*** by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
18. **The party must sign**: an undertaking/affidavit for adherence to sustainable ecological practice and protection of environment in keeping with guidelines for eco-tourism and safety cum security guidelines of Department of Tourism Ladakh.
19. **The agency must maintain**: in its office premises all the maps and reference material concerning the particular activities it desires to pursue as business.
20. **The Agency/ATO**: should have filed Income Tax Return for the current assessment year.
21. **Safety guidelines**: for trekking, mountaineering, Skiing, Water sports, Aero – sports, Safaris etc to be followed by ATOs have been mentioned in subsequent chapters.
22. **Insurance**: Since Adventure has an in – built risk factor, the Clients & ATOs must be covered by insurance. It covers accidental deaths, loss of limbs and permanent / partial disability.
23. **Disclaimer**: Department of Tourism UT of Ladakh would not be responsible for any mishap or accident or any claims by clients of the approved ATO.
24. Agency/ATO would be required to Pay a non – refundable fee of Rs.1000/- (Rupees Thousand only) towards an Adventure fund while applying for the Registration and renewal of the Head Office as well as each Branch Office. The application for ATO/Agency/Registration/renewal is appended as Annexure I.
25. Agency/ATO so granted Registration/ Renewal or extension shall be entitled to such incentives and concessions as may be granted by Government of Ladakh from time to time and shall abide by the terms and conditions of recognition as prescribed from time to time by Department of Tourism UT Ladakh.
26. In order to carry out operation of Adventure activity for which the Agency/ATO is registered, the ATO/Agency shall apply before Assistant Director/Tourist Officer of the concerned districts who in turn will forward the case along with recommendations to Director Tourism Ladakh for obtaining permission in any tourist area.
27. The Agency/ATO registered by any designated authority of Ladakh Tourism is eligible to operate business throughout the State subject to grant of permission from the concerned authority.
28. Children below 12 years age shall not be permitted to undertake the following adventure sports and other high risk activities.
  - a. Rafting.
  - b. Mountaineering.
  - c. Solo-paragliding, hang gliding, solo Para-sailing.
  - d. Solo ATV/Snow Biking.

**Rigzin Samphel, IAS**  
**Commissioner/Secretary,**  
**Department of Tourism,**  
**Union Territory of Ladakh.**

## **GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY AND RESCUE IN ADVENTURE SPORTS**

An Adventure Tour Operator is one who is engaged in activities related to Adventure Tourism in UT Ladakh, namely, water sports, aero sports, or land based adventure activity like mountaineering and trekking.

1. Every group of persons taking part in adventure sports must be accompanied by a person designated as "Guide".
2. Staff/Guides must possess appropriate Technical qualification and skills as indicated in relevant chapters of this document.
3. Every person joining a group engaged in adventure sports must receive an introductory training and leaders should be satisfied that they have acquired the skills necessary to participate.
4. Staff/Guides should have a first aid certification and must be competent to impart first aid training in the use of stretchers.
5. Staff/Guides should be familiar with search procedures and should brief all group members in these procedures.
6. All group members must be familiar with the use of radios where these are being used.
7. Staff/Guides should be familiar with helicopter operations, know how to approach a helicopter and procedures for being winched up and down, where needed.
8. Staff/Guides should be proficient in the use of maps and compasses in any weather by day or night.
9. Staff/Guides should be satisfied that all members are medically fit to take part in the adventure sports.
10. Staff/Guides should satisfy themselves that equipment to be used meets all the safety norms for each adventure sport; all inspections have been carried out as recommended by the manufacturer and is fit for use.
11. Under no circumstances should the capacity rated by the manufacturer if adventure sports equipment be exceeded, any unauthorized modifications except as additional safety measures be carried out or sub standard material used.
12. Information regarding nature of activity, area of operation, period of activity, possible hazards, persons to be contacted in an emergency and list of members should be given to the concerned safety and rescue committees constituted by the Adventure Tour Operator.
13. Suitable hand held devices with graded distress signal capabilities should be made available to adventure tourist groups at suitable prices when available in India.
14. A qualified Doctor should be available on call.

15. Communication facilities such as Mobile Telephone / Walkie-Talkie etc. should be available.
16. The ATO must follow a strict '**leave no trace**' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.
17. All SOPs and Operating Instructions as suggested in respective Adventure Activity to be strictly followed by ATO in letter and spirit.

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS (CHECK LIST) REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION / RENEWAL  
OF ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATOR / AGENCY**

| s.no. | Particulars   |
|-------|---|
| 1.    | Application duly filled in (Annexure I).  |
| 2.    | Two self attested photographs of owner/ proprietor along with photographs of furnished Office and Adventure Equipment.  |
| 3.    | Undertaking of Non- Conviction as per TT Act 1978/82 2011 in original to be attested by First Class Magistrate or Judicial Magistrate.  |
| 4.    | A copy of PAN Card and Income Tax Return for the last Assessment/ current Assessment year, as applicable.   |
| 5.    | Reference letter from Bank on its original letterhead regarding the firm's bank account with address & telephone numbers including Minimum Balance of Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only).  |
| 6.    | Details of proprietor giving Name, educational qualification. The proprietor must have 10+2 as educational qualification (copies of certificates to be enclosed).   |
| 7.    | Details of Staff giving names, educational qualification, technical qualification in Adventure Sports & experience in Tourism / Adventure activities (copies of certificates to be enclosed).   |
| 8.    | Details of Guide(s)/Instructor(s) with name(s), educational and technical qualification or experience of three years (copies to be enclosed).   |
| 9.    | Copy of the First-aid and CPR certification by Red Cross or equivalent body or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.   |
| 10.   | Details of ownership of office premises, whether located in commercial or residential area, office space in sq. ft. (The minimum office space should be 100 (Urban)/150 sq. ft (Rural) with accessibility to Toilet and Reception area. |
| 11.   | PRC, Adhaar Card and Character Certificate of the proprietor and each Guide employed.   |
| 12.   | All documents should be duly stamped and attested by the proprietor/Managing Director of the firm.  |

**Annexure - I****To,****The Director/Assistant Director/Tourist Officer,**  
\_\_\_\_\_, Ladakh.

Sir/Madam,

I request that I may be registered as an Adventure Tour Operator within the UT of Ladakh to carry out the adventure activities. The particulars required for the purpose are given hereunder:-

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | Name of the Firm and its registered address   |  |
|  | Year when the firm was established  |  |
|  | Whether the firm is proprietary/ partnership/ Private or public limited Concern   |  |
|  | Month and Date when the firm was registered.  |  |
|  | Capital Standing in Bank.   |  |
|  | Names of Director/Directors, Partners   |  |
|  | If already working as Travel Age? (Yes/ NO) If yes. Details of Travel Agency/Registered Authority.  |  |
|  | Name of bankers with which the firm has an account (attach reference from the Bank).  |  |
|  | Name of Auditors (a balance sheet and profit And loss statement pertaining to the Travel Adventure Business as prescribed under company law must be submitted by each applicant). |  |
|  | ITR for the Current Assessment Year   |  |
|  | Adventure activity applied for  |  |
|  | Branches of the firm in the country   |  |
|  | Please indicate whether you comply with the norms of the Insurance  |  |
|  | Please indicate which relevant Insurance has been done as mentioned under section 16.1.   |  |
|  | Particulars of foreign firms if any   |  |

I do hereby declare that my firm/agency complies with the norms of the Insurance as specified in the Ladakh Adventure Tour Operator Guidelines. I further declare that the relevant rules and laws under Tourism Trade Act 1978/82/2011 shall be adhered to in letter and spirit. Any other permit/NOC to be followed in the proposed area of operation would be complied.

**Signature of the Applicant****Date:****Address:**

## **ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATVs)**

**1.1 ATVs** (also known as quad bikes), when operated properly, can be exciting and safe. However, their incorrect use can lead to serious injuries. Though ATVs are very similar to cars motorcycles, their operation is very different. ATV operation requires a different level of instruction and training. These minimum standards have been outlined to promote safe practices among operators of ATV tours.

### **Guides:**

**1.2** Guides supervising participants on All Terrain Vehicle (ATV). Accreditation given by any International Institute's may be accepted. Alternatively the guide should have a Driver's Training Course on All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) or a valid License from Regional Transport Office, Ladakh and be competent in :-

- An introduction to the ATV machine.
- Protective clothing, equipment and pre-ride inspections.
- Range signals, rules and warm up exercises.
- Controls and starting the engine.
- Starting out, shifting gears and braking.
- Turning.
- Riding strategies / risk awareness.
- Riding circles and figures of eight.
- Quicker turns.
- Sharp turns.
- Quick stops and swerves.
- Quick stop in a turn.
- Riding over obstacles.
- Safe and responsible driving practices.
- U-turns and traversing hills.
- Circuit or Trail rides.

**1.3.** In addition, all guides must be familiar with (and assessed on) the operating manual(s) of the ATV(s) which they operate.

### **CUSTOMER TRAINING :**

**1.4 ATV operators** should always follow the instruction in their Owner's Manual for recommended operating techniques. All participants of an ATV tour must receive a basic training course before their tour commences. The basic minimum training course should cover the following:

- a) To mount and sit on the ATV correctly, locate and operate the controls, and dismount.
- b) To use the brakes properly to bring ATV to a smooth, safe stop.
- c) To demonstrate basic turning skills by shifting weight properly to maintain balance and avoid the possibility of losing control of ATV.
- d) It is very important that all participants pay attention to the instructions provided by their guides.

### **Equipment :**

**1.5 ATV Machine:** ATVs are subject to considerable wear and tear owing to the nature of their use outdoors. Therefore, only use an ATV from a reputable manufacturer and ensure maintenance is undertaken as per operating manual instructions.



- 1.6 Helmet:** The single most important piece of protective gear riders must wear is a helmet, which can help prevent serious head injuries. Wearing an approved motorcycle helmet does not reduce essential vision and hearing. Use either a full face or three-quarter (open-face) helmet. Helmets must be properly fitted to the participant – it should be snug, comfortable and securely fastened.
- 1.7 Face shield or goggles:** If the ATV tour is in a jungle or in areas with dense foliage, a face shield or goggles should be used to prevent eye injuries.
- 1.8 Gloves:** Gloves should be of a quality that will help prevent your hands from getting sore, tired or cold, as well as offering protection in the event of a spill/fall. Off-road style gloves, available at leading motorcycle and ATV dealerships, provide the best combination of protection and comfort. They are padded over the knuckles for added protection.
- 1.9 Footwear:** The minimum protective footwear is a pair of ankle-length shoes or boots with low heels to help prevent feet from slipping off the footrests.
- 1.10 Clothing:** It is important to protect your skin from scratches. A long sleeved jersey/sweater, shirt or T-shirt and long trousers are requirements for rider protection.
- 1.11 Spares & First Aid:** It is recommended that guides carry an appropriate first aid kit and tool kit during an ATV tour. Examine the tool kit that came with your machine.

### **Inspections & Maintenance Procedures:**

- 1.12** Before commencing each trip, Guides must carry out an inspection of any ATV to be used by themselves or their customers, before each ride. An inspection will minimize the chance of injury or malfunction, ensure long-term usage of your ATV. The ASI uses the following basic T-CLOC checklist:

(T-CLOC stands for Tyres and Wheels, Controls and Cables, Lights and Electrics, Oil and Fuel, Chain/Drive Shaft and Chassis).

### **SOPs & Operating Instructions**

- 1.13** The following rules should apply to all participants and guides during an ATV tour:
- a) All participants must wear a helmet and other protective equipment.
  - b) Always keep both hands on the handlebars and both feet on the footrests of ATV during operation.
  - c) Avoid paved surfaces – ATVs are designed to be operated off paved roads.
  - d) Avoid public roads unless the machine has been specifically manufactured for this purpose and complies with the relevant automotive licensing requirements for road use.
  - e) Never allow riding under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  - f) Never carry a passenger unless the machine has been specifically designed and manufactured to do so.
  - g) Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed as mandated by the Manufacturer of the machine.
  - h) Extreme care must be taken not to undertake random off roading as it has deep Impact on the ecology of the area.
- 1.14 Special arrangements for Children:**
- a) Children under the age of 18 require parental consent to ride ATV and adult supervision.
  - b) ATVs are NOT toys and children aged below 18 years should only ride the right

ATV for their age.

- c) Always follow the manufacturer's minimum age recommendations which will be shown on the ATV or in the Operating Manual.

### **1.15 Documentation :**

The following is the basis minimum documentation required.

- ATV and associated equipment purchase documentation, including warranty, service & maintenance history documentation.
- Owners / Operating Manual for each ATV.
- Training and assessment log for all guides.
- First aid certificates for all guides.

### **1.16 Risk Mitigation:**

- A basic risk assessment should be conducted on any trail intended for the use of ATV tours before participants are permitted to use such a route.
- An Emergency Action Plan must be in position and regular training imparted to the staff for the same.

### **1.17 Emergencies and rescues:**

A first aid kit must be available and the venue/route itself must be easily accessible. In addition, a detailed emergency procedure must be written that includes contact numbers of the available emergency services. Evacuation routes and emergency procedures must also be included in the company's risk assessment.

### **1.19 Safety Briefing:**

A pre ride safety briefing covering all aspects of risks and action to be taken both by conducting staff and the participants should be covered in details, some aspects are highlighted below.

- Rules and speed limits.
- Wearing of protective gear.
- ATV controls operation and pre ride checks.
- Rider responsibilities and risk awareness.
- Group riding procedure to include lane
- Position, following other vehicle, head lights, signals and parking.
- Handling dangerous surfaces and any special riding conditions.
- Indemnity bond by participant.
- Avoiding alcohol prior to/during the ride.
- Staying hydrated and rest stops.

### **1.20 Medical Concerns:**

**These are of two types:** Personal and Accident related during the ride. For personal medical conditions clients should be advised to carry medication and inform the ride leader. For accident related concerns, the ride leader should have a plan in addition to a First Aid Kit.

### **1.21 Basic Minimum Standards for Grant of Recognition to ATV Operators :**

- a) The agency must own ATVs and all accessories and safety gear as specified above. The ATVs must be well maintained, serviced and in perfect working order with the required documentation.
- b) The agency must have at least one full time trained ATV guides, knowledgeable about conducting ATV activity safely, group dynamics, rules, communication skills and repairs / punctures etc. They must possess valid First Aid / CPR certification by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- c) The operator must have SOPs for conducting ATV trips and an Emergency Action Plan for all trips.
- d) A detailed risk assessment must be carried out prior to conducting ATV trips.
- e) A list of hospitals in the vicinity of the tour should be carried by the ATV guides.
- f) A detailed SOP for inspecting ATVs, documentation and safety gear prior to conducting trips must be in position.
- g) The agency must have a registered office.
- h) The agency must be registered with the local tourism authorities.
- i) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

### **CYCLING TOURS**

- 2.1** Bicycling tours in India have been managed by privately owned companies and do not fall under the purview of any government or any community-instituted central body. The Cycling Federation of India organizes races and tours for licensed elite athletes for prize money. Any tours where amateur athletes/ holidaymakers are entering into a commercial contract with a touring experience provider do not require any permissions from any sport related bodies

### **Adventure Guides/ Instructors: Basic minimum qualifications and experience**

- 2.2** While there are no technical criteria of qualifications required, these are experiences that will help a tour leader ensure a successful trip:
- a) Experience of being in the saddle and riding the distance covered per day. This will ensure that they are alert and not fighting their own fatigue. In a staged tour that lasts multiple days, the guests will experience cumulative fatigue; the tour leader cannot be in the same position. They need to have spent time cycling, so they do not experience saddle soreness and are able to help their charges and ensure a good experience for them.
  - b) Knowledge of the terrain being traversed, potential hazards of that area, typical weather conditions, in addition to knowledge of Hindi, English and or local language are required.
  - c) The knowledge to assess which customer needs what size of helmet and how to tighten or loosen the various straps to ensure a snug fit on their heads.
  - d) First-aid and CPR certification by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
  - e) Basic knowledge of bike maintenance while on tour and fixing issues such as punctures, gears not working well and other such minor repairs.

- f) Owning a government authorized identity card and keeping it with them for the duration of the tour.

### **Training:**

**2.3** No specific training is required to be a cycling tour operator in Ladakh. However, it is helpful if the organizers meet the basic qualifications listed above. It will go a long way towards ensuring the safety and well-being of the clients and ATO's own confidence in its operation.

### **Equipment required:**

**2.4** Tour operators usually give their clients the option of bringing their own bicycles or providing bicycles to them.

- a) In the former case, the minimum materials needed would be spares, tyres, tubes, tyre levers, patch kits, brake and gear cables and their housing, chains, chain links, lubricants, floor pump with presto and shredder valves, multi tool or Allen keys, small screw drivers, duct tape and zip ties.
- b) In the latter case, in addition to the above, add bicycle specific spare components such as brake shoes, drive train components, spokes, spoke wrench, etc.
- c) Bikes should be delivered to the clients fully built and ready to ride after individual saddle height adjustments.

### **Cycling Grades:**

**2.5** It is important to categorize the biking /road cycling itinerary with proper grades so that the clients can choose their trip as per their level of fitness and preparedness:

**Grade 1: Easy** - For those new to cycling or who don't have a high level of fitness. Easy combination of flatter or gently undulating routes. For riders seeking a very relaxed holiday. Beginners: 20-40 miles / 30-60 kms. per day.

**Grade 2: Gentle** - On undulating or rolling terrain, occasional moderate / challenging climbs. No high altitude ascents & the odd short steep climbs. For semi-regular riders / relative novices wishing to gain experience & fitness. 40-50 miles / 60-80 kms per day.

**Grade 3: Moderate** - For riders with experience, good fitness & a decent level of skill. Some features that may be experienced more frequently in a higher-grade tour. Most days include a couple of significant climbs. Some long days & some steep to very steep sections. Not for beginners. 45-60 miles / 70-95 kms per day.

**Grade 4: Challenging** - For cyclists with stamina & a good level of fitness. Long challenging days with multiple tough or high altitude ascents, with steep sections over extended distances. Long & often technically demanding descents. Road riding for experienced riders. 45-95 miles / 80-160 kms per day.

**Grade 5: Demanding** - Designed for cyclists with good stamina and a high level of fitness. Consecutively long, challenging days with multiple serious or high altitude ascents. Frequent steep or very steep stages occasionally over extended distances. Includes long and often technically demanding descents. Serious road riding for experienced riders only. 60-100 miles / 95-160kms per day.

### **Equipment care and maintenance:**

**2.6** Maintaining the bicycles is critical to ensure every group of customers has a good experience. To do so, here are components of the trip that need care:

**Bicycles:**

- a) Ensure the bicycles are given care after every trip. This would include:
  - i) Cleaning the bicycle.
  - ii) Lubricating the chain.
  - iii) Drive train service.
  - iv) Check chain health.
  - v) Check brake and gear cable tension.
- b) Get a complete strip down service done with a trusted bicycle shop, for each bicycle every 1000 kms. You should get from them, a list of jobs carried out per cycle, parts replaced and have a sense of how long each of the parts are likely to last.
- c) If the bicycles have been through a tough rocky terrain or a muddy region, inspection for damage and/ or sending them for inspection to a bicycle shop is recommended.

**Helmets:**

- a) Cycling helmets by respectable brands, stocked for all sizes from extra small (XS) to extra large (XL).
- b) It is mandatory to use helmets on all rides and at all times

**Lights:**

- a) Head lights: Head lights that are powerful enough to see the road at night/ in foggy or rainy conditions. Typically, headlights with mounts, that can be removed easily when the bikes are being left by themselves.
- b) Tail lamps: Tail lamps that is powerful enough to be visible and provide the option of rapid blinking, so they are more visible to oncoming motor vehicles.
- c) Spare batteries for each of the lights.

**Material carrying equipment & safety equipment:**

- a) Panniers and racks for luggage.
- b) Bungee cords to tie additional material to the bike rack.
- c) Cable locks to lock the rear tyre, possibly the front tyre, the frame of the bicycle to a pole, a gate or a similar construction.

**Inspection & Maintenance Procedures:**

2.7 Listed above.

**SOPs & Operating Instructions:****2.8 SOPs:**

- a) Inspect gears 1-2 days before travel.
- b) Check weather conditions.
- c) Reach out to all service providers en route and get confirmations, if possible on email, of the terms of agreement with them.
- d) Check cash, cheque and card usage en route and ensure there are sufficient funds.

**Operating instructions:**

Instructions for tour leaders to customers:

- a) Give all customers a safety briefing at the start of the tour, such as not riding more than two abreast, right of way to larger vehicles, hand signals and following instructions of the tour leader.

- b) Explain to them how the bicycle gears function.
- c) Get them used to riding on seat posts, heights that are higher than what they are likely to be used to, from childhood, if these are inexperienced cyclists.
- d) Explain the importance of a helmet to be worn at all times on the saddle, the right way to wear one snugly and the importance of wearing a helmet of the correct size.
- e) Check for medication clients are on
- f) And ensure that they are carrying sufficient dosage for the duration of the tour.
- g) In case of self-guided trips the guides
- h) must give the travelers a briefing of do's and don'ts including how to engage with The locals and where to stop / not stop.
- i) Self-guided riders must check in with the local operator on a daily basis to update them on their well being.

### **2.9 Documentation:**

- a) Maintain a log book of all gear (cycles, helmets, racks, panniers, backpacks, lights, locks, etc.).
- b) Copies of permits to enter a region, if relevant.
- c) Copies of the tour operator's credentials.
- d) Copies of the identity and emergency contact details of each client.
- e) Mandatory insurance copies of each client.
- f) List of doctors & hospitals as well as ambulance providers along the route.
- g) List of reliable bicycling stores (which manage the cycle brands being used) along the route.
- h) Emergency Action Plan.

### **Risk Mitigation:**

### **2.10 Risk to humans:**

- a) Recommend a comprehensive medical checkup prior to a tour. Ask for a doctor's certificate of fitness while signing up for the trip, if the distance and terrain are challenging.
- b) Ensure customers have medical insurance and that copies of the insurance are handed over to the guide before the start of the trip.
- c) Ensure you have information like blood group, known allergies, known medical conditions, emergency contact persons (at least two names and numbers).
- d) An indemnity form signed by each tour participant that states that they are taking sole responsibility for their own well-being during the trip and this legally keeps the tour leader and touring company safe.
- e) In case of self-guided trips a detailed briefing covering the cultural situation in India, safety of women etc. should be given prior to commencement of the trip.

### **Equipment risk:**

Tour operators must ensure that:

- a) A comprehensive first-aid kit is carried on the trip. Do ensure that all medicines are within expiry period.
- b) All bicycles are in good condition to ride – this should be confirmed by a service professional.
- c) Lights (head lights and tail lamps) on all bicycles.
- d) Helmets for all riders.
- e) Support vehicle is close-by at all times.
- f) In a group with people of varied abilities the operating company must ensure that there is a leader and follower for every day.

## **2.11 Emergencies & Rescues:**

a) To deal with an evacuation required due to natural disasters etc., assess emergency evacuation procedures for the various places the tour will go to.

b) In an emergency situation, the touring group takes and follows instructions from the tour leader. This information needs to be communicated to the group at the start of every tour.

c) The Tour Leader must assess the situation and administer first aid as appropriate and call for back-up as soon as possible.

d) To deal with cases of medical emergencies, assess proximity to hospitals, time taken to reach there and mode of transport.

e) If there is a medical emergency and the tour leader is occupied with the emergency, the company must set a practice of how to manage the rest of the group.

### **Safety briefing:**

**2.12** Leaders are required to give a brief demonstration of the bike (brakes, gears, any possible adjustments). It is recommended this happens before clients are given their individual bikes to ensure that they all focus on the explanation. The briefing to the clients must include:

a) Keeping identification with them always.

b) Taking ownership for assessing if they feel unwell or not up to the trip at any point and alert the tour leader.

c) Riding safely, riding as per traffic rules.

d) Keeping their helmet on at all times, while on the saddle.

e) Using lights when conditions require it.

f) Cleaning bicycles and keeping them ready for the next day of travel.

g) Following instructions of the tour leader at all times, especially emergencies briefings during the trip:

### **Evening briefings:**

On the evening prior to each ride the leader must explain the next day's riding to the whole group. Points covered will include:

a) Using a map to show the overview of the route for the day.

b) Any included transfers needed as part of the travel on that day.

c) Expected distance of the days ride.

d) Expected terrain (road surface, ascent and descent).

e) Planned stops: notable rest stops, lunch, and any visits.

f) Where the ride will finish and the accommodation they will be using that night.

### **Route descriptions:**

At rest stops and re-grouping points during the ride leaders are expected to give short 'next section' briefing to let clients know what is coming up:

a) The distance and approximate duration of the next section.

b) Any known hazards (road surface, heavy traffic, steep descents, difficult route finding etc) and how to avoid them.

c) Any directions and junctions the group should look out for.

d) Points of interest to look out for the next planned stopping or re-grouping point.

### **Medical concerns:**

**2.13 Covered above.**

## 2.14 **“Basic Minimum Standards” for grant of recognition to operators**

- a) Tour operator organization to have :**
- i) Minimum one personnel qualified for the job (specified above).
  - ii) First aid /CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
  - iii) Well maintained bicycles, (if being offered), basic safety equipment and tools.
  - iv) Knowledge of the region – history, geography and culture; permits needed for the region, inherent risks (natural, political, social, etc.).
  - v) Registered office.
  - vi) Recognition by Tourism Department, Ladakh.

**b) Tour leaders with experience of:**

- i) Riding bicycles on the road for multiple days and riding the distance covered by the tour.
- ii) Good communication skills.
- iii) Ability to converse with government authorities and get relevant permissions.
- iv) Ability to plan and schedule all events in advance.
- v) Ability to deal with an iron out issues on the trip.
- vi) Administering first aid and helping clients with medical insurance should the situation arise?

- c) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.**

## **Mountain Biking**

2.15 Guidelines for mountain biking tours are similar to biking. There are some additional MTB specific guidelines a tour operator must ensure:

### **Trail rules for mountain biking**

**a) Ride open trails only:**

- i) Do not use prohibited trails. In national parks only designated trails are permitted.
- ii) Take necessary permission for restricted trails. Reserve forests may issue entry ticket with fees.
- iii) Respect land rules for open trails.

**b) Leave no trace:**

- i) Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage than dry ones.
- ii) When trail is soft, consider other riding options. Do not create new trails or cut switchbacks.
- iii) Do not ride around standing water, it widens the trail.
- iv) Pack out as much as you pack in. Also consider picking up any litter on the trail.

**c) Control your bicycle:**

- i) Lack of attention even for a moment can lead to serious problems for the rider and others.

**d) Follow suggested speed limit.**

**e) Trail etiquette:**

- i) Make all efforts to alert other trail users. A friendly greeting or ringing the bell will do.
- ii) All downhill users must yield to uphill users.



- iii) All mountain bikers must yield to trekkers and animals on trails.
- iv) Always anticipate other trail users around corners.

**f) It is important to watch out for animals on the trail.**

**g) Plan ahead for unusual conditions:**

- i) Know your equipment, ability, terrain, riding conditions, weather and available resources on route.
- ii) Always stay in touch with your group.
- iii) Carry clothes for change in weather conditions.
- iv) Strive to be self-sufficient.
- v) Follow all safety rules.

## **MOTORCYCLE TOUR OPERATORS:**

**3.1** Motorcycle touring is a lot of fun and is filled with a sense of freedom, as against a car, but can also be a fairly high risk activity. Therefore, needs to follow a set of rules and practices to keep all involved safe especially in a commercially organized group riding scenario where all participants are a disjointed group. Adventure activities by their very nature involve some risks, these regulations are being introduced to ensure that tour operators who offer motorcycle adventure tours, have basic safety and operating standards in place.

**3.2** These regulations will give both foreign and domestic tourists confidence that appropriate steps have been taken to keep them safe and mitigate the risks involved.

### **APPLICABILITY:**

**3.3** These regulations will apply to operations and services of travel agencies and tour operators, who organize or sell, motorcycle tourism related services to public for business purposes.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

**3.4** To increase safety consciousness among tour operators as well as enabling tour operators to determine safety standards which apply to motorcycle tour operations and expeditions.

## **ADVENTURE GUIDE/INSTRUCTOR – BASIC MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:**

**3.5** Who is an Operator? Any person whether employer, a principal, or self employed person who provides an adventure activity to a person directly or indirectly for a payment, the purpose of which can be educational/recreational/ business and deliberately exposes the participant to a risk of a possible serious harm.

**3.6** Basic Qualifications/Requirements. A tour guide/instructor should possess these basic minimum qualifications/experience.

- a) Drivers License. Operator should have held a full motorcycle license for a minimum of 5 years, and have adequate experience of riding in all types of terrains in India - Himalayas, Coastal, Deserts, National parks etc.
- b) Should preferably have completed a basic motorcycle safety course from a recognized Institute.
- c) Should have basic knowledge of the working and running repair of a motorcycle that is being used in the expedition.
- d) Should have valid first aid and CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- e) Have adequate computer skills and ability to handle/operate a GPS.
- f) Have basic map reading skills and ability to use a compass.
- g) Have customer handling and motorcycle group management skills.
- h) Possess adequate know how of traffic rules and general rules and regulations of area of operation.
- i) If the customer group does not speak Hindi or English, the operator must have a Guide who speaks the language of customer rider.
- j) For an expedition that is more than 4 days or operates in remote areas or had a group size more than 7 riders, a backup logistic truck may be provided. This could carry additional baggage, mechanical spares, reserve fuels etc.

### **EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:**

**3.7** Based on the type of expedition and its duration; there is a comprehensive list of equipment that may be carried on a guided tour. Some basic essentials are listed below which, the operator must have and a recommended list for the client. The instructions to this effect must be conveyed to the customer, well in advance so that they come suitably prepared.

- a) A suitable motorcycle according to the route planned. They could bring their own or may be rent it from the provider.
- b) Suitable apparel according to the weather and safety gear to include certified safety helmet, high ankle boots, gloves, riding jacket, rain gear etc.
- c) Communication equipment radio/mobile/satellite phones (if applicable).
- d) Marked Maps, GPS with pre-fed maps and route-distance Charts.
- e) Handy tools and spares to carry out basic wilderness repairs including puncture repair kit.
- f) First aid kit and if operating in a high altitude area an oxygen cylinder and emergency contact numbers in case assistance is required for casualty evacuation.
- g) Recording and photographic media with adequate batteries and power banks.

### **EQUIPMENT CARE, MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION:**

**3.8** Operators must ensure that the vehicles used to provide a service are maintained to a standard that complies with or exceeds the servicing program specified by the manufacturer. Road worthy condition of the vehicle to be certified for each trip, norms to be fixed to ensure the Physical fitness of drivers whenever necessary.

**3.9** A complete comprehensive review by a specialist should be done before every ride to ascertain top condition of engine, body, brakes, lights and tyres before letting a vehicle on rental/tour.

**3.10** The inspections should include the following:

- a) All controls, cables, lights and battery.
- b) All fluids engine, coolant, clutch and brakes.
- c) Tyres, chain/belt and sprocket, suspension.
- d) All major systems e.g. electrical, fuel, ignition and engine etc.

**3.11** Additionally, a system of daily checks should be in place to ensure optimum availability of a safe motorcycle during the day of ride.

### **SOP'S AND OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS AND DOCUMENTATION:**

**3.12** All operators must have in place a system of standard actions to be taken for various contingencies to ensure a satisfactory and consistent response to a situation and help provide a safer expedition environment. It is not possible to have a SOP for all possible contingencies, but at a basic level should cover following situations:

- a) Pre ride checks and briefings to include local traffic rules.
- b) Actions to be taken in case of motorcycle failure/accident.
- c) Medical emergency response, minor/ major injury and evacuation.
- d) Lost party member tracking and retrieval.
- e) Group riding rules including night riding.
- f) Motorcycle and safety gear inspection.

**3.13 Documentation:**

- a) All necessary government registrations, clearances and permits for tour operations.
- b) Driving licenses, motorcycle documents.
- c) All insurances (both for equipment and personnel).
- d) Carnets and overland permits.
- e) (as applicable)
- f) International driving licenses.

**RISK MITIGATION:**

**3.14** Risk management and mitigation in its broadest term is to understand the risk involved in a particular activity and to take appropriate steps to reduce or nullify the same. For example hot weather riding, following can be done to mitigate the risk involved – cover up, hydrate, avoid caffeine, replace electrolytes, start early stop early and cool down. Similarly rainy weather, cold weather, Himalayan trail etc. requires specialist handling of riding group.

**3.15** There are two types of risks – subjective and objective. Subjective are inherent to the riders attitude. Objective are created by environmental, motorcycle, road and rider health conditions, these are the ones that tour operators need to focus on. Additionally, a written risk assessment should be carried out for each excursion/ tour. Involving identification and analysis of all contingencies and dangers involved, actions should be taken to mitigate these and participants should be informed of these special circumstances.

**EMERGENCIES AND RESCUE:**

**3.16** Emergency on a motorcycle tour can be majorly of two natures - equipment failure/ accident or medical nature e.g. a minor fall may just require first aid or a serious injury may require evacuation. Therefore, depending on severity of both detailed action plan / SOP should be available with the ride leader, including things like contact numbers of emergency services, to implement.

**SAFETY BRIEFING:**

**3.17** A pre ride safety briefing covering all aspects of risks and action to be taken both by conducting staff and the participants should be covered in details, some aspects are highlighted below.

- a) Local traffic rules, speed limits and documents to be carried on person.
- b) Wearing of protective gear.
- c) Motorcycle controls, operation and pre-ride checks.
- d) Rider responsibilities and risk awareness.
- e) Group riding procedure to include lane position, following other vehicle, head lights, signals and parking.
- f) Handling dangerous surfaces and any special riding conditions.
- g) Night riding and fatigue.
- h) Indemnity bond by participant.
- i) Avoiding alcohol prior to/during the ride.
- j) Staying hydrated and rest stops.

**MEDICAL CONCERNS:**

**3.18 These are of two types:** Personal and accident related during the ride. For personal medical conditions the client should be advised to carry sufficient medication and inform about the same to the ride leader. For accident related the ride leader should have a plan in addition to a well stocked First Aid Kit.

**3.19 Infections.** An antibacterial disinfectant soap / sanitizer should be recommended to keep infections at bay.

**3.20 Inoculations.** When travelling in rural areas have vaccinations against cholera and tetanus. Consult your local clinic for up to date information.

3.21 Acute Mountain Sickness.

Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) are an illness that can affect travelers at high altitude (typically above 10,000 feet or 3,050 meters). Thus for carrying pot Bike rallies in such areas:

- 1) Tour leaders must have full knowledge of handling customers in such an environment - precautions and emergency procedures.
- 2) A one day acclimatization is mandatory before starting any adventure activity in such areas

### **3.22 BASIC MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR GRANT OF RECOGNITION TO OPERATORS:**

- a) The agency must own or have the ability to hire suitable, registered motorcycles and all accessories as specified above. The motorcycles must be well maintained, serviced and in perfect working order with perfect documentation/insurance.
- b) The agency must have at least one full time trained motorcycle trip leaders with knowledge about leading motorcycling trips safely, group dynamics, traffic rules, communication skills and field repairs/punctures etc. They must possess valid First Aid/CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- c) The operator must have SOP's for different itineraries/motorcycling trips offered and Emergency Action Plans for all trips.
- d) A detailed risk assessment must be carried out by the trip leaders with the back up team prior to conducting any trips.
- e) A list of hospitals, police stations and workshops along the route should be carried by the trip leaders.
- f) A detailed SOP for inspecting motorcycles, documentation and safety gear prior to conducting trips must be in position.
- g) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

### **MOUNTAINEERING**

**4.1** India has 73 percent of the Himalayan range with a huge potential for mountaineering expeditions. Mountaineering is an activity for which Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) is responsible to the Government of India through the Foreigner's act and other statutes. All tour operators must keep abreast of the guidelines given by IMF from time to time. These guidelines apply for both guided commercial expeditions and overseas expeditions booked by recognized adventure tour operators.

#### **GUIDES / INSTRUCTORS:**

**4.2** Lead guides and instructors who are leading mountaineering activities should, as a minimum, hold valid certificates in the following:

- a) A minimum 16 hour (2 day) First Aid / CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- b) Completed the Mountaineering Course preferably Advanced Method of Instructions from JIM & WS Pahalgam **OR** any other National Mountaineering

Institute **OR** carry a certificate duly authenticated by an IMF recognized body **or an** IMF accredited tour operator stating that the individual has experience of 3 years in assisting mountaineering expeditions at altitudes of 6000 m and minimum 3 climbs above 6000 m clearly reflected in a logbook duly authenticated/ validated by the operator and the clients.

**c)** Maintain a logbook containing authenticated records of mountaineering experience.

**d)** All guides to have a comprehensive understanding of altitude sickness, recognizing its symptoms, treatment, knowledge of appropriate medication are essential to work at high altitude.

**e)** They should also have a sound knowledge of cold weather problems like hypothermia/ frost-bite.

### **EQUIPMENT:**

**4.3** The correct use and proper maintenance of climbing equipment is essential for conducting mountaineering activities and should never be taken lightly.

**4.4** Equipment, especially safety equipment should be of the highest standard available and preferably certified by ISI or an international body like CE or UIAA.

**4.5** Rope – There are many different types of ropes. The operator and leader must have sound knowledge of specifically designed climbing rope, including the different types and applications. Climbing rope comes in different diameters and specifications but the basics are dynamic, semi-static and static. A safe working load of 25KN (2.5 tons) and CE approval is the internationally recognized standard for climbing ropes.

**4.6** Hardware (anchors, carabineers, belay devices etc.)– There is a wide range of climbing aids and devices and the operator and instructor must have sound knowledge of their applications including which devices are necessary to conduct mountaineering activities safely. These devices are also a “link” in the safety chain. As per all other climbing equipment items a safe working load of 25KN (2.5 tons) and CE approval is the internationally recognized standard for climbing hardware and devices.

**4.7** All equipment is subject to wear and tear and must be checked before every use. Incorrect storage, use and monitoring of rated and approved equipment is usually the cause of equipment failure. Operators and leaders must have sound knowledge of this and have systems in place in order to control and manage their equipment.

## **INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES:**

**4.8** Inspections and maintenance require sound knowledge of the systems and equipment themselves and therefore must be carried out by qualified persons. As a minimum, the inspector must be qualified to be a guide/instructor. Basic inspections must be carried out before every use with complete and detailed inspections carried out on a regular basis in accordance with their operations procedures and risk assessments.

## **SOP'S AND OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS:**

**4.9** All Mountaineering Tour Operators must maintain and update a Standard Operating Procedure for their operations and get the same vetted from IMF from time to time.

**4.10** Besides covering the methodologies that are adopted by the agency in organizing the expedition, such as assessing of members qualification, medical condition and experience, procedures for obtaining of various permissions, travel to the mountain, maintenance of base camp including hygiene, avoidance of high altitude sickness, safety precautions, communication, weather reports, procedure for emergencies, casualty evacuation, incident and accident reporting and feedback mechanism, the following must be included in the SOPs:

- a) The guiding staff and porters on the mountain and the material supplied must be adequate for the aims of the party and stated level of service offered.
- b) An experienced doctor in the party is desirable but at the very least advance arrangements must be known for medical help. Advance arrangements must also be made for evacuation assistance in case of an emergency.
- c) Advertising must give a true picture of all the difficulties and dangers involved and avoid promising the impossible. If an expedition is commercially launched by an operator, then the biographical information about the guiding team should be included.
- d) The client must truthfully reveal his experience, supported by documentation/ photograph, medical history etc to the organizer so that the organizer can make an informed choice about the potential client.
- e) Information supplied in advance will include a clear statement of the guiding, porters and equipment which will be supplied by the organizer, together with details of the clothing and equipment to be supplied by the client. This is not in context of the operators assisting expeditions with logistics alone.
- f) One day acclimatization is mandatory before starting the expedition.

## **DOCUMENTATION:**

**4.11** The tour operator must maintain, at the minimum the following documentation:

- a) Details of all Guides and Instructors including, copies of certifications, record of expedition experience and feedback from clients.
- b) Copies of all Permits and Permissions of current expeditions.
- c) Copies of identification documents.
- d) Insurance cover and details of next of kin for all participants, guides and instructors.
- e) Copy of SOP's.
- f) Current list of emergency contact numbers.
- g) Emergency Action Plan

## **4.12 RISK MITIGATION:**

In order to mitigate the risk of high altitude, the following is advised:

- a) Participants should be physically and medically fit.
- b) To ensure that at least one or two members of the expedition have experience

of high altitude climbing.

- c) To provide wireless sets or take on hire from IMF, for communication between camps on the mountain and the base camp.
- d) To bring radio receiving sets in case weather forecasts by All India Radio are required to be arranged by the IMF.
- e) To ensure that environmental safeguards are implemented in their programmed so that the area and peak visited by them suffers no damage, and is left clean for subsequent expeditions.
- f) Environment guidelines provided by IMF shall be followed strictly.



#### **4.13 EMERGENCIES AND RESCUES**

- a) Adequate first aid medical equipment must be available. Pulse Ox meters to be part of the FA kit.
- b) Evacuation routes must identified and known to participants, guides and instructors of the team.
- c) A detailed and documented Emergency Action Plan must be available at the base camp along with closest available emergency services which can be called upon as required.
- d) Oxygen and OR Gamow Bag(PAC/ Certec etc) to be at base camp for emergencies.
- e) Walkie-talkies at base camp and with the group whenever they are out climbing and all the camps where climbers are.
- f) Routes with highly avalanche risks or history of avalanche accidents should carry Avalanche transceivers, Shovel & probe also.
- g) The operator must announce the maximum group size up front. The maximum group size should be fixed depending on the kind of mountains. We can divide them into two categories:
  1. Trekking Peaks & Mountaineering Expeditions
  2. Trekking

#### **4.14 SAFETY BRIEFING:**

The lead guide / expedition leader must give a proper briefing to expedition members before starting from the base camp and this should include:

- a) Exact route, campsites and places where ropes have been fixed. Hazards on the mountain and expected weather.
- b) The protocol to be followed during the climb. Details on SOP's to be followed.
- c) Role of the expedition lead guide and assistant guide.
- d) Procedures to be followed in an emergency.

#### **4.15 BASIC MINIMUM STANDARDS:**

It is highly recommended that any outfit, entity, establishment or company seeking grant for recognition must fulfill these desirable criteria:

- a) The entity must own specialized equipment commensurate with needs of undertaking and running such an operation (listed above).
- b) The entity must have qualified personnel (minimum two full time qualified staff) on their payroll (listed above). These personnel must carry the requisite experience in the activity and have valid First Aid & CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- c) The entity must operate with the required permits / licenses and registered with Tourism Department, Ladakh.
- d) The entity must have a registered office.
- e) The mountaineering company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

## **ROCK CLIMBING / ARTIFICIAL WALL CLIMBING AND ABSEILING**

**5.1** Climbing and abseiling are adventure activities growing in popularity in India. However if not conducted safely it can lead to injury and serious accidents. The purpose of these minimum standards is to enumerate best practices for operating rock climbing and abseiling sessions. These apply to purpose-built (artificial) structures and single pitch climbing venues with fixed protection systems.

### **5.2 Terms and definitions:**

- a) **Single Pitch** – An easily accessible climbing venue where both top and bottom of the climbing surface can be accessed safely by foot without the need for personal protective equipment and roped systems.
- b) **Fixed protection systems** – “Bolts” or “anchors” specifically designed and fitted for the purpose of attaching roped systems to a structure/natural climbing venue.
- c) **The safety chain includes the anchor;** the rope; the carabineers and slings; the knots; the harness and the alert belayer.
- d) **Bottom roping** where the layer is situated at the bottom of the climb and the rope is directed through an anchor at the top of the climb and back down to the climber.
- e) **Top roping** where the layer is situated at the top of the climb and the rope is directed from the belay system directly to the climber.
- f) **Lead climbing** where the climber places protection during the climb and has no roped protection above.
- g) **Leader placed protection** is protection specifically designed for the use of lead climbing and rigging where no fixed protection is available.
- h) **Fall factor** a method in which to scale the severity and force of a fall.

### **Guides / Instructors:**

**5.3** Guides and instructors who are supervising climbing and abseiling activities should, as a minimum, hold valid certificates for the following:

- a) A minimum 8 hour (1 day) first aid course provided by a recognized and qualified provider or any other First Aid training conducted by the District Administration.
- b) A Mountaineering Course preferably Advanced/MOI JIM & WS Pahalgam or any other National Mountaineering Institute and be certified by a MOI Qualified Instructor to have assisted climbing and abseiling activities for a minimum of 100 hours OR Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) recognized Sports Climbing Instructors course or should have three years experience certified by suitably qualified Coaches/Instructors duly recognized by IMF.

### **5.4 Equipment:**

- a) The correct use and proper maintenance of climbing equipment is essential for conducting safe climbing and abseiling activities and should never be taken lightly.
- b) Although these standards do not cover the fitting or construction of fixed protection systems, these systems should be rated by the manufacturer and have a quantifiable safe working load. As a minimum standard for such systems, operators must adhere to a safety factor of 3 in accordance to the operator's weight limitations. In addition, fixed protection systems must be proven to withstand 10KN (1 ton) without displaying any visible deformation or damage. In order to fully understand appropriate fixed anchor/ protection systems an operator must also have sound knowledge of static/dynamic load and fall factors.
- c) Rated and quality assured personal protective equipment or PPE must be used. An internationally recognized safe working load for such equipment is 25KN (2.5 tons). In order to comply with this standard it is recommended that all PPE is CE (European Conformity) approved. Here is a list of the minimum PPE requirements for an average climbing and/or abseiling sessions:

i. **Harness** – The single most important piece of personal protective equipment which allows the climber to be safely attached to the roped system and is also a “link” of the safety chain. Harnesses however do not fit themselves and when fitted incorrectly introduce further risk due to providing a false sense of security. For this reason, all harnesses must be checked by a qualified leader to ensure they are fitted correctly prior to leaving the ground and being exposed to a potential fall.

ii. **Helmets** – Climbing helmets are designed to withstand impact from above by falling rock and equipment, NOT the head impacting on the ground from a falling climber.

iii. As such, it is the responsibility of the owner/operator to deem if a climbing helmet is necessary in accordance with their risk assessments. The general rule however is that in natural rock venues use a helmet; in bottom rope artificial venues a helmet is optional; in top rope/abseil artificial venues, use a helmet. If in doubt, use a helmet.

iv. **Rope** – There are many different types of rope. The operator and leader must have a sound knowledge of specifically designed climbing rope, including the different types and applications. In order for the operator or leader to fully understand the applications or different climbing ropes they must also fully understand fall factors.

v. Climbing rope comes in different diameters and specifications but the basics are dynamic, semi static and static. The operator must consult the manufacturer’s manual to ascertain its intended use. Rope not intended for climbing is made with different materials and has different specifications.

vi. Rope that isn’t designed specifically for the use of climbing and abseiling activities must NEVER be used for this purpose. A safe working load of 25KN (2.5 tons) and CE approval is the internationally recognized standard for climbing rope.

vii. Hardware (carabineers, belay devices etc.) – There is a wide range of climbing aids and devices and the operator and instructor must have a complete and sound knowledge of their applications including which devices are necessary to operate climbing and abseiling activities safely. These devices are also a “link” in the safety chain. As per all other climbing equipment items a safe working load of 25KN (2.5 tons) and CE approval is the internationally recognized standard for climbing hardware and devices

viii. All equipment is subject to wear and tear and must be checked before every use. Incorrect storage, use and monitoring of rated and approved equipment is usually the cause of equipment failure. Operators and leaders must have sound knowledge of this and have systems in place in order to control and manage their equipment. Details of how to do this is included in the Indian Climbing Leader Award.

### **Inspection and maintenance procedures:**

**5.5** Inspections and maintenance require sound knowledge of the systems and equipment themselves and therefore must be carried out by qualified persons as a minimum the inspector must be qualified to be a guide/ instructor. Basic inspections must be carried out before every use with complete and detailed inspections carried out on a regular basis in accordance with their operations procedures and risk assessments.

## **5.6 SOPs and operating instructions:**

**a) For rock climbing and abseiling**, the systems required at each individual venue vary. The following is the minimum requirement and standards that apply to all climbing and abseiling activities.

### **b) The safety chain**

- i) **The Anchor** – Is permanent and been fitted with the intention to be used for this particular activity. Has been tested to withstand a minimum of 10 KN (1 ton). Does not show any signs of damage or deformity.
- ii) **The rope** – Is a climbing rope that has been made by an approved manufacture. It is the correct type of rope for this particular activity. It does not show any signs of damage or deformity i.e. excessive “fluffing”, cuts, rips or tears, thin bits, fat bits etc. Is correctly secured to the anchor.
- iii) **The carabineers and slings** – Equipment is for its intended use only. There are no signs of damage, deformity or wear and tear. Are correctly secured.
- iv) **The knots** – Are the correct knots. Have been double-checked before exposing anyone to a potential fall.
- v) **The harness** – There are no signs of damage, deformity or wear and tear. Is correctly fitted.
- vi) **The alert be layer** – Has the belay device fitted correctly? The be layer knows how to use the device. The belayed alert, paying attention to the climber and performing the correct 5 point belaying technique (covered in the Indian Climbing Leader Award).

**c) During all following applications and systems**, and in line with the exception of this minimum standard, neither the instructor nor participant should ever be subject to potential fall greater than a fall factor of 1.

### **d) Bottom rope system**

- i) The weight of the climber and be layer should be calculated to judge if a ground anchor for the be layer is necessary.
- ii) The appropriate belay system for the venue/group should be utilized.
- iii) It is preferable that the belay device be locked off under load allowing the instructor to escape from the system – applicable to customer/group belaying and ground anchor belay systems.

### **e) Top rope system**

- i) The instructor must always be attached via an independent safety line that allows him/her to escape from the system whilst the climbing rope is under load.
- ii) The instructor must be able to lock off the belay device under load.

### **f) Group abseil (releasable abseil) system**

- i) The abseil rope, safety rope and instructor safety line must be attached to individual anchor points.
- ii) The abseil rope must be a redundant system that is releasable under load enabling it to be discarded if necessary.
- iii) The instructor must be able to lock off the safety rope whilst under load.

### **g) Participants**

- i) Age is not a factor but a participant must be of suitable size in order to be fitted safely into their harness. Chest harnesses are to be used where necessary.
- ii) Participants must be aware of the risks involved and in turn must listen and adhere to the instructions of their instructor.
- iii) Specific health concerns must be considered before participating.

**h) The venue**

- i) All venues under the purview of this minimum standard must remain within the definition of single pitch.
- ii) Artificial structures must be designed and certified to withstand the forces involved and include a safety factor of 3 on all safety critical components.
- iii) Anchor points on both artificial and natural venues must be accessible without the need for lead climbing or leader placed protection. Failing this, they must be rigged, checked and accessed by suitably trained and experienced instructors.

**5.7 Documentation:**

- a) Associated equipment purchase documentation, including warranty, service & maintenance history documentation.
- b) Documented installation/structure checks.
- c) Logbook of instructor training and qualifications.
- d) Valid first aid/CPR certificate by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- e) Emergency Action Plan.

**5.8 Risk mitigation:**

- a) A basic risk assessment of the venue is required before use.
- b) Emergency/evacuation procedures must be formulated in which all leaders are trained.

**5.9 Emergencies and rescues:**

If the above systems are adhered to, climbing and abseiling rescues are simple and safe, the details of which are covered in the Indian Climbing Leader Award. In addition:

- a) A first aid kit must be available on site.
- b) Evacuation routes must be easily accessible as per the definition of single pitch.
- c) A detailed and documented evacuation/ emergency procedure must be written which includes the contact numbers of the closest available emergency services which can be called upon as required.

**5.10 Safety Briefing:**

- a) All instructors and guides should be able to give a thorough safety briefing that covers all safety aspects and detailed climbing/ abseiling and rescue instructions in detail.
- b) This briefing must be clear and instructors must have the ability to give the safety briefing in English, Hindi or local language, with ability to prepare guests for the activity.

**5.11 Medical Concerns:**

- a) All instructors and guides must have information on medical issues before the activity is conducted.
- b) It is recommended that heart patients, those with spinal issues, recent surgery or any other medical issue of concern, expecting mothers and under age children do not undertake the activity. It is also recommended that epilepsy and asthmatic patients, avoid this activity. Asthma inhalers must be carried by guests for the activity.

**5.12 Basic Minimum Standards for grant of recognition to operators:**

It is highly recommended that any outfit seeking recognition must fulfill these criteria:

- The entity must own specialized equipment commensurate with needs of running such an operation (specified above).
- The operator must have minimum two full-time qualified personnel on their payroll.
- These personnel must carry the requisite experience in the activity (specified above) and have valid First Aid & CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course

conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.

- The operator must operate with the required permits/licenses and registered with Tourism Department, Ladakh.
- The entity must have a registered office.

a) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

## **SKIING / SNOWBOARDING**

**6.1** Access is the main issue today, all ski areas have an issue with connectivity, In most cases, the drive can last anywhere between 5 to 12 hours to get to a ski area.

### **Qualified instructors:**

Instructors must be qualified in advance ski course from IISM (Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering, Gulmarg), JIM&WS Pahalgam or Recognized Institute. Army and ITBP have their own training institutes and their instructors are at par with National or state ski instructors.

**Safety:** Ski instructors/ guides must be able to assess weather and mountain hazards (avalanches, snow condition and terrain) correctly, respond and behave appropriately and be able to take immediate action in the event of an accident. The candidate should be familiar with and able to implement local/FIS rules. The instructor must brief clients about the local culture and a strict 'leave no trace' policy on the mountain.

**Equipment:** Equipment available for rent must be thoroughly inspected before use.

**Ski Patrol and Evacuations:** None of the other areas have a dedicated team to monitor slopes and skiers. This should be made into a minimum requirement for a ski area.

### **6.2 Guides and Training:**

- The instructor should be proficient in Hindi/local language and English as a medium of instruction.
- The instructor should be able to grade up lessons in a step wise manner covering walking exercises, basic swings, parallel turns etc.
- All ski / snowboarding guides must have valid First Aid/CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- Must preserve local flora, fauna and environment.
- Ski guides must have skiing certification from a national or international skiing or snowboarding Institute, approved by the Director of the local snow- sport school.
- The instructor should be able to teach all guest categories and age groups, as a group or individual one on one lesson.
- The instructor should be able to judge extreme weather conditions and other hazards like avalanches, snow condition and blizzards.

### **Group Sizes:**

**6.3** The instructor/student ratio should be small and manageable. The ideal group strength should not be more than 10 persons per instructor. The group must be formed based on participant's age, learning ability and prior proficiency.

### **6.4 Tour Operator/Agents:**

- The tour operator on ground must be registered with MoT, Govt. of India OR Tourism Department, Ladakh as an Adventure Tour Operator.

**Equipment Use:**

**6.5** The correct use and proper maintenance of equipment is essential for conducting safe skiing and snowboarding activities.

**6.6** Whenever equipment is hired the tour operator must ensure that:

- a) Ski equipment is fully serviceable with all components and is routinely checked every time it is used.
- b) Snow sport helmets in good condition and certified by a recognized safety standards organization.
- c) Ski boots and bindings are compatible with each other.
- d) Ski helmet must be of correct fitting and size.
- e) Only fully qualified technicians to undertake the fitting of equipment.
- f) The tension on bindings must be fitted with due consideration to the age, weight, height and ability of the participant and the manufacturer's instructions.
- g) The ski binding must be put at the correct tension level looking at the proficiency of the skier and their weight.
- h) Boots must be dry and in full working order with no significant damage that could reduce performance. All fastenings must be fully functional.
- i) Skis and boots should be numbered and easily identifiable.
- j) The tour operator must regularly check that these conditions are being met and should be able to provide evidence of such checks upon request.

**6.7 Ski Lifts:**

- a) The tour operator should have tested and used the lift system, particularly those parts dedicated to beginners.
- b) The whole ski area and line of lift must be under watch of the operator who should be able to take immediate action in case of an accident.
- c) Resorts must be assessed by the tour operator as suitable for the age group and activity.
- d) Both lift system and runs, particularly nursery slopes, should be able to absorb the number of tourists in a group without causing dangerous overcrowding.
- e) Lifts should be suitable for the age and experience of group being handled.

**6.8 Inspection and maintenance procedures:**

Whenever skiing equipment is owned by the operator, independent inspections and maintenance are to be carried out before the commencement of the season. This requires sound knowledge of equipment and therefore must be carried out by a qualified technician. As a minimum, the inspector must be a qualified instructor. Basic inspections must be carried out after every use by the guide/escort and records maintained. The edges and bindings must be in good working condition.

**6.9 SOP's and operating instructions:**

The systems and SOP's required at each individual ski resort will differ. While ensuring the minimum requirements and standards that apply to all skiing and snowboarding activities, ski operators must maintain a SOP which is known and understood by all participants. The instructor as well as the Tourists Participating in these activities has to get Physical Fitness Certificate from a Physician. The SOP should covers the following:

- a) DOs and DON'Ts for the particular ski resort/area.
- b) Procedure for use of Ski Lift, timing, ticketing and local customs.
- c) Manufacturer's manual for the ski equipment in use.
- d) Location and identification of slopes that require a minimum proficiency level.
- e) Instruction procedures.
- f) The outer limits of the skiing area and any known hazards.
- g) Appropriate Personal clothing and protective gear.

- h) Emergency and accident procedures, responsibilities and reporting.
- i) Fully equipped first aid kit available on the slope.

#### **6.10 Risk Mitigation:**

- a) The entire ski area must be mapped and the ski runs graded in color codes for easy identification.
- b) Extensive signage on and off the slopes to show run grading, off piste and groomed areas and area under ski patrol.
- c) Must ensure that skiers on Black and Red runs are always accompanied by a qualified mountain ski guide.
- d) Every Mountain Ski guide must carry Recon or similar systems for avalanche rescue, avalanche poles, first aid, walkie talkies and cell phones.
- e) First aid kit must be available in the ski area itself. In addition, a detailed Emergency Action Plan must be written that includes contact numbers of the available emergency services. Evacuation routes and emergency procedures must be included in the company's risk assessment.

#### **6.11 Safety Briefing:**

##### **Beginners:**

- a) Wear appropriate clothing in layers, that will protect from wind and cold.
- b) Carry /drink enough water, a minimum of 3 -4 liters every day.
- c) Carry extra knee and ankle support with you at all times.
- d) Always unbuckle your ski boots while walking to reduce strain on ankles. At the same time ensure that boots are re buckled and fasten all loose clothing and gear before commencing your run.
- e) Listen carefully to all instructions. Follow the defined line and do not hesitate to get clarifications from your instructor.
- f) Maximum accidents happen while taking a ski lift. Skiers should not be allowed to use ski lift until they develop full confidence to use their ski equipment properly. Read signage and listen to instructions carefully. Never disobey your instructors on the slopes.

#### **6.12 Safety Briefing:**

##### **Intermediate and advanced skiers:**

##### **All of the above and ...**

- a) Be aware of prevailing weather conditions and predicted patterns. Wear and carry appropriate gear.
- b) Always have a walkie talkie or mobile phone (where applicable)/wireless set in your pack in case you get separated.
- c) Never ski alone. Always with an instructor or in a group.
- d) Understand clearly the location of avalanche zones and if a ski patrol is active in the area.
- e) Read avalanche warnings before you get onto the Black or Red runs.
- f) You must have a Recce system to trace you in case of an avalanche incident.
- g) Plan to finish your last run of the day latest by 1600 hrs so that there is enough daylight time to initiate a rescue if needed.
- h) If you and your buddy/instructor are going Off Piste, then ensure that you leave information behind outlining the area you plan to ski/ snow board in.
- i) Carry emergency rations and an extensive medical kit in case you have to spend a night in the open.



### **6.13 Medical Concerns:**

Clients must be physically fit prior to a ski holiday and highlight following medical concerns prior to booking a ski package. Operators must get a medical opinion from a qualified doctor clearing the guest for skiing and snowboarding; in case any of the following concerns are highlighted the activity should not be undertaken:

- a) Asthma (must carry inhalers).
- b) High Blood Pressure.
- c) Heart disease or recent open heart surgery.
- d) Diabetes.
- e) Knee related problems.
- f) Severe spinal issues.
- g) Pregnancy.
- h) Severe allergies.
- i) Recent surgery / hospitalization.
- j) Any other ailments that you may deem life threatening in outdoor conditions.

### **6.14 Basic Minimum Standards for grant of recognition to Operator:**

- a) Operator must have minimum two instructors on full time employment or long term contract (minimum 12 months).
- b) The instructors must have successfully completed an advance level skiing / snowboarding course from an International/ National or State Level ski institute. Instructors must have valid First Aid/CPR certification by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- c) The Operator must have / or show proof of being able to hire a minimum of 20 serviceable sets of ski / snowboard equipment. This should include clothing and gear.
- d) The operator must have adequate and up to date knowledge of the ski areas and runs available.
- e) The operator must be able to clearly identify the slope and area of operation based upon qualification and experience of the ski instructor/tourists.
- f) In case the operator is operating in Off Piste sections that are not in the purview of the local Ski Patrol, they must be able to clearly define and display a rescue and evacuation policy.
- g) For running trips off piste, Black and Red sections, the instructors leading the group must be able to prove that they have skied/boarded the runs at least once before taking any clients on the same section.
- h) The operator must have a wireless/walkie talkie/mobile phone set to use on the slopes.
- i) The operator must carry a First Aid kit and water on each trip.
- j) The operator must maintain live records of all guests on the slopes on any given day and time. These come in handy in case of any emergency/rescue.
- k) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

## **TREKKING**

**7.1** With 73 percent of the Himalayan range in India, trekking has become the most popular adventure activity in the country. These Basic Minimum Standards will apply specifically to commercial trekking expeditions across the country and at altitudes above 2000 meters.

### **7.2 Guides/Instructors:**

- Trek leaders should have a certificate issued by a MOT recognized adventure tour operator stating that the individual “has experience of 3 years in assisting trekking expeditions at altitudes of 2000 m or minimum 3 climbs above 2000m (for guiding in the Himalayas minimum 3 climbs above 4500 m) clearly reflected in a logbook duly authenticated or validated by the operator and the clients and is independently capable of guiding trekking groups and carrying out rescue operations” OR
- Completed the Basic Mountaineering Course from JIM&WS Pahalgam or any other National Mountaineering Institute and carry a certificate duly authenticated by an Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) recognized body.
- Maintain a logbook containing authenticated records of trekking experience.
- Must have valid certification of minimum 16 hour (2 day) first aid and by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration. The maximum group size should be fixed depending on the nature of the trek. The treks can be divided into different categories like Low Altitude Treks/ Glacier Treks/ High Altitude Treks/ Trekking Expeditions etc.

### **7.3 Equipment required:**

Equipment care and maintenance

- a) The correct use and proper maintenance of trekking equipment is essential for conducting trekking activities and should never be taken lightly.
- b) Trekking equipment such as tents, sleeping bags etc should be appropriate for the terrain in which it is being used.
- c) All equipment is subject to wear and tear and must be checked before every use. Proper Equipment must be stored properly and inspected periodically. Unserviceable equipment should be discarded immediately. Operators and leaders must have sound knowledge of this and have systems in place in order to control and manage their equipment.

### **Inspection and maintenance procedures:**

**7.4** Inspection and maintenance require sound knowledge of the systems and equipment and must be carried out by qualified persons, as a minimum the inspector must be a qualified guide/instructor. Basic inspections must be carried out before every use with detailed inspections carried out on a regular basis in accordance with their operational procedures and risk assessments.

### **7.5 SOP's and operating instructions:**

- a) All Trekking Tour Operators must maintain and update a Standard Operating Procedure for their operations and get the same vetted from Tourism Department, Ladakh from time to time.

**b)** SOP's for organizing the trekking expedition, such as assessing of members qualification, medical condition and experience, procedures for obtaining various permissions, travel to the trekking area, maintenance of base camp including hygiene, precautions for avoiding high altitude sickness, safety precautions, communication, weather reports, procedure for emergencies, communication protocol, casualty evacuation, incident and accident reporting and feedback mechanism must be well documented and part of staff training. The following must be included in the SOPs: i) The guiding and porter staff on the mountain and the material supplied must be adequate for the aims of the party and stated level of service offered.

**ii)** Advance arrangements must be known for medical help. Advance arrangements must also be made for evacuation assistance in case of emergency. A detailed Emergency Action Plan must be in position and communicated to all concerned prior to the commencement of the trek.

**iii)** Advertising must give a true picture of all the difficulties and dangers involved, and avoid promising the impossible.

**iv)** For commercial trekking expeditions, information about the guiding team and their experience should be sent to the clients beforehand.

**v)** The client must truthfully reveal his experience, supported by documentation/ photograph, medical history etc to the organizer so that the organizer can make an informed choice about the potential client.

**vi)** For high altitude treks a doctor's fitness certificate for clients is recommended.

**vii)** Information supplied in advance will include a clear statement of the guiding, porter age and equipment which will be supplied by the organizer, together with a detailed gear / clothing list for the clients.

**viii)** ATO must follow a strict "leave no trace policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

## **7.6 Documentation:**

The tour operator must maintain, at the minimum the following documentation:

- Details of all Guides and Instructors including copies of certifications, record of trekking experience and feedback from clients.
- Copies of all Permits and Permissions of current trekking expeditions.
- Copies of identification documents,
- Insurance cover and details of next of kin for all participants, guides and instructor.
- Copy of SOP.
- Current list of emergency contact numbers.
- Emergency Action Plan for the particular trek.

## **7.7 Risk mitigation:**

In order to mitigate risk of high altitude trekking, the following is advised:

- To get participants medically examined before starting on the journey. A visit to a dentist is also recommended prior to multi day treks.
- Unless guided by a highly experienced guide, at least two members of the party have experience of high altitude trekking with valid First Aid/ CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- Ensure that environmental safeguards are implemented in their programmed so that the area visited by them suffers no damage, and is left clean for subsequent expeditions.
- The operator must ensure that a comprehensive risk assessment is done and properly documented before operating any trekking expedition.

### **7.8 Emergencies and Rescues:**

- a) Adequate first aid medical equipment must be available with the party. For high altitude treks an oxygen cylinder and Gamow bag are recommended.
- b) Evacuation routes must be identified and known to participants, guides and instructors.
- c) A detailed and documented Emergency Action Plan with emergency contact numbers must be available with the party along with closest available emergency services which can be called upon as required.

### **7.9 Safety briefing:**

- a) Safety briefing should form an integral part of a daily routine of the lead guide / trip leader.
- b) Where significant risks have been identified, lead guides should explain these risks and advise clients of any action needed to safeguard themselves.
- c) Local guides / trip leader's primary responsibility is to ensure safety of the clients, support staff and themselves.
- d) This requirement comes before all other responsibilities and the lead guides / trip leaders should be assured that any decision made by them to ensure the safety of all will be supported by the company.
- e) Safety briefing should also include information about weather forecast (if available), elevation profile, and time taken on the trail, hazards, hydration and trail hygiene.

### **7.10 Medical concerns:**

- a) Local guides / trip leaders should be aware of any common health risks that may be present on a trekking expedition and should know how to prevent and treat problems. This may include environment related conditions such as hypothermia, sunstroke or altitude sickness.
- b) The lead guide / trip leaders should be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions/ allergies within the group and this information should be checked during the main briefing. The lead guide must speak to the client/s who declare such conditions to gain a clear understanding of the medical concern.
- c) The lead guide / trip leaders must be aware of the local / nearest possible emergency services available and how to contact them.
- d) Must carry First Aid / Medical kit with emergency medicines as required and it is absolutely important that first aid kits are routinely checked for expiration of medicines and serviceability and replaced as necessary.

### **7.11 Basic Minimum Standards for grant of recognition to Adventure Tour operators.**

- a) The operator should have a minimum of two qualified staff. The owner of the firm could be included as one of the qualified employees. Either, the Owner/ Director or their Operations - Chief should be well qualified in the activity the adventure operator wants to pursue, which is determined by certification by any national or international institute in the activity or minimum of three years of practical experience.
- b) The operators must have their own adventure equipment.
- c) The field staff of Adventure Tour Operator must be qualified for the activity or must have minimum of three years of practical experience.
- d) Field staff of the company must be qualified in First - Aid/ C.P.R by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- e) The company must maintain in its office premises all the maps and reference material.
- f) The company must have printed brochure or website clearly describing its i) present activities (ii) Its area of operation (iii) its commitment to follow Eco- tourism guidelines.

**7.12 Chadar Trek:**

The Chadar Trek or frozen river Trek is a Winter Trail of Ladakh carried out during the month of Jan-Feb when temperature drops to sub zero range. It is undertaken from both sides of Leh and Zaskar, as it remains the only life line to the sub Division of Zaskar owing to the closure of Pensila. Chilling in Leh and Zangla of Zaskar are the starting and finishing points of the Trek. The approximately distance of Trek is 105 kms.

**7.13 Standard operating instructions:**

In addition to the SOPs and Instructions mentioned above, ATO shall also follow the rules and Standard Operating Procedures adopted by All Ladakh Tour Operator Association (ALTOA).

## **ZIP WIRES & HIGH ROPES COURSES**

**8.1** All owners & operators of Zip Wire and High Ropes Courses should aspire to install and operate their courses to the following European Standard: EN 15567:2015 (Sports and recreational facilities –

**Ropes courses:**

**Part 1:** Construction and safety requirements;

**Part 2:** Operation requirements). What follows is an abridged version of these standards.

**8.2** High ropes and zip wire courses involve participants engaged in activities while attached to ropes or cables more than 1.0m above ground level. A zip wire is defined as an activity system or ropes course in which the participant glides under gravity in a sloping direction. Both high ropes and zip wire courses are distinct from playground equipment in that they have restricted access and require supervision.

**8.3** Such activities involve risks that should be managed by the operators. This is achieved through careful supervision, training, instruction & information. On the basis of a risk assessment, operators should take reasonably practicable measures to ensure the safety of participants, including safety devices and protocols designed to limit the risk or consequences of falls or collisions. However, it should be understood that such risks cannot be eliminated altogether.

**Medical concerns:** High ropes and zip wire courses should only be undertaken by those who are physically and mentally able to comply with the safety requirements specified by the operator. Participants must get a medical opinion from a qualified doctor clearing them for participating in high ropes/ zip wires activity, in case any of the following concerns are highlighted:

- a) Asthma (must carry inhalers).
- b) High Blood Pressure.
- c) Heart disease or recent open heart surgery.
- d) Diabetes.
- e) Knee related problems.
- f) Spinal issues.
- g) Severe allergies.
- h) Recent surgery/hospitalization.
- i) Any other ailments of a serious nature.
- j) Pregnancy (expecting mothers should not participate in the activity).

**Guides:**

**8.4** It is vital that any guides or instructors involved in high ropes and zip wire courses have the right combination of training and experience to carry out the following tasks:

- a) Provide participants with the information required to ensure that the equipment and elements are used correctly.
- b) Check that participants use the right equipment.
- c) Assess a participant's self-sufficiency on a high ropes or zip wire test course.
- d) Ensure that the operator's safety instructions are complied with
- e) Carry out a mid-span rescue, safely bringing a participant back to the ground within 30 minutes; or alert an onsite rescuer if required.
- f) Provide assistance to participants.
- g) Provide participants with First Aid, including stretcher evacuation if required.

## **Training**

**8.5** As a basic minimum, all high ropes and zip wire courses should have guides trained to the following level:

- a) All guides to be trained in First Aid / CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- b) All guides to be trained in basic high ropes and / or zip wire operations – in house training, to a standard approved by ATOAI.
- c) Guide competence in all safety critical roles validated via regular assessment, containing clearly defined pass and fail criteria, by a senior instructor.
- d) Regular field monitoring to assess guide competence with participants while not under direct supervision.
- e) At least one guide per course to be rescue trained and assessed as capable of conducting a mid-span rescue, safely bringing a participant back to the ground within 30 minutes.

### **The manager and/or senior instructor to have:**

- a) A minimum of 1 years' experience as a full-time guide on a high ropes or zip wire course.
- b) An advanced first aid/ CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- c) Adequate training and assessment to validate their competence in a senior role.

### **8.6 Equipment – the installation:**

**a) Choice of site:** The High Ropes or Zip Wire Course shall be located in an area of reasonable operating safety; it shall be possible to evacuate participants from any part of the course.

**b) Materials:** Materials shall be fit for purpose. Timber parts shall be designed in such a way that precipitation can drain off freely and water accumulation can be avoided. Metal parts shall be weather-proofed against atmospheric conditions

**c) Wire rope:** Only galvanized or stainless steel wire ropes shall be used. Terminations around trees and poles shall have a closure angle less than or equal to 60 degrees. Wire rope inspections and discard criteria shall conform to ISO 4309.

**d) Wire rope terminations and grips.** All wire rope terminations shall conform to EN 13411 Parts 1-7. The number of wire grips shall depend on the nature and diameter of the wire rope and the types of wire ropes and grips used. It shall not be possible to undo critical components without a tool. Points of attachment on wire ropes may create local fatigue and shall be given special attention during inspections.

**e) Design and manufacture.** High Ropes or Zip Wire Courses shall be designed with consideration for the size and body weight of the participants. The dynamic load (generated by a falling participant) shall not exceed 6kN. Installations using self-belay systems made out of steel wire rope shall be calculated using safety factor 3.0 in relation to the ultimate load.

**f) Support system:** The support system (artificial and/or natural structure intended for installation of activity and safety systems) shall have the stability and resistance appropriate for the load calculated. In instances where the zip line course transmits loads to the existing structure (e.g. building) care shall be exercised to ensure that the existing structure can bear the loads created by the zip lines. When rocks are used as supporting structures the anchor pull out strength must be at least four times the applied load.

**g) Activity system:** The activity system (e.g. landings, platforms, descending devices, zip wires) shall be designed to accommodate the imposed loads. The safety connection between the participant and the zip wire shall be made with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Wire ropes shall have no exposed broken wire ends within the reach of the participants. If any part of the zip wire and landing area is not visible from the start point a departure regulation system shall be used. Appropriate training and equipment shall be provided if participants are required to brake actively during the descent; a passive braking system (e.g. gravity, buffer, bungee, net) shall always be in place.

**h) Safety system:** The safety system can be collective (e.g. railings, landing mats, belay anchor) or individual (e.g. safety harness & belay to fall arrest device). When participants' feet are more than 1.0m from the ground, a safety system shall be in place. Systems, in particular with movable trolleys, shall be designed in such a way as to reduce entrapment of body parts or clothing.

**i) Inspection and maintenance:** Before the site is inaugurated a competent body, approved by ATOAI, shall certify that the site is in compliance with this standard. The following shall be carried out: a visual inspection, a functional inspection, a design validation, documentation including structural analysis, date and location of inspection, result of inspection and details of any defects detected. The inspection report shall be included in the operations manual of the course. After inauguration, the equipment and its components should be inspected or maintained as follows: i) Routine visual check – before each opening

ii) Operational inspection – every 1-3 months

iii) Periodical inspection – at least

Once per year by an inspection body, to include: visual inspection, functional inspection, determination of replacement state of worn parts, inspection including manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

The Inspection, Certification and periodical Maintenance would be the sole responsibility of the ATO.

**j) User manual for operators:** The manufacturer or installer of a zip line course shall provide a manual containing at least the following information:

i) Technical description of the facility and its individual components,

ii) Use of the course & marking,

iii) Manufacturer's declaration, containing: the basis of static load calculation, normative references, and exclusions of liability, if any.

**k) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** All participants are required to wear PPE while engaged in High Ropes and Zip Wire Course activities. As a minimum, the PPE should include:

i) Rock climbing sit harness.

ii) Additional chest harness or full body harness where appropriate, e.g. when a sit harness is ill fitting around the waist.

iii) Two points of attachment (e.g. lanyards & screw gate karabiners) to the safety system.

iv) All PPE to conform to UIAA or EN / CE standards.

**l) The fitting of PPE shall be checked by a guide prior to use. The PPE shall be inspected and controlled as follows: i) Routine check – before participants use equipment**



- ii) Complete check by an inspector
  - iii) At least every 12 months; after an exceptional event; after the equipment has been withdrawn from use following a routine check.
  - iv) A personal protective equipment inspection register is required for each set of devices.
- m)** All exceptional events affecting the equipment, the checks performed as a result of such events and the minimum annual checks shall be entered on the register.
- n) Competence of the inspectors. An inspector of PPE is deemed to be competent if:**
- i) They hold an advanced national climbing certificate (e.g. mountaineering, climbing)
  - ii) They have completed a special course run by an organization that can certify that the person in question has specific skills in the equipment mentioned; or
  - iii) They can prove that they have at least 24 months experience as a trainee inspector, supervised by a competent inspector.

### **8.7 Standard Operating Procedures:**

Safety brief; instructions and practical assessment of participants. Before commencing an activity all participants shall be informed of the safety instructions, which should include:

- a) Explanation of the high ropes / zip wire course and inherent risks.**
- b) Explanation of the equipment (PPE) to use when required.**
- c) Demonstration by the instructor or manipulation of the equipment by the participant.
- d) Explanation of the safety instructions, especially the need to be always connected to the safety system by at least one connector.
- e) Explanation of any marking placed at the beginning of every course or action system.**
- f) Identification of instructors and how and when to communicate with them (at any time any participant shall be within range of sight of either an instructor or an adult participant).
- g) Action to be taken in event of an accident.**
- h) All of this information shall be documented.**
- i) All instructors and guides should be able to give a thorough safety briefing that covers all safety aspects and detailed paddling and rescue instructions in detail. This briefing must be clear, must have the ability to be given in English and/or Hindi, with ability to command guests for the activity.
- j) The principles of the various techniques participants will have to perform during the course shall be explained. All participants shall demonstrate their understanding of these techniques by means of a practical assessment by a trained guide on a practice zip or high ropes area. All participants shall pass an assessment of competence on the test course, to a defined pass and fail criteria, before progressing.
- k) Supervision** – general points. During a rescue operation, a rescuer shall be dispatched without any adverse effect on site supervision. Communication between participants and the guide shall be ensured. At any time any participant shall be within range of sight of either a guide or another adult participant.

**I) Course Supervision.** Supervision by trained guides is divided into 3 levels:

- i) Level 1:** a situation whereby a guide can physically intervene.
- ii) Level 2:** a situation whereby a guide can clearly see the participant and intervene verbally.
- iii) Level 3:** a situation whereby a guide is in a position to communicate verbally with and to provide adequate assistance to participants.
- m) Continuous belay system & Zip Wire belays.** A minimum of one, and preferably two, trained guides shall ensure participants are correctly attached to the safety system on High Ropes or Zip Wire Courses using a continuous belay system.
- n) Self belay & Assisted belay.** In the event of participants being required to self-belay, There shall be an adequate number of guides to ensure the following:
  - i) All participants to demonstrate their understanding of the activity procedures and safety instructions in a practice area under Level 1 supervision & assessment.
  - ii) The first five elements negotiated by a participant shall be under Level 2 supervision. During this period guides shall pay particular attention to the change-over. After this period participants shall be under Level 3 supervision by guides.
  - iii) For assisted belays, there shall be a minimum of one guide for 4 participants (at height). In such instances the belayers shall be under Level 1 supervision of the guide.
  - iv) Children between the ages of 10 and
  - v) 14 shall be under Level 2 supervision by a guide throughout the activity.
- o) Inspection and Maintenance.** The equipment or its components should be inspected or maintained as follows:
  - i) Routine visual check, which shall be carried out before each opening.
  - ii) Operational inspection which should be carried out every one to three months (e.g. cleanliness, equipment ground clearances, ground surface finishes, exposed foundations, sharp edges, missing parts, excessive wear of moving parts and the structural integrity of the safety system).
  - iii) Periodical inspection, at least once a year. The following should be carried out: a visual inspection, a functional inspection, determination of replacement state of worn parts, inspections including all manufacturer's/supplier's instructions for maintenance. Any safety relevant defects observed shall be eliminated. Specific considerations on safety critical wire ropes shall be given to the potential effects of fatigue. For periodical inspections, an inspection report shall be drawn up, including the following :
    - a) Date and place of inspection,
    - b) Results of the inspection indicating the defects observed,
    - c) Assessment, whether there are any misgivings about further use of the facility,
    - d) Information on necessary re inspection,
    - e) Name, address and signature of the examiner.

**8.8 Documentation:**

The following documentation is required to be kept onsite:

**a) Administrative:**

- i) Name and address of owner and operator.
- ii) Document indicating the annual inspections carried out by an inspecting body.
- iii) List of site personnel and their job titles.
- iv) Evidence of public and other liability insurance.

**b) Operational:**

- i) Log book containing the daily operation sheets (including faults observed during inspections at opening and closing, relevant events concerning safety). These need to be kept for three years.

- ii) Accident and incident report sheets.
- iii) Personal protective equipment inspection register and operation log.
- iv) Risk assessment and management plan – drawn up by the zip line course operator.
- v) Instructor and rescue training to be documented.
- vi) Manufacturer's product manual.
- vii) Rescue and emergency plan.
- viii) Current inspection report.

**c) Information to be provided for participants and visitors:**

- i) Description of the activity and safety instructions.
- ii) Limits and restrictions for use.
- iii) Information relating to personal public liability insurance of the operator.

**8.9 Risk Mitigation & Emergencies:**

**a) Risk Assessment.** Each operator of a High Ropes / Zip Wire course is required to conduct a basic risk assessment, at least once per year, according to the format approved by the ATOAI. Documentary evidence of this risk assessment should be kept onsite. The risk assessment will give rise to the Security and Emergency Plan.

**b) Security and Emergency Action Plan.** The security and emergency action plan shall be appropriate to the surface area of the High Ropes / Zip Wire course and the number of participants it can accommodate. It shall contain the following: i) Names of the rescuers and the name and address of the operator

- ii) Means of communication.
- iii) Emergency equipment
- iv) Drawings indicating the emergency paths, accesses and exits
- v) Procedures for evacuation due to injury or extreme weather
- vi) Documentation for training in emergencies and reporting accidents
- vii) Every High Ropes/Zip Wire Course to have a First Aid kit and stretcher/spinal board onsite.

**8.10 BASIC MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR GRANT OF RECOGNITION:**

- a) The operator should be registered with the Tourism Department, Ladakh
- b) All guides must be trained/ certified to the standards listed above.
- c) Operational procedures as listed above, must be strictly adhered to and documented.
- d) A third party audit by a qualified/certified engineer must be conducted prior to commencing operations.
- e) Periodic site inspections and PPE inspections must be conducted as listed above.
- f) A comprehensive Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan should be in position and the staff trained periodically on the same.
- g) It is highly recommended that any outfit, entity, establishment or company seeking grant for recognition must fulfill these desirable criteria: i) The entity must own specialized equipment commensurate with needs of undertaking and running such an operation.
- ii) The entity must have qualified personnel on their pay roll. These personnel must carry the requisite experience in the activity and be certified in First Aid & CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- iii) The entity must operate with the required permits/licenses and registered with Tourism Department, Ladakh.
- iv) The entity must have a registered office.

- v) The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

### **PARAGLIDING / HANG GLIDING:**

**9.1** Paragliding and hang gliding loosely come under free flying, along with Gliding. Unlike gliders, both are very light and can be launched on foot, creating a separate category of foot launch able gliders. Hang gliding started in the late 1960s while paragliding evolved in the early 80's.

**Para glider:** is a glider that achieves its aerofoil structure without any solid reinforcement; from RAM air pressure between two layers of fabric.

**Hang Glider:** is a delta wing that has a fabric aerofoil with an aluminum frame and inserts

### **9.2 Adventure guides: Basic minimum qualifications and experience:**

#### **Tandem:**

- a) Pilots must have minimum P4 level training as a solo pilot, achieved 100 hours of solo flying and minimum 100 km xc flight. A conversion course to tandem pilot must be undertaken.
- b) 50 non commercial flights as sports tandem pilot before converting to commercial flying.
- c) If available, pilot should be duly certified by an accredited national association.

#### **Instructor:**

- a) **P5 solo rating on FAI safe pro levels.**
- b) **Worked as trainee instructor with a reputed instructor for 2 years.**
- c) Taken instructor certification from an accredited Association.

### **9.3 Equipment required:**

- a) EN /SHV/DHV/AFNOR certified wing and reserve parachute.
- b) **Certified harness and helmet.**

### **9.4 Equipment care and maintenance:**

A logbook of equipment and maintenance to be kept.

### **9.5 Inspection & Maintenance Procedures:**

All commercially used equipment must be inspected for fabric porosity and line length annually.

### **9.6 SOP's & Operating Instructions:**

- a) Passenger should be clearly briefed on basics of flight and risks involved.
- b) Staff introductions and their training.
- c) Passenger should sign liability release waivers.
- d) Passenger/pilot should wear appropriate clothing that is safe and comfortable for the task and weather.
- e) No aerobatic man oeuvres to be done with clients.
- f) No overloading or under loading of equipment.
- g) Should fly conforming to VFR and in VMC. Cloud or night flying is strictly prohibited.
- h) Any incident to be fully documented and reported.

### **9.7 Documentation:**

- a) Pilot certification and logbook.
- b) Equipment logbook and service record.
- c) Liability insurance, pilot insurance.
- d) Emergency Action Plan.

**9.8 Risk Mitigation:**

- a) Operations to be undertaken at sites judged to be safe for paragliding/hang gliding operations.
- b) Selected sites should not have any turbulence sources or hazards.
- c) Life jacket to be mandatory if operating near water.
- d) Wing should be inspected annually for porosity and line lengths.
- e) First Aid kit, stretcher (spinal board) and qualified staff should be available at the site.
- f) Pilots should be First Aid/CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- g) Emergency response time (ambulance) and distance to hospital should be clearly conveyed to the passenger and emergency numbers available at location.
- h) A detailed Emergency Action Plan should be in position and training for the same provided to staff periodically.

**9.9 Emergencies & Rescues:**

- a) First aid and proper equipment for stabilization and removal from life threatening situation.
- b) Contact numbers for ambulance and other emergency services.
- c) Evacuate at the very earliest.
- d) Get witness statements before debriefing them.
- e) Write your own report.
- f) Submit reports and follow up on the injured.
- g) Take immediate action to improve any weakness in equipment or staff exposed by incident.

**9.10 Safety Briefing:**

All instructors and guides should be able to give a thorough safety briefing that covers all safety aspects and detailed instructions about a safe flight. This briefing must be clear and given in English, Hindi or the local language that passenger can understand.

- a) Passengers should be briefed on equipment and clip in, clip out process.
- b) Briefing should cover emergency procedures.
- c) Any sensitive parts within reach of passengers should be clearly marked and briefed upon appropriately.
- d) Essential communication terms/ signals should be explained.

**9.11 Medical concerns:**

There should be clear declaration of medical conditions that are not suitable for paragliding or hang gliding by the operator. Any flight taken with differently abled passengers should be well planned documented and reported in advance.

All instructors and guides must be able to ensure that a question regarding medical issues is asked before the activity is conducted. It is recommended that heart patients, those with spinal issues, recent surgery or any other medical issue of concern, expecting mothers and under age children do not undertake the activity. It is also recommended to check for epilepsy and asthmatic patients, on the extent of their ailment. Asthma inhalers must be carried by clients and preferably handed over to the guide.

**9.12 Basic Minimum Standards for grant of recognition to operators:**

It is highly recommended that any outfit, entity, establishment or company seeking grant of recognition for paragliding must fulfill the following criteria:

- a.** The entity must have qualified personnel (minimum two full time qualified staff) on their pay roll. These personnel must have the requisite experience in the activity and have valid First Aid & CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- b.** The entity must own specialized equipment commensurate with needs of undertaking and running such an operation (specified above). Proof of good equipment, certification where applicable and inspection of safety equipment. The entity must operate with the required permits / licenses and registered with Tourism Department, Ladakh.
- c.** The entity must have at least one certified and experienced person on their Board.
- d.** The entity must have a registered office.
- e.** The company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.
- f.** Inspection of site and permission/ right of use of site.
- g.** Declaration of conforming to flight rules, risk mitigation and airspace rules.
- h.** Declaration to follow existing association rules and new ones that might be introduced.

## RAFTING

**10.1** Rafting is one of the most popular adventure activities in India. Since it is a dynamic sport, instructors/guides must be highly qualified and equipment used should be of the highest standard.

### Trained manpower:

**10.2** It is imperative that personnel responsible for conducting rafting activities are skilled to a high level in rafting techniques, rescue, life saving techniques and First Aid / C.P.R. Ability to communicate clearly and deliver a comprehensive safety briefing is mandatory.

### **10.3 Guides/Instructors:**

Lead guides for water sports activities should, as a minimum, hold the following:

- a) A minimum 16 hour (2 day) First Aid and CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- b) Advanced/ MOI Certificate from a recognized National or International Institute of Water Sports or a certificate from the Registered Operator that the individual "has experience of minimum 2 years in assisting in the particular activity and is independently capable of guiding groups and carrying out rescue operations".
- c) A WRT (White water Rescue Technician) certification is highly recommended for guides on all grade IV and above rivers.
- d) Log book containing authenticated record of river running experience.

### **10.4 Equipment:**

- a) **Life jackets or Personal Floatation Devices** (PFD's) must meet the minimum buoyancy requirement, be appropriate for the intended activity, be certified / approved by Indian Standards Institute, US coastguard, British Canoe Union or equivalent.
- b) **Throw-able rescue devices/rescue bags** must be available for immediate use.
- c) **Safety Kayaks** must be available in the immediate vicinity (within visual distance) for prompt rescue with personnel duly qualified to operate/carry out rescue operations.
- d) **Helmets** are mandatory for all rafting trips.
- e) **During cold weather** operations wetsuits and spray jackets are recommended.

### **10.5 Operations:**

All rafting activities must begin with a thorough safety briefing. Operators must ensure that clients are briefed about the appropriate dress code, medical concerns and age limit prior to the rafting trip. The briefing must highlight the equipment used, do's and don'ts, falling out of rafts, rescue bags, flips, rescue and emergency procedures.

The correct drill for rescue by a safety kayaker must also be demonstrated. A liability waiver and medical form clearly highlighting the risk involved and that participants are in good health, without any serious medical concerns, must be signed by all participants prior to the commencement of the activity. Participants with any medical condition making them unfit for participation must not be allowed to participate. All rafts must have a rescue bag and all rafting trips must carry a First Aid kit, a repair kit and a pump.

## 10.6 **Risk Mitigation.**

- a) **Lifejackets**: No rafting activity should be undertaken without wearing a lifejacket throughout the time spent on the water. The life jacket must have adequate buoyancy, should be fastened properly and checked by the instructor prior to commencement of rafting and checked again above major rapids (grade III and above). The lifejacket must be of the appropriate size for the intended user.
- b) **Guides**: No rafting activity should be conducted without the presence of trained guide/s. No single rafts must be operated, at least one raft and one kayak.
- c) **Alcohol/drugs** during the activity and at least six hours prior to the activity is strictly prohibited.
- d) **Sign boards**: With rafting rules, medical concerns, age limit, dress code and safety rules should be put up at a prominent place in Hindi, English and local language.
- e) **No rafting activity** should be conducted in the dark and preferably finish an hour before dark.
- f) **Age limit**: 14 years on all sections of the river and relaxed to 10 years on grade II, easy sections.
- g) **Helmets** must be worn by all participants including guides during rafting.

## 10.6 **SOP's and operating instructions:**

- a) All Rafting Operators must maintain and update a Standard Operating Procedure for their operations.
- b) Besides covering the methodologies that are adopted by the agency in organizing the activity, such as assessing medical condition and experience, procedure for conduct of the activity, avoidance of injury, safety precautions, communication, weather, procedure for emergencies, casualty evacuation, incident and accident reporting and feedback mechanism the following must be included in the SOPs:
  - i) An Emergency Action Plan including rescues, evacuations and medical assistance must be in position. Staff/ guides/drivers must be trained in all aspects of the Emergency Action Plan periodically.
  - ii) Advertising must give a true picture of the difficulties and risk involved and clients briefed accordingly. Information about guides and their experience should be sent to the clients for multi day rafting expeditions.

## 10.7 **Documentation:**

The tour operator must maintain, at the minimum the following documentation:

- a) Details of all Guides and Instructors including, copies of certifications, record of experience and feedback from clients.
- b) Copies of all Permits, Permissions and Insurance required for operations.
- c) Copies of identification documents, Insurance cover, medical concerns and details of next of kin for all participants, guides and instructors.
- d) Copy of SOP's.
- e) Current list of emergency contact numbers and Emergency Action Plan.

## 10.8 **Emergencies and rescues:**

- a) A proper First Aid kit must be available with the rafting trip.
- b) Evacuation routes must be identified and known to participants, guides and instructors.
- c) A detailed and documented Emergency Action Plan must be available along with closest available emergency services which can be called upon as required.



### **10.9 Safety Briefing**

All instructors and guides should be able to give a thorough safety briefing that covers all safety aspects and detailed paddling and rescue instructions in detail. This briefing must be clear, must have the ability to be given in English and/or Hindi or the local language.

### **10.10 Medical Concerns:**

All instructors and guides must be able to ensure that a question regarding medical issues is asked before the activity is conducted. It is recommended that heart patients, those with spinal issues, recent surgery or any other medical issue of concern, expecting mothers and under age children do not undertake the activity. It is also recommended to check for epilepsy and asthmatic patients, on extent of ailment. Asthma inhalers must be carried by clients and preferably handed over to the guide.

### **10.11 Basic Minimum Standards for grant of recognition to operators:**

It is highly recommended that any outfit, entity, establishment or company seeking grant of recognition must fulfill these desirable criteria:

- a) The entity must own specialized equipment commensurate with needs of undertaking and running such a safe rafting operation.
- b) The entity must have qualified personnel on their pay roll. These personnel must have the requisite experience in the activity and have valid First Aid & CPR by Red Cross or equivalent body or Certificate Course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India or any other First Aid training conducted by District Administration.
- c) The entity must operate with the required permits/ licenses and registered with Tourism Department, Ladakh.
- d) The entity must have a registered office.
- e) The rafting company must follow a strict 'leave no trace' policy and conform to high sustainability standards.

## **ESSENTIALS: INSURANCE**

While the outdoors and adventure activities are an enjoyable pursuit, unfortunate incidents can happen to anyone, anywhere despite the best training, equipment, infrastructure and guidance. In India, where no specific adventure insurance policy exists, the past is witness to many situations where such specialized insurance would have been useful and immensely helpful.

With exponential increase in adventure tourism, especially among domestic tourists, there is an urgent need for specific insurance products, to cover all parties in the adventure sports ecosystem. The policies promote safety as well as showcase an understanding of risks involved in adventure undertakings in the outdoors. It creates a sense of professionalism among the operators, clients and the medical service providers. Better risk management, swift action and high value financial security due to the coverage will lead to many more people venturing in outdoor pursuits with a sense of calm and peace of mind. It's a vital component of the vast growth potential of Indian Adventure Tourism.

The insurance in the adventure ecosystem include:

- 1) Adventure tour Operators
- 2) Adventure Professionals
- 3) Resorts and Hotels

- 4) Clients
- 5) Gear
- 6) Liability

### **1. Adventure Tour Operators**

An adventure tour operator should have one of the three

- a) Third Party Liability Insurance\*
- b) CGLI – Comprehensive General Liability Insurance\*
- c) Tour Operator Liability Insurance\* Adventure operators must also consider having:
- d) Personal Accident (PA) and Group medical cover (GMC) for their staff.
- e) D & O insurance: Directors and Officers

Liability Insurance\*. \*Liability for all parties are explained as a separate topic at the end.

### **2. Adventure professionals:**

They are the backbone of our industry and they comprise Guides, Instructors, Staff, Porters, Kitchen staff etc. They must have an accidental insurance cover, which includes adventure, or extreme or hazardous activities, which will protect them in the outdoors. The accidental insurance should provide coverage for:

- a) Death & Disabilities
- b) Accidental hospitalization
- c) Basic medical evacuation
- d) Repatriation covers

A more comprehensive coverage could include advance treatment cover, Air Evacuation covers, Liability covers, Sickness and medical covers, advance financial covers for the family and travel insurance coverage. Financial covers for the family: This is very important as sudden accident or Injury of a breadwinner can create serious financial problems for the family.

Some of the financial covers available in the market are:

- a) Children education cover
- b) Coma cover
- c) Compassionate visit
- d) Loan Protector covers
- e) EMI covers

For porters or daily wagers we can look into policy called Workman compensation policy, which is used in various industries where daily wage workers are employed.

Independent guides/instructors should also have some sort of Professional Liability insurance cover.

**3. Clients:** We need policies, which will protect them 360 degrees. They should cover them on Air, Land, water and while on the mountains and ice.

A basic adventure policy must have accidental protection or coverage for

- a) Death & Disabilities**
- b) Accidental hospitalization**
- c) Basic medical evacuation**

More advance policies can have in addition to above-mentioned covers

- a) Advance casualty evacuations with air/ heli-rescue**
- b) Coma cover**

### **c) Financial covers**

For extreme risk and people venturing over 5000 meters for any adventure activities including trekking and mountaineering, policy must have in addition to all of the above mentioned covers:

- a) All kind of sicknesses like AMS, HAPE, HACE, frost bite etc**
- b) Advance Medical Evacuation cover due to sickness and accidents**
- c) Travel covers like missed connections, trip cancellations etc**

### **For Medical Evacuations**

- a) Basic cover** for adventure in or near a city should be of Rs. 10,000 so as to at least offset the Road Ambulance costs.
- b) For Himalayas or altitude up to 5000mts**, policy should have minimum of Rs.25000- Rs. 50,000 to off sett long distance road ambulance cost/ Taxi or jeep costs.
- c) For Altitudes above 5000 mts** a minimum of Rs. 3 lakh to 4 lakhs should be included in the policy to cover the cost of Air Ambulance to the nearest medical facility plus the basic evacuation costs via foot or road ambulance.
- d) For Extreme mountaineering** and other expeditions, policy must have more than Rs 5 lakhs of Medical evacuation cover.

### **For Accidental & Sickness hospitalization:**

- a) Basic cover** for basic adventure activities should be equal to or more than Rs. 50,000/-
- b) Medium level** activities and Himalayan adventures up to 5000mts should have cover for hospital treatments above Rs. 1,00,000/-
- c) High altitude adventures** and more serious adventure activities should have hospitalization above 2 lakhs.

### **For Death & Disabilities:**

- a) Basic cover** should be equal to or more than Rs. 50,000/-.
- b) Medium and high level activities** and Himalayan adventures should have minimum cover above Rs. 1, 00,000/-.

**NOTE:** There are many policies (mainly by PSU banks) that are offering coverage of a single amount to be divided in either of the heads mentioned in the policy. For example, policy for Rs.2 lakhs for a person venturing outdoors will have cover for death and disability, accidental hospitalization and medical evacuation cover for maximum 2 lakhs. One can utilize the same for either hospitalization or medical evacuation or death. Now if someone gets rescued first and utilizes considerable amount for the same then the amount left for life saving treatments may not be enough!

Thus coverage should properly specify under each head, giving each head sufficient amount to be utilized in case of an emergency.

In some of these high-risk PA (Personal Accident) covers, a person gets the claim for medical cover only if there is a claim for the main cover. Which essentially means, if a person gets injured and went in for treatment, his family will get the amount specified for the medical cover only if the person is dead? Else no claim will be given.

Adventure Resorts, Camps and Theme Parks

- a) Insurance for the clients** – Basic Accidental covers
- b) Insurance for the staff PA & GMC**

## **ESSENTIALS: INSURANCE - FOR ADVENTURE & ALLIED SPORTS**

- a) **CGLI** - Comprehensive General Liability Insurance.
- b) **D & O insurance**: Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.
- c) Fire and Burglary Insurance

Some of the covers available in the market are:

**Standard Fire and Special Perils**: Covers your property against loss or damage due to:

- a) Fire.
- b) Lightning Explosion / Implosion.
- c) Aircraft damage.
- d) Riot strike and malicious damage.
- e) Storm, cyclone, typhoon, tempest hurricane, tornado, flood and inundation.
- f) Impact damage due to rail, road. Vehicle or animal not belonging to insured, Subsidence and landslide including rockslide.
- g) Bursting and/or overflowing of water tanks apparatus and pipes.
- h) Missile testing operations.
- i) Leakage from automatic sprinkler installations.
- j) Bush fire.
- k) Expense incurred on debris removal up to 1% of claim amount.
- l) Expense incurred on Architects surveyors and consulting engineers fees up to 3% of claim amount.
- m) Earthquake.
- n) Terrorism cover.
- o) Additional expense of rent for alternative accommodation.
- p) Loss of rent.

### **Adventure Equipment and Outdoor Gear Insurance:**

This is a new concept, which will insure an individual's, or a company's outdoor gear and equipment. Since the equipment is expensive plus there is a surge in people using expensive gadgets, photography equipment, GPS & communication devices, there is a need to insure them for tough terrains and harsh environments. It should cover loss, damage and theft of adventure gear when in action.

### **Liability Insurance:**

Liability insurance provides a cover to an individual or an organization from the legal risk that they may be held liable for due to negligence, injury or malpractices. It covers the cost of the legal proceedings and the payouts in case the insured is found legally liable. It excludes intentional damages and contractual liabilities.

There are many types of Liability Insurance:

Some of them are:

- Third party Liability Insurance
- CGLI: – Comprehensive General Liability Insurance
- D & O: Directors and Officers Liability Insurance
- E & O: Errors and Omissions Liability
- Workman's compensation liability
- Professional Liability
- Tour Operator Liability insurance

### **CGLI: Comprehensive General Liability Insurance**

CGLI in simple terms, product and public liability insurance which is tailor made for an organization of any size and nature. The policy covers operations and premises liability, personal & bodily injury, advertising and medical payments etc. The coverage depends on the risk profile associated with a business and the total size of the business. It covers the cost of the legal proceedings (defending or investigating the lawsuits) and the payouts in case the insured is found legally liable. It excludes intentional damages and contractual liabilities. As per CGLI, insurers retain the right to defend any suit against the insured, from bodily or property damages.

Below are the extensions available for CGLI. Most of these covers are not part of plain Public Liability policy.

### **ESSENTIALS: INSURANCE - FOR ADVENTURE & ALLIED SPORTS**

- a) **Act of God Perils** - Compensation on account of injury/death of guests in hotel due to Tsunami, Earthquake, Flood etc.
- b) **Food & Beverage liability** - Compensation on account of injury/death of guests due to consumption of food and beverages served in hotel.
- c) **Lift Liability** - Compensation on account of injury/death of guests while they are in hotel lift/ escalators.
- d) **Other Facilities liability** - Hotel's liability to pay compensation to guests because of injury/death in other facilities like Swimming Pool, Gymnasium, Spa etc.
- e) **Valet Parking liability** – Compensation on account of physical damage to guest's car while being parked by hotel valet
- f) **Travel of Executives** - Compensation to 3rd parties in case injury/damage due to the hotel management while they travel.
- g) **Product Completed operations cover** - Compensation on account of injury/death/damage to 3rd parties due to products sold by the hotel (e.g. food, merchandise)
- h) **Sudden and accidental pollution liability** - Compensation on account of injury/death/property damage to 3rd parties due to accidental pollution caused by the hotel.
- i) **Liability on account of events organized** - compensation on account of injury/death/damage to 3rd parties in connection with events organized inside the hotel or by the hotel.
- j) **Damage to guest property under care control custody of the hotel** - Compensation on account of damage to bona fide guest property whilst under recorded custody of hotel.
- k) **Liability w.r.t tours organized by hotels** - Compensation on account of injury/death/damage to 3rd parties in connection with sightseeing tours organized by the hotel.
- l) **Innkeepers Liability** - Compensation on account of damage to guest property.
- m) **Liquor liability coverage** - Compensation on account of injury/death of guest due to liquor consumption at hotel.
- n) **Incidental medical malpractices liability cover** - Compensation on account of injury/death of guest due to negligence of the hotel doctor while providing first aid
- o) **Liability on account of work done by contractual employees/workers** - Compensation on account of injury/death/ damage to 3rd parties due to negligence of the workers/employees on contract with the hotel (e.g. cleaning, security etc.).
- p) **Liability on account of construction/ maintenance projects at hotel** - Compensation on account of injury/death/ damage to 3rd parties due to construction/ maintenance work in the hotel.
- q) **Additional insured cover** - Hotels can make their contractual parties e.g. brand owners etc. an additional insured under CGL.
- r) **Waiver of subrogation clause** – By virtue of this clause we shall waive our subrogation rights against the additional insured.

s) **Medical expenses clause** - The policy shall reimburse hotel the medical expenses incurred in order to offer first aid to the injured party (regardless of hotel's faults). The deductible doesn't apply to this coverage.

t) **Fire Damage cover** - The policy shall cover hotel's liability to pay on account of property damage to the premises rented to them (arising out of heat from a hostile fire). This operates in of fire insurance policy.

u) **Terrorism legal liability cover** - Compensation to hotel on account of injury/death/damage to guests in event of a terrorist attack on the hotel.

v) **Non-owned/hired automobile liability cover** - Compensation to hotel on account of 3rd party injury/damage in connection with automobiles non-owned/hired & used in connection with hotel's business. It operates in xs of MV Act liability.

w) **Personal & Advertising injury cover** - Under this the insured hotel is compensated for their liability on account of following: i) False arrest, detention or imprisonment.

ii) Wrongful eviction or wrongful entry

iii) Use of another's advertising idea in hotel's advertisement.

iv) Infringing upon another's copyright, trade dress or slogan in hotel's advertisement.

**D & O: Directors and Officers Liability Insurance**: It's a liability for an organization's board of directors, management or office bearers, covering them against liability if the organization or the company issued. It's an addition liability specific for the management or the decision makers over and above the liability protection present in an organization.

**E & O: Errors and Omissions Liability**: E &O covers an organization from the legal proceedings resulting from giving negligent professional services. Any service oriented business charging a fee for their services should have this cover.

## **ESSENTIALS: RISK ASSESSMENT**

### Declaration & Liability Release

I acknowledge that I have voluntarily chosen to participate in the trip/s offered at \_\_\_\_\_ . I acknowledge that the enjoyment and excitement of adventure travel is derived in part from the inherent risks incurred by travel and activity beyond the accepted safety of life at home or at work and that these inherent risks contribute to such enjoyment, being a reason for my participation. I also am aware that medical services may not be readily available or accessible while I am participating in the trip.

Although precautions are taken to provide a safe and enjoyable experience, there can be no guarantee of absolute safety against injury and accident. There are significant elements of risk in any adventure activity associated with the outdoors or wilderness including but not limited to camping, hiking, rock / wall climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, rafting, high ropes challenge, Travelling Travis, Jumaring, kayaking, and the use of related equipment.

I also recognize that I am undertaking an active holiday that contains an inherent element of personal risk, and that risk does sometime become a reality. I acknowledge the relative remoteness, weather conditions, and the limited and relatively primitive medical and other services available, as well as the greater potential dangers compared with my usual daily life, or conventional holiday travel. Not only do I accept these realities, I have chosen to seek them out. I recognize \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility to me and I accept the authority and decisions of \_\_\_\_\_ and its representatives in respect to the journey that I have applied to join. I also am in sound medical health of suffer from no cardiac illness or any other medical disorder which will hamper my participation in the activity.

I have also been given the safety briefing upon arrival, which covers all aspects of safety while I am in the care of \_\_\_\_\_. I have also been made aware of all risks in all the activities that i undertake with \_\_\_\_\_. I hereby undertake to strictly abide by the safety briefing which I have heard, read and understood all aspects of my undertaking. If I act in contravention of the understanding of the safety briefing and the “no swimming” in the river rule, I shall be personally liable, and shall not hold \_\_\_\_\_ responsible for any consequences that may follow from my actions in contravention of the safety briefing. I also agree to abide by all rules that the outfit and its guides have instructed me on, keeping in mind the nature of the holiday I have chosen, and in the sensitive Reserved Forest Area I am visiting.

In consideration and payment for the right to my being permitted to participate in the trip, I have and do hereby fully assume all risk of illness, injury or death. Furthermore, I hereby release and discharge from liability and indemnify and agree not to sue \_\_\_\_\_, their owners, officers, agents, contracted tour operators and employees and other persons or entities involved with providing the opportunity to take part in the trip, regardless of the cause of my illness, injury or death from all actions, claims or demands for injury or damage resulting from my participation in the trip.

I have carefully read this agreement. I understand that it is a release of liability and contract between me and \_\_\_\_\_ and/or its contracted tour operators or affiliated organizations and sign it of my free will.

**Date / Place**

**Signature.**