



**N**ational  
**O**utdoor  
**L**eaders  
**R**egistration  
**S**cheme

# REGISTRATION GUIDE

**NOLRS VERSION 2.2**

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Outdoor Council of Australia

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It is the responsibility of a particular employer, organisation, government agency or resource manager to determine the "appropriate" skills, knowledge and experience required, based on a risk analysis of the type of program(s), situations, clients and conditions. It should therefore be noted that additional skills over and above those specified as a minimum within the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS) might be deemed necessary in some circumstances.

In administering the NOLRS, the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) does not conduct assessments of an applicant's skills, knowledge and experience; rather it relies upon the information and certification provided by external training providers / assessors to determine the applicant's competency. Whilst every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of evidence presented, the OCA accepts neither liability nor responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability that may be suffered or incurred by any person as a consequence of reliance upon a person gaining NOLRS registration status.

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# What is the NOLRS?

## Introducing the NOLRS

The National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS) is a voluntary, national registration scheme for individuals seeking to lead groups in outdoor adventure activities. Examples of programs that engage outdoor leaders include programs for recreational, educational, tourism, community development and business related outcomes. The NOLRS is designed to recognise individuals who have appropriate and current knowledge and skills to lead groups in the outdoors to a nationally agreed industry standard. This 'standard' or benchmark is endorsed by the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) and implemented by state/territory industry peak bodies. The registration of outdoor leaders into the NOLRS provides a nationally portable endorsement of their current skills, knowledge and experience. At the same time, the NOLRS database allows end users, land managers, employers and policy makers to make decisions about the suitability of outdoor leaders for matters within their jurisdiction.

## What is the “National Industry Standard”?

The NOLRS benchmarks the skills, knowledge and experience required for safe, high quality outdoor leadership at various levels within each activity. These skills, knowledge and experience requirements have been categorised into Registration Levels within each activity specialisation. These requirements act as checklists for persons wishing to enter the NOLRS and for others wishing to make decisions about the suitability of outdoor leaders for recreational, educational, tourism, community development and business related outcomes.

The skills, knowledge and experience were developed following extensive collaboration across all related disciplines. They will be subject to ongoing refinement. Outdoor leaders can enter the NOLRS by meeting the requirements of a particular activity specialisation at a specific Registration Level (for example as a “single pitch abseiling guide on natural surfaces”), or multiple activity specialisations. Each activity specialisation comprises requirements that are generically applicable to all activity specialisations (for example, “risk management”), in addition to requirements that are activity specific. Collectively the requirements are the “*National Industry Standard*”.

## Entry into the NOLRS

Study and / or training in outdoor activities and outdoor leadership is available via Registered Training Organisations, universities and other training organisations who provide relevant courses. The NOLRS recognises the diversity of learning pathways that may contribute to an individual’s knowledge, skill and experience.

The OCA maintains a schedule of courses deemed to produce outdoor leaders with the skills, knowledge and experience equivalent to the national industry standard in each activity specialisation at each Registration Level. Providers of courses and assessment that have demonstrated to the OCA that their courses and assessment processes produce outdoor leaders with skills, knowledge and experience equivalent to or exceeding the national industry standard are endorsed by the OCA as “NOLRS Partnered Assessment Providers” and are listed as such on the OCA website ([www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au)) and related websites. This is a fundamental element of the quality assurance built into the NOLRS.

Once qualified or formally recognised as having achieved the skills, knowledge and experience that are equivalent to the NOLRS requirements, a person can then seek to enter the NOLRS and “become a registered outdoor leader”.

Newly trained outdoor leaders seeking to become registered must have documentary evidence to indicate that they have completed the minimum number of independent instruction or guiding sessions within the last 12 months.

Leaders who have a minimum of 6 years’ experience in the activity and at the Registration Level in which they are seeking registration will be designated as “Experienced” (indicated by “E” on all NOLRS cards, certificates, etc).

Registration has a shelf life of three years following which the outdoor leader would seek re-registration. This is achieved by providing evidence of ongoing outdoor leadership that meets the NOLRS re-registration requirements for a specific activity and Registration Level.

### **Registration options within the NOLRS**

Registration is available within the NOLRS for the following activities:

- Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces)
- Abseiling (Natural Surfaces)
- Bushwalking
- Canoeing
- Canyoning
- Caving
- Challenge Ropes Course (High Ropes)
- Challenge Ropes Course (Low Ropes)
- Climbing (Artificial Surfaces)
- Climbing (Natural Surfaces)
- On Road Cycle Touring
- Four Wheel Driving
- Horse Trail Riding
- Kayaking
- Mountain Biking
- Rafting
- Sea Kayaking
- Snorkelling / Wildlife Swims
- Surfing
- Trail Bike Touring

A summary of the skills, knowledge and experience required for registration in each activity at each Registration Level is available in the individual documents entitled *Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces) Registration Levels*, *Abseiling (Natural Surfaces) Registration Levels*, *Bushwalking Registration Levels*, etc available at [www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au)

Additional documents available at [www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au) which provide information about the Scheme and the registration process include:

- *Courses and Competencies Equivalent to the NOLRS Standard* - a cross reference detailing the courses delivered by NOLRS Partnered Assessment Providers and the units of competency which achieve outcomes equivalent to the skill and knowledge requirements for each activity at each Registration Level
- *NOLRS Re-registration Guide* - information about the re-registration requirements and process
- *Application for Registration Form*
- *Application for Subsequent Registration*
- *NOLRS Partnered Assessment Providers* - a guide for organisations which conduct assessment of outdoor leaders, detailing how to have their course outcomes recognised as equivalent to the skill and knowledge requirements of the NOLRS.

### **What Registration Level do I need to work in the outdoors?**

The four interactive variables that determine the skills, knowledge and experience required by an outdoor leader in any given situation are -

#### **1. Type of Environment**

- physical locations (e.g. mountain, river, lake, desert, school grounds)
- physical variables (e.g. weather, distances from the road head, difficulty of terrain)
- legal requirements (e.g. private property, institution, National Parks, Forestry Service).

#### **2. Type of Activity**

- different outdoor recreation activities and the program objectives (e.g. instructional, recreational)

#### **3. Level of Technical Expertise**

- Staff

#### **4. Profile of Client**

- Age, gender, physical and mental abilities, and psychological, social and cultural backgrounds.

Therefore, the Registration Level needed in any given situation needs to be determined (e.g. by employers or those responsible for the activity) following a risk assessment involving consideration of all of the above variables. The Registration Levels within the NOLRS are also based on defined job roles or functions within an activity specialisation. These may vary from specialisation to specialisation but can include:

- "Restricted Guide"
- "Guide"
- "Instructor"
- "Conductor–Supervisor – Manager"

## **How do I Know What Registration Level I am Eligible for?**

If you aren't sure what Registration Level best suits your current knowledge and skills, refer to the document, *NOLRS Registration Levels* (or the document specific to each activity) for a description of each Registration Level and the types of situations and locations that an outdoor leader registered at that Level should be able to guide or instruct within.

If you have completed formal training and / or assessment through a university or other community-based or commercial training organisation, use the document entitled *Courses & Competencies Equivalent to the NOLRS Standard* at [www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au) to determine whether the course or unit of study which you have completed has been delivered by a NOLRS Partnered Provider and, if it has, the NOLRS Registration Level which is appropriate to your skills and knowledge. Your Academic Record, Statement of Achievement, Qualification or other certification indicates your successful completion of a relevant course assessed by a NOLRS Partnered Provider and verified copies should be submitted with the *NOLRS Application for Registration Form*.

Alternatively, if you have completed formal training and / or assessment (including Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL), through a Registered Training Organisation and have a Statement of Attainment detailing units of competency in which you have been deemed "competent", access the document entitled *Courses & Competencies Equivalent to the NOLRS Standard* at [www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au). Use the cross references from the units of competency codes and titles to determine the NOLRS Registration Levels which are appropriate to your knowledge and skills. Your Statement of Attainment indicates your successful completion of the units of competency and verified copies should be submitted with the *NOLRS Application for Registration Form*.

## Benefits and Outcomes of the NOLRS

The NOLRS benchmarks national standards for outdoor leadership. Application of the NOLRS not only improves quality assurance within the outdoor industry but also provides a number of other potential outcomes for outdoor leaders, land managers, employers and policy makers, including:

- National recognition of skills, knowledge and experience irrespective of the outdoor leader's pathway to a qualification
- A tool for monitoring currency of skills, knowledge and experience of outdoor leaders
- A mechanism for "quality management" in training options relevant to the industry by delivery of training to meet the national industry standard
- A database<sup>1</sup> for agencies and employers seeking to monitor the status of outdoor leaders
- Increased public confidence in outdoor program delivery
- Assistance for organizations with workplace safety obligations

Other possible longer term benefits of the NOLRS include:

- Provision of data to assist planning and policy decisions
- Increased access to natural areas for registered leaders who abide by the NOLRS Code of Ethics and Practice
- Decreased insurance premiums for organisations employing registered leaders

In the future, and as the NOLRS expands, the OCA intends to provide the following services for registered leaders:

- Mutual recognition aligned to NOLRS Registration Levels with other countries (e.g. New Zealand, United Kingdom)
- Discount schemes (retail, legal, insurance, training)
- Other services including newsletters, networking, insurance, work conditions, job opportunities and pay rates

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<sup>1</sup> Whilst the details of all registered leaders will be maintained on a database for the purpose of distribution of newsletters, information and renewal reminders, only those who request it will be listed on a database available for more public viewing

## Information About the Registration process

A range of documents that provide additional background information is available from the Outdoor Council of Australia's web site ([www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au)) or the NOLRS Administration office:

**Phone:** (08) 9248 6677  
1800 660 540  
**Fax:** (08) 9248 5799  
**Email:** [nolrs@outdoorcouncil.asn.au](mailto:nolrs@outdoorcouncil.asn.au)  
**Postal:** PO Box 2408 WARWICK WA 6024

### Requirements for Registration

1. *Recognised qualification and/or formal assessment of skills, knowledge and experience, as verified by:*
  - A Certificate, Academic Record, Qualification, Statement of Results from a NOLRS Partnered Assessment Provider; and/or
  - A Statement of Attainment from a Registered Training Organisation (.ie. a TAFE College or a private Registered Training Organisation)

2. *Demonstrated Currency*

A primary purpose of the NOLRS is to establish a system whereby the currency of an outdoor leader's skills, knowledge and experience is maintained. This is based upon the accepted notion that to "not be current" is to "not be safe". Entry into the NOLRS requires the outdoor leader to demonstrate currency of his/her skills, knowledge and experience via a **verifiable** log book submission<sup>2</sup>.

Specific currency requirements are listed in each activity specialisation and Registration Level description.

3. *Current First Aid Qualification*

Currency must be maintained in first aid as part of NOLRS registration. Unless otherwise specified in an activity specialisation or Registration Level, a senior First Aid Certificate (or other state/territory equivalent), is required as a minimum. (Note: some situations may require a higher level of knowledge and skill in first aid procedures than for the general requirement in the NOLRS. This would be determined during a risk assessment).

4. *Signed Code of Ethics and Code of Practice*

The Code of Ethics is designed to provide fundamental guidance and will permeate the conduct of a NOLRS outdoor leader. The Code of Practice is designed to provide more specific guidelines regarding acceptable standards of professional practice. These practices focus on essential matters and are considered as a minimum standard of practice. All persons registered through NOLRS are encouraged to strive to achieve a level of

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<sup>2</sup> Logbooks and other material need to have the contact details for a verifying person, or access to a 'workplace' diary or schedule along with the name of a person within the organisation who can verify the activity occurred

professionalism in excess of such minimum requirements. These Codes cover the following seven areas:

- Competence
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Concern
- Recognition
- Objectivity

**Registration through NOLRS requires compliance with both the Code of Ethics and the Code of Practice.**

## **What do I get when I Become Registered?**

Each registered leader, as part of their registration, *receives*:

- Personal membership wallet card with details of all areas of registration
- Logbook to assist with re-registration requirements (electronic format, in Word)
- Inclusion in industry e-network

The Outdoor Council of Australia also intends to develop, as the NOLRS scheme expands, a number of other benefits including product / workshop discounts.

## **How much does Entry to the NOLRS cost?**

*Please refer to the current "Application for Registration" form on the OCA website for the current pricing schedule.*

On this form, two fees are listed, one for members and one for non-members.

The **Member Fee** applies to individuals who are members of any organisation which is a member of the OCA (refer <http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au/members/index.htm>). Proof of membership can be submitted at time of application.

The **Non-member Fee** is for individuals who are not members of any organisation which is a member of the OCA.

**The initial registration fee applies to the first registration application regardless of the number of activity registrations included.**

Subsequent registration applications (i.e. for additional activity registrations at a later time) are offered at a reduced rate.

The registration fee structure is regularly reviewed by the OCA. The OCA reserves the right to alter at any time the fee structure associated with the Scheme. When this occurs a new

version of the NOLRS *Application for Registration Form* will be made available indicating an "effective date".

## Checklist for Entry into the NOLRS

(all materials are available at [www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au](http://www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au))

### STEP 1

Read through the Registration Levels for each activity and select the activity area(s) and level(s) which best suit your skills and knowledge, or use the cross-reference document (*Courses and Competencies Equivalent to the NOLRS Standard*) to determine what Registration Levels you are eligible to apply for based on your qualifications, Statement of Attainment, Academic Record, etc.

### STEP 2

Gather the supporting evidence that demonstrates how you meet the NOLRS registration requirements. This includes:

- (a) Certified copies of your qualifications, certificates, etc. A certified copy is obtained by presenting your original and a photocopy of the same to a Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations OR your employer/ Training Provider. This person will sign and date the photocopy to indicate its authenticity. **Send only the copies** and keep the originals for your own records.
- (b) Verifiable log books or other material which validates you currency. Logbooks and other material need to have:
  - the contact details for a verifying person, or
  - access to a 'workplace' diary or schedule along with the name of a person within the organisation who can verify the activity occurred

### STEP 3

Attach a certified copy of your current first aid certificate as required by the activity and Registration Level that you are applying for\*

### STEP 4

Sign the NOLRS Code of Ethics and Code of Practice

### STEP 5

Complete the *NOLRS Application for Registration Form*

### STEP 6

Enclose payment (according to fees and payment options as outlined in the *Application for Registration Form*) and proof of membership, as necessary.

### STEP 7

Post you application, certified copies of your evidence and payment to the NOLRS Administration office

**\*Note: all attached documentation must be certified as original and authentic by an employer, trainer or Justice of the Peace**

## Re-Registration

Re-registration is required every three years from the initial registration date (or subsequent re-registration date) and requires the individual leader to meet the minimum criteria to demonstrate currency of their knowledge and skills. (refer to the *NOLRS Re-registration Guide* for details). Different activities and Registration Levels have different re-registration requirements in the following areas:

- Leading a Group
- Emergency Response and Rescue Training
- Professional Development

Details of re-registration requirements for each registration activity and Registration Level are available from the OCA website. The NOLRS Administration office will notify leaders whose registration is due to expire at least 3 months prior to the expiry date.

OCA reserves the right to modify the re-registration requirements based on industry, changing industry trends and any other relevant circumstances. Registered leaders will be provided with notification of any changes and adequate time to meet the changed requirements prior to re-registration.

Registered leaders who, for some extenuating circumstances<sup>3</sup>, are not able to meet the re-registration requirements over the three-year period, may access an alternative pathway to re-registration which is detailed in the *NOLRS Re-registration Guide*.

Experienced outdoor leaders (E) are extended reduced re-registration requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> Types of circumstances that may warrant use of this method could be prolonged period of illness or injury, pregnancy, overseas, “time out” from the industry” due to some valid reason.

## Complaints, Appeals and Suspensions

Full details of the Complaints, Appeals and Suspension processes are available from the OCA website and the NOLRS Administration office. However, in summary:

### Complaints

Any written complaint against a NOLRS registered leader received by a the NOLRS Administration office will be handled according to the rules of natural justice which can be stated as:

- The person accused will receive notice of, and know the nature of, the accusation made against him or her;
- The person accused will be given the opportunity to state his or her case;
- The NOLRS Registration Panel hearing the case will act in good faith and without bias.

### Suspensions

The NOLRS is in place to recognise people in the outdoor community who are committed to providing safe, quality experiences to their clients. NOLRS reserves the right to suspend an individual's registration when it is discovered that these guidelines are not adhered to.

The NOLRS Code of Ethics and Code of Practice would be of limited value without some means of ensuring that the standards are upheld. It is therefore important that leaders are aware of the consequences if they breach them.

Any registered leader may have their NOLRS registration *suspended if*:

- They fail to complete the re-registration process;
- There is a proven breach of any part of the Codes of Ethics or Practice;
- Substantiated complaints are received by the NOLRS Administration office;
- They are found to be negligent in a court of law in a case relating to their area of registration with NOLRS;
- The outcome of an external audit indicates that the person is not complying with the NOLRS registration requirements;
- The original registration was obtained on the basis of false or misleading information or failure to disclose particular information.

### Appeals

If a leader is not happy with the complaints handling or suspension process or result and thinks that they have been unfairly dealt with then they have the right to appeal the decision. A formal appeal should be lodged to the NOLRS Administration office within 14 days of receiving the final result of the process.