

Standard Operating Procedure: Coasteering, Kayaking & Rock Climbing

SOP Number: AN-SOP-001

Version: 1.2

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Review Date: Annually

Purpose

To describe the standard procedures and safety protocols for all outdoor adventure activities delivered by Adventure Northumberland, specifically Coasteering, Kayaking, (including Kayak Coasteering), and Rock Climbing.

Introduction

Adventure Northumberland (AN) delivers a range of outdoor adventure activities along the Northumberland coast and inland rock venues. These include:

- Coasteering – navigating intertidal coastal zones on foot and by swimming
- Kayaking – primarily sit-on-top kayak tours in coastal and sheltered water environments
- Rock Climbing – outdoor climbing on natural crags and rocky outcrops

All activities are governed by this SOP and supported by separate Risk Assessments and Technical Advisor oversight. The organisation operates under the guidance of the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) and relevant technical bodies (e.g., National Coasteering Charter, British Canoeing, Mountain Training).

Scope

This SOP applies to all AN staff involved in the planning, delivery, or oversight of adventure activity sessions.

Responsibilities

Activity Provider:

- Ensure participants meet prerequisites and medical declarations are collected
- Maintain and provide all required safety and personal protective



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equipment (PPE)

- Ensure compliance with AALA requirements and internal safety policy
- Coordinate with the Technical Advisor on staff training and assessment

Technical Advisor:

- Assess and authorise staff competency for each activity type
- Advise on route selection, conditions, safety practices, and equipment use

Activity Leader:

- Conduct the session safely, adjusting based on group and conditions
- Perform dynamic risk assessments (DRA) throughout the session
- Ensure briefing, PPE checks, and communication protocols are followed
- Manage emergencies and report incidents

Assistant Leader:

- Support the Activity Leader with group control, spotting, and safety equipment
- Aid in communication, setup, and response during dynamic sections or incidents

Activity Preparation

- Monitor weather/tide/rock conditions at least 24–48 hours prior
- Collect updated medical and consent forms
- Check, prepare, and load all PPE and safety equipment
- Conduct a pre-deployment DRA

Site Setup

- Park vehicles considerately
- Deliver Welcome Brief & PPE Check
- Secure valuables and prepare for dynamic site conditions
- Perform on-site DRA

Activity Delivery

- Deliver activity-specific safety briefing
- Continual DRA loop at each technical feature



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- Coach group control techniques
- Periodic PPE re-checks throughout session

Emergency Procedure

- Initiate DRA during emergencies
- Rescue hierarchy: Shout → Reach → Throw → Go
- Communicate with base/emergency services
- Log details post-incident

Site Clear-Up

- Final participant check
- Identify damage or unserviceable items
- Secure valuables and conduct site sweep

Activity Close-Out

- Wash and inspect PPE
- Quarantine damaged items
- Complete debrief and submit logs



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Appendices

Appendix A – Standard Equipment

Equipment Type	Coasteering & Kayaking	Rock Climbing
Helmet	✓	✓
Wetsuit/Appropriate clothing	✓	✓ (as weather requires)
Buoyancy Aid	✓	—
Footwear	Wetsuit boots or trainers	Climbing shoes, approach shoes
Group Safety Kit	Throwline, first aid, comms	First aid, whistle, comms
Personal Kit (Leader)	Knife, whistle, watch, VHF	Guidebook, rope, prusiks, comms

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Appendix B – Dynamic Risk Assessment Factors

- Group abilities, fatigue, medical needs
- PPE fit, condition, appropriateness
- Route conditions: water level, rock surface, swell, wind, exposure
- Spotting, belaying, or in-water support needs
- Access/egress routes and evacuation planning

Glossary

Term	Definition
Activity	Coasteering, kayaking, or rock climbing
Activity Leader	Staff member responsible for the session
Activity Provider	Adventure Northumberland
DRA	Dynamic Risk Assessment – conducted continuously
Participants	Clients or group members under supervision

