



Western Australian Adventure Activity Standard

Four Wheel Driving

Version 1.1 October 2009



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Four Wheel Driving

Adventure Activity Standards benchmark the minimum industry requirements and responsibilities for organisations and leaders conducting outdoor adventure activities for commercial and non – commercial groups.

Whilst the Four Wheel Driving Standard is a requirement for all commercial groups, it is highly recommended that all non – commercial groups, including clubs, work towards the adoption of the Standard into their operations.

The Adventure Activity Standards are designed to be applied when the participants are, for the purposes of participating in the Four Wheel Driving activity, either

- In a pre-existing group
 - Where either the group members (and or its representative third party) have made a collective purchase of / collective decision to participate in the activity (ie a school, corporate or community group); or are
- Formed into a new group
 - Where the participants have purchased / made the decision to participate in the activity as individuals or smaller groups, but having done so become a part of a new group (ie citizens or tourists who, having purchased an activity from an organisation or leader individually, are formed into a group for the purposes of participating in the activity provided).

In all cases the relationship between the group of participants and the activity provider is one based upon dependence by way of contract and duty of care.

The Western Australian Adventure Activity Standards were developed by an industry wide consultative process coordinated by Outdoors WA following the recommendations of the 2006 State Government Adventure Tourism Visitor Safety Task Force Report. The Project received grant funding via the Department of Sport and Recreation.

The development and implementation of the AAS allows the outdoor adventure industry to demonstrate its collective integrity and agreed standards. This, in turn will provide a measure of quality for the purposes of assisting

1. Consumers of our services to make informed choices about the services they select
2. Training organisations to produce graduates who understand and meet industry standards
3. Media, insurance and legal scrutineers of our industry and its members, to understand what is acceptable practice and what is not
4. The development of sustainable use practices that consider the specific natural and cultural heritage values of areas in which we conduct outdoor activities

The AAS are a critical component of the **industry quality framework** comprising four aligned and inter-connected components

1. **Accreditation** - the required business operating standards for businesses and organisations
2. **Adventure Activity Standards** - the minimum standards to which an activity must be conducted by a provider to dependent groups of participants
3. **Leader Competency / Registration Scheme** - the responsibilities and competencies required of the leaders conducting the outdoor activities
4. **Codes of Conduct** – the behavioural expectations of persons operating as outdoor leaders

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INTRODUCTION

The Western Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) have been developed to assist organisations and leaders to plan and conduct outdoor adventure activities for dependent groups of participants where there is a duty of care based in contract and in authority.

The general intent of the AAS is to maintain the experience of adventure whilst simultaneously reducing / managing the real risk for participants.

The AAS provide a valuable resource for the development of operating procedures, and or for the purposes of comparing existing operating procedures to industry agreed benchmarked standards. All groups differ in their collective skills and experience and in their degree of dependence upon the leader. They participate in outdoor activities at a range of sites with varying conditions (including weather). It therefore **remains the responsibility of the leader to make the professional judgements and decisions concerning the conduct of the activity to ensure the safety of the group.** The AAS are designed to assist such judgements and decision making.

The AAS are also designed to promote knowledge and awareness of the broad and activity specific impacts increasing recreation and travel opportunities placed upon the natural environment. The AAS are designed to assist the protection of biodiversity values and the preservation of cultural sites balanced with the increased access demands. The 7 Principles of Leave No Trace are imbedded within the AAS.

Whist not statutory standards, the AAS provide the basis for policy formation and decision making by jurisdictions external to the outdoor adventure activity industry including, but not restricted to, licensing, insurance and legal jurisdictions.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The activity of Four Wheel Driving involves traveling on unsealed, difficult or remote roads and tracks in licensed four wheel drive vehicles.

Examples of commercial four wheel driving activities include

- “tag - a - long tours” whereby persons travel in their own vehicles in convoy with others on a led expedition
- “in vehicle tours” where by persons travel inside a vehicle(s) driven by a tour leader(s)

Vehicles that are purpose built 6 wheel drive vehicles for the purposes of “in vehicle tours” as described above are captured by this Standard.

It is not intended that competitive events are captured by this Standard.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

The AAS provides a planning and preparation framework considered critical in maximising participant safety and enjoyment. All planning must be finalised and the relevant components documented before the activity is undertaken. A suggested planning and preparation framework includes

- Preliminary Information
- Route / Campsite Plan(s)
- Risk Management Plan
- Emergency Response Plan
- Minimal Environmental Impact Plan

Samples and suggested templates are available at www.outdoorswa.org

Preliminary Information

The following are the minimum information requirements for conducting a group four wheel driving activity

- Planned start and finish times (may also include sector times if known)
- Vehicle to participant ratio and group size
- Profile of the group
- Land manager requirements including

Access restrictions

Group sizes

Booking and permit requirements

Regulations in regard to fire restrictions, other restrictions, bans, local conditions

- A general understanding of the natural and cultural history / diversity of the site(s) / location(s)
- Availability of suitable maps
- Anticipated track conditions
- Equipment requirements and vehicle suitability / preparation
- Participants' names and emergency contact details including designated external contact
- Medical information advised by participants which may be relevant to the activity

Medical Conditions

Medications - what is it / why is it required / how is it administered?

- Group members are advised, in writing and or in a verbal briefing, of
 - Potential risks associated with the activity
 - Zero tolerance requirements re illicit substances other than prescription drugs NOT affecting the participant's ability to participate
 - The requirement to conform to responsible and attentive behaviour
 - Emergency contact number for the tour leader(s)
- **RECOMMENDED** - Participant signed legal liability disclaimer (informed consent) / waiver to sue / authorisation to seek / provide emergency medical treatment (retain for a time frame as dictated by the Statute of Limitations Act 2005); dependent participants under the age of 18 must have the signature of a parent / guardian if required by the organisation that has legal responsibility for them (it is recommended that your insurance provider approves the wording of your disclaimer)

Route / Campsite(s) Plan

The purpose of the route / campsite(s) plan is to assess issues regarding access, environmental impact, risk and emergency communications relative to a planned route / campsite(s). The route / campsite(s) plan shall provide details of

Assessment of the suitability of the route / campsite(s) for the size and driving ability of the group

- Access to and along the route / campsite(s) by emergency services vehicles
- Where is / are the best place (s) to make an emergency contact (by mobile or satellite phone or HF radio if coverage available, by radio or by a runner party to a land line, by EPIRB/PLB)
- Route / Campsite(s) characteristics
 - Weather forecast (temperature, wind, rain)

- Specific terrain / route characteristics including topography, surface, hazards
- Availability of drinking water
- Availability of shelter
- Availability of fire wood
- Availability of fuel
- Contingency plans for forecast / foreseeable weather conditions
- Opportunities for rest breaks and availability of shaded areas / shelter
- Toileting facilities and appropriate waste disposal options
- Location of any water sources
- Location of any culturally significant areas, structures, artefacts or rock art that need to be avoided
- Location of any rare or endangered plants or animals, or sensitive areas
- Ability of route / campsite(s) to withstand visitation with minimal impact upon vegetation

Samples and suggested templates are available at www.outdoorswa.org

Risk Management Plan

The purpose of the Risk Management Plan is to identify the human, route / campsite(s) specific, equipment and environmental risks for the safe conduct of the activity. By identifying, analysing and evaluating these risks, appropriate strategies to reduce / manage the risk can be developed and implemented. Four Wheel Driving leaders must investigate the chosen route / campsite(s) for potential hazards and adapt the planning of the activity as required. Information with regard to any new hazard must be made available within the group / organisation and to the relevant land manager where appropriate.

Samples and suggested templates are available at www.outdoorswa.org

The Risk Management Plan strategies can include (but are not restricted to)

- Leader(s) have the required authorisation, skills, qualifications and experience to
 - conduct the drive in / to the selected location(s) / environment(s)
 - effectively manage incidents
 - preserve the environmental integrity of the route and campsite(s)
- Leader : Participant ratio
- Group size
- Group profile including
 - Skill / experience levels
 - Knowledge of environmental minimum impact strategies
 - Vehicle capability / suitability
 - Methods for managing / communicating with the group at all times including vehicles at the front, in the middle and at the end of the convoy

Emergency Response Plan

The purpose of the Emergency Response Plan is to provide a set of steps for leaders to follow in the event of an emergency which may include injury or death. The plan must include information to assist the leader to minimise the escalation of the situation, the injuries incurred and how to reduce the likelihood of further incidents occurring. The Emergency Response Plan must be specific to planned route / campsite(s) and document current details including

- Access and egress options from the route / campsite(s) including sectors and distances
- Contingency plans for effective rescue
- May include helipads as appropriate
- Emergency contact details which may include
 - Emergency contact number of the tour leader(s)
 - Next stage of definitive medical care (hospital, doctor, RFDS)
 - Police and or relevant agencies
- Specific communication requirements / available communication networks

ALL leaders must carry a copy and be fully aware of the emergency response plan (often included as a part of the “route plan”). A copy of the emergency response plan must also be kept (with other documentation) with a non-participating external contact.

The leader is to communicate with the relevant external contact at a designated time(s). Upon failure to do so the external contact must action the emergency response plan which may include contacting the police. In situations where there is only one leader, the emergency response plan shall have been introduced to, and be available to members of the group so that it may be actioned in the event that the leader becomes unable to do so.

Samples and suggested templates are available at www.outdoorswa.org

Leader Vehicle : Participant Vehicle Ratios

Whilst it is acknowledged that the characteristics of the route / campsite(s), the profile of the group, the purposes of the four wheel drive tour, and the experience of the leader will influence the ratios of leaders to dependent participant vehicles

- the operational ratio of leader to participant vehicles is 1:12

Group size will be determined by route and campsite(s) characteristics, land manager restrictions, environmental considerations and the application of the above ratios

Minimal Environmental Impact Plan - Leave No Trace 7 Principles

Protecting Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage is the responsibility of all involved in adventure activities – leader/s, organisation and participants. The following principles draw on minimal impact ethics and serve to raise awareness of the respect due to the environments and communities where adventure activities take place.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

Research your destination and know the regulations and special concerns of the area/s you access

Seek permits if necessary

Do not travel through Disease Risk Area or Quarantine Areas

Prepare for isolation, weather hazards and emergencies

Carry and know how to navigate using a map, a compass and/or GPS

- Maintain your vehicle in a mechanically sound condition

Take sufficient food and drinking water (minimum 5 litres per person per day)

To minimise rubbish, plan to remove all rubbish (take some rubbish bags. Avoid glass)

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Driving

- Drive to suit the conditions, and to protect the track, the environment and your vehicle
- Stay on established tracks and avoid creating new tracks unnecessarily
- Cross rivers at existing fords and be cautious of depth and current
- Avoid using trees or other vegetation as anchor points for vehicle recovery where possible. If there is no other alternative, use the largest sturdy tree and protect using tree trunk protectors
- Where appropriate unload gear and take breaks on durable ground to avoid damaging vegetation

Try to keep your vehicle clean and avoid transporting soil (including mud) and fauna. Soil may contain Phytophthora (dieback) fungal spores and plant diseases

Camping

- Leave your campsite better than you found it
- Use existing campsite where possible; if no site is available camp at least 100m from water courses
- Focus activity where there is minimal impact upon vegetation

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

- Remove all rubbish including food scraps, cigarette butts and sanitary products
- Use existing toilets where available
- Bury human waste at least 15cm under the ground 100m away from any campsites or, watercourses; use toilet paper sparingly and bury, carry out or burn (subject to fire restrictions)

- Do not use soap, toothpaste or shampoo in or near watercourses

4. Leave What You Find

- Prevent the spread of weeds and pests, check your vehicle, equipment and clothing
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species

Respect Indigenous art and other sites of cultural or historical significance

Do not touch rock art, which can be damaged by the natural oils from human skin

Do not remove artefacts

- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them

5. Minimise the Impact of Fire

- Preferably use a fuel or gas stove for cooking
- Observe fire restrictions
- Where fires are permitted, use existing fireplaces or pit fires (to be filled on departure)
- Light fires in cleared areas, away from vegetation and tents
- Keep your fire small – the size of your fire is to be proportionate to the size of your group
 - Minimize the size of your fire
- Don't put rocks around the fire as they may explode
- Collect timber only where it's permitted; use only dead, fallen timber
- Ensure the fire is out on departure

6. Respect Wildlife

Observe wildlife from a distance; do not follow or approach them

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times - mating, nesting, and raising young

Touching nests or young animals may cause their parents to abandon them

Do not feed wildlife as feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviours, and exposes them to predators and other dangers

Store food and rubbish securely

- Leave pets at home, baits and wildlife can injure or kill them
- Avoid driving at night, dawn or dusk if possible, as this is when animals are most active
- Slow down and let wildlife move off the track

7. Be Considerate of Your Hosts and Other Visitors

- Recognise, acknowledge and respect local cultures
- Respect other users and protect the quality of their experience
- Read and obey signage
- Obey the laws and regulations that apply on public land
- Do not disturb livestock or watering points and leave gates as found
- Do not visit places where you have not obtained appropriate permission

Further information is available at

Leave No Trace Australia www.lnt.org.au

Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council Code of Conduct

http://www.fourwheeldriveaustralia.com/code_eth.cfm

REQUIREMENTS OF LEADERS

The performance of the leader is a critical factor in the safe conduct of a Four Wheel Driving activity. The leader is required to

- Accept responsibility for the conduct of the activity
- Maintain current skills, qualifications and experience as required
- Accept responsibility for the environmental preservation of the sites and surrounding areas

This does not exclude the fact that dependent participants are responsible for their own actions in relation to the potential risks that may be encountered by choosing to participate in a Four Wheel Driving activity.

Responsibilities of Leaders

Leaders are required to accept the following responsibilities

- To ensure that ALL required competencies as outlined in “Competencies of Leaders” are available to the group for the activity, if not within his / her competency profile then within the collective of his / her co-leaders
- To use their judgement to make decisions that will ensure the safety of all group members and maintain the integrity of the environment including matters relevant to
 - People based risks
 - Familiarise self with all documentation / forms signed by all dependent participants / parents or guardians
 - Communicate the anticipated risks relating to the activity to the group in a pre-activity briefing, and others that arise during the drive
 - Match the experience / capabilities of the drivers to the activity
 - Request that participants advise where they have stored / are carrying their personal medications
 - Ensure all significant incidents and accidents are documented and reported in writing to the organisation sanctioning the drive within seven (7) days of the completion of the drive or as soon as is practical
 - Site / route based risks
 - Be familiar with the selected site(s) / route(s) and the scope of variation of conditions likely to be encountered; check weather forecasts pre - departure
 - Appropriately manage hazards that are encountered
 - Ensure the availability of drinking water on route and have appropriate refill / contingency plans; monitor consumption of drinking water
 - Ensure the availability of fuel on route and have appropriate refill / contingency plans; monitor consumption of fuel
 - Be aware of and comply with the land / site manager’s guidelines including minimal impact
 - Notify nominated external contacts of safe return / completion when appropriate
 - Equipment based risks
 - Check suitability, condition and use of all vehicles and equipment prior to departure
 - Ensure correct use of equipment by all dependent participants
 - Ensure that a First Aid Kit suitable for the route is in good order and available to all participants
 - Ensure that suitable communications equipment for the route is in good order and available to all participants
 - Environmental based risks
 - Apply Leave No Trace Principles
 - Comply with the land / site manager’s guidelines including minimal impact principles relative to flora, fauna and rubbish removal
 - Report all environmental damage to the appropriate land manager

Competencies of Leaders

Leaders require a range of technical and group facilitation skills to effectively conduct both commercial (and non-commercial) Four Wheel Driving activities for dependent groups.

- Commercial Leaders are required to have achieved
 - Qualifications
 - AQTF Outdoor Recreation Training Package
 - Drive and Recover a Four Wheel Drive Vehicle (SRODRV001B) and its pre requisites
 - First Aid
 - Senior First Aid (assuming communication with external medical professionals is always available within one hour)
 - Advanced / Wilderness / Remote Area First Aid (if communication with external medical professionals within one hour is not always available)

- A current driver's license
 - F Class or national equivalent for the carriage of fare paying passengers

OR

- Current registration in the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS)* as a Four Wheel Driving Registered Leader - Guide or Instructor (NOLRS is administered by Outdoors WA on behalf of the Outdoor Council of Australia) which requires
 - A recognised qualification or skill set
 - Sufficient current experience
 - First Aid
 - Senior First Aid (assuming communication with external medical professionals is always available within one hour)
 - Advanced / Wilderness / Remote Area First Aid (if communication with external medical professionals within one hour is not always available)
- A current driver's license
 - F Class or national equivalent for the carriage of fare paying passengers

*** registration with NOLRS must be achieved by 31 January 2011**

*** further information about NOLRS including how to register is available at www.outdoorswa.org**

*** the registration achieved must align with the specific form of Four Wheel Driving to be undertaken ie. Four Wheel Driving Guide**

In addition to the above minimum requirements, supplementary training in “tour guiding” is highly recommended. For example AQTF THTFTG05B Lead Tour Groups

REQUIREMENTS / RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS

Organisations sanctioning the conduct of Four Wheel Driving activities for dependent groups of people are required to

- Maintain a current Commercial Operators License (Department of Environment and Conservation)
- Maintain current public liability insurance and other insurances as required
- Collect all documentation / forms signed by all dependent participants / parents or guardians (or ensure data is collected by the third party responsible for the group)
- Plan and prepare all aspects of the trip / route
- Report incidents and accidents to relevant jurisdictions in writing within seven(7) days when appropriate
 - Police
 - Insurers
 - Land Managers
 - Outdoors WA (*to assist in the gathering of industry wide statistics with the aim being able to demonstrate to insurance companies etc that outdoor activities, often considered high risk and dangerous, are in fact not*)
- Provide leaders with the necessary resources to conduct the tour in accordance with all aspects of this Standard
- Notify nominated external contacts of safe return / completion (when appropriate)
- Verify and accept responsibility for the current competence of leaders selected for Four Wheel Driving activities

EQUIPMENT

Equipment requirements may vary with the profile of the group and the range of environmental / track conditions likely to be encountered. When planning equipment requirements for a group four wheel driving trip it is important to consider all possible eventualities and to select equipment that will maintain safety and minimise cultural and environmental impact of the activity. The following minimum equipment requirements apply to all group four wheel drive activities.

Leader AND Participant Vehicles and Associated Equipment

- ALL licensed 4 wheel drive vehicles suitable for the conditions likely to be encountered on the planned route fitted with
 - Heavy duty tow recovery points appropriately mounted to the chassis at both front and rear with high tensile fittings (recommended)
 - 1 x shovel
 - 1 x jack and base plate
 - Spare parts as deemed appropriate
 - Tool kit and vehicle manual as deemed appropriate
 - UHF radio
 - First Aid Kit
 - Fuel, water, oil quantities required for the planned trip
 - Tyre pressure gauge
 - Correctly fitting spare wheel and tyre

Leaders' and Group Equipment*

The following equipment is required for all dependant four wheel driving groups

- Recovery equipment*
 - dynamic recovery strap (minimum 2 per group)
 - winch extension strap / tow rope (minimum 2 per group)
 - rated bow shackles with a minimum 3.2 tonne rating (minimum 2 per group)
 - 1 x axe (1 per group)
- A copy of the emergency response plan
- Fire extinguisher
- Emergency communication equipment (EG. HF radio, mobile phone, satellite phone, details of nearest land line, EPIRB / PLB if in remote area etc.)
- A First Aid Kit appropriate for the location of the activity and the size of the group
- Relevant maps, and a compass or GPS
- Air compressor
- Puncture repair kit

** Larger vehicles will require higher rated recovery equipment*

Participant's Equipment (recommended)

- Clothing appropriate to the requirements of the trip and potential weather conditions with particular emphasis upon protection from the sun, wind, rain, cold, heat, insect bites and vegetation cuts
- Appropriate footwear (usually enclosed)
- Personal medication
- Personal food and water in suitable quantities for the planned trip

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Activity Provider** – an entity, person or group of persons assuming the role of providing the activity (the activity provider) for a dependent group of participants for a specific commercial or not – for – profit purpose
- **Dependent Group / Participant** - a group or individual within a group whose welfare associated with participating in the activity is in part the responsibility of the leader; who is dependent upon the leader for their safe participation in the activity which may be so deemed by law or contract
- **Outdoor Leader** - term for an individual accepting the roles of leading and managing the outdoor activity; can be a guide or instructor; can be paid or voluntary
- **Registered Leader** - currently registered in the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme
- **Recognised Leader** - outdoor leader recognized as meeting the leader competencies required
- **Competency** - minimum industry agreed standard of skill and knowledge necessary for a specific activity being conducted at a specific level

- **Phytophthora** - Phytophthora Dieback: is a microscopic soil borne water mould that attacks plants. It impacts 40 percent of our native plant species and threatens whole communities including animal habitats. It is spread in the movement of infested water, soil or plant material. As the name water mould suggests, it requires moist conditions to thrive. Its food source is the root and basal stem tissue of living plants. It is currently the biggest threat to biodiversity in Australia and it is spread extensively by human activity. More information is available online at www.dieback.net.au
- **Route** - includes all intended and emergency routes, rest stops and campsites
- **AQTF Competency Framework** - Australian Qualification Training Framework including the current Four Wheel Driving competencies listed in the Outdoor Recreation Training Package

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Adventure Activity Standards initially developed by The Outdoor Recreation Centre in Victoria proved to be an invaluable resource in the development of the Western Australian Adventure Activity Standard for Four Wheel Driving.

Leave No Trace Australia www.lnt.org.au

FEEDBACK, REVIEW & APPEALS

The AAS are designed to be 'living' standards with feedback, requests for review and/or appeal against aspects of a standard considered to be healthy part of the development process, one that will ensure the currency & relevancy of the standards. Feedback, requests for review and/or appeals will be managed by the Industry Standards Panel. Details and proformas are available at www.outdoorswa.org / industry quality framework / Industry Standards Panel.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Outdoors WA for further information or to obtain contact details of the organisations conducting Four Wheel Driving activities and training.

TELEPHONE: 08 9248 6677
 FAX: 08 9248 5799
 POST: PO Box 2408 WARWICK WA 6024
 EMAIL: executiveofficer@outdoorswa.org
 WEB: www.outdoorswa.org