



Western Australian Adventure Activity Standards

Rafting

Version 1.1 October 2009



Western Australian Adventure Activity Standard

Rafting

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

The Adventure Activity Standards are designed to be applied when the participants are, for the purposes of participating in the 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 or duty of care.

The existence of other types of groups where the group is less defined and NOT dependent as a group upon an activity provider for the conduct of the activity is acknowledged. (ie independent club members participating in an activity). It is intended that such less defined groups of independent participants are not “captured” by the AAS.

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 Qualifications / 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 with commercial and non-commercial dependent groups of participants where there is a duty of care based in contract and or in authority.

The purpose of the AAS is to maintain the perception of adventure whilst simultaneously reducing / managing the real risk for participants. Increased outdoor physical activity with reduced incident and accident rates will be the ultimate performance indicators of the value of the AAS.

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 place 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 rafting is described as the navigation of moving, often white water courses (typically rivers) by paddling inflatable craft including one, two or multiple person craft.

This Standard is not intended to be applied to *“raft building activities”*.

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
- Site / Route / Float Plan
- 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 rafting session

- Objectives / desired outcomes of the session (recommended only)
- Planned start and finish times (may also include sector times and locations)
- Leader to participant ratio and group size (refer Leader : Participant Ratios and Group Size)
- Profile of the group (skill and fitness levels, experience)
- Land / site manager requirements including
 - Access restrictions
 - Group sizes
 - Booking and permit requirements
 - Current environmental management policies and biodiversity issues affecting the Region (refer to www.naturebase.com.au)
 - regulations in regard to fire restrictions and bans
- Equipment requirements (refer Equipment)
- Transport requirements
- Dependent participants' names and emergency contact details
- Medical information advised by dependent participants which may be relevant to the activity
 - Conditions - asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, fainting, allergic reactions, blood conditions which may effect bleeding/ blood clotting, recent or long-standing injuries, (eg back, knee, ankle), disability, pregnancy, repetitive strain injury, psychological 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 alcohol and drugs other than prescription drugs NOT effecting the participant's ability to participate
 - The requirement to conform to responsible and attentive behaviour
- 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
- An understanding of the natural and cultural history / diversity of the site(s) / location(s)

Site / Route / Float Plan

The purpose of the site / route / float plan is to assess issues re access, environmental impact, risk and emergency communications relative to a particular site. The site / route / float plan shall provide details of

- Assessment of the suitability of the site / route for the size and skill level of the group
- Access to and egress from the site(s) including sectors
 - By vehicle (2WD / 4WD) including emergency services vehicles
 - On foot including to and from the nearest car park including the best routes to Take to minimise environmental impact
- How to make an emergency contact (by mobile or satellite phone if coverage available, by radio or by a runner party to a land line, by EPIRB/PLB) and where is the best place to make these calls from
- Site / route characteristics
 - Water temperature
 - Grade(s) of water course to be paddled
 - Potential risks; how these risks can be managed
 - Specific route characteristics
- Contingency plans for forecast / foreseeable weather conditions
- Opportunities for rest breaks and availability of impacted shaded waiting areas
- Toileting facilities and appropriate waste disposal options
- Location of any drinking 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 site(s) to withstand visitation with minimal impact including leaving vegetation undisturbed

Samples and suggested templates are available at www.outdoorswa.org and www.canoewa.com.au

Risk Management Plan

The purpose of the Risk Management Plan is to identify the human, site 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.

Rafting leaders must assess the chosen site(s) / routes 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.

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

The Risk Management Plan must consider

- Leader(s) have the required authorisation, skills, qualifications and experience to
 - Conduct the activity in the selected environment
 - Satisfy the planned objectives
 - Effectively manage incidents (refer Requirements of Leaders)
 - Preserve the environmental integrity of the activity site(s) and surrounding areas
- Leader : Participant ratio (refer Leader : Participant Ratios and Group Size)
- Group size (refer Leader : Participant Ratios and Group Size)

- Group profile
 - Skill / fitness / experience levels

- Needs / requirements
- Knowledge of environmental minimum impact strategies
- Suitability and condition of equipment
- Methods for managing the group at all times including
 - Rafters at the front, in the middle and at the end of your line of rafts
 - Others waiting to raft
 - Others who have completed rafting

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 detail how 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 site specific and document current details including

- Access to and egress from the site(s) including sectors
- Contingency plans for effective rescue with minimum environmental impact to the site
- Group assembly points
- Emergency contact details which may include
 - Police
 - Relevant Agencies (EG Department of Environment and Conservation, land owners, rescue services, Department of Planning and Infrastructure)
 - Next stage of definitive medical care (hospital, doctor)
- Specific communication requirements / available networks

ALL leaders must carry a copy and be fully aware of the emergency response plan (often referred to as a “float plan”). A copy of the emergency response plan must also be kept (with other documentation) with a non-participating contact and be readily accessible by the leader via an available telecommunication method in the event of an incident / emergency.

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 unfit to do so.

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

Leader : Participant Ratios and Group Size

Whilst it is acknowledged that the characteristics of the site(s), the profile of the group, the purposes of the activity, and the experience of the leader(s) will influence the ratios of leaders to dependent participants, the minimum ratios considered acceptable are

- ***Large Craft (3 - 12 persons per craft) - Flat Water****

Operational Ratio – one current qualified leader (on water) per group PLUS one responsible adult (on water) per craft

- ***Large Craft (3 - 8 persons per craft) - Grade 1 Water****

Operational Ratio – one current qualified leader (on water) per group PLUS one responsible adult (on water) per craft

- ***Large Craft (3 - 8 persons per craft) - Grade 2+ Water****

Operational Ratio – one current qualified leader (on water) per craft

- **Small Craft (1 - 2 persons per craft) – Flat to Grade 1 Water***

Operational Ratio – one current qualified leader (on water) per group PLUS one responsible adult (on water) to dependent participants 1:1:16 / 1:2:24 / 1:3:28

- **Small Craft (1 - 2 persons per craft) – Grade 2+ Water***

Operational Ratio – one current qualified leader (on water) per group to dependent participants 2:16 / 3:24 / 4:28

Maximum group size

Maximum group size shall be determined by both site characteristics and the application of the above ratios. Consideration must be given to the adequate supervision of non-participants and of all participants throughout the rafting line. Additional considerations include

- Experience of participants
- Site and weather conditions
- Distance from shore line
- Availability of access and egress points

* Large Craft – maximum 5 craft per group recommended

* Small Craft – maximum 32 persons (including leaders) per group recommended

Minimal Environmental Impact Plan - Leave No Trace 7 Principles

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare*

- Know the regulations for and special concerns of the areas comprising your float plan
- Be aware of the biodiversity values and threats of the region and the specific condition of the locality
- In the South West Ecoregion, a world biodiversity hotspot, access detailed information about occurrence of *Phytophthora Dieback*

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces*

- Stay on durable surfaces, which include established tracks, rock, gravel and dry grasses where practical
- Always walk on the track even if wet and muddy, to avoid widening it (with the exception of *Phytophthora* areas where one should avoid mud)
- On narrow paths walk in single file as much as possible to avoid widening the track
- Manage groups to minimise disturbance to vegetation to reduce erosion and the spread of pest plant species
- Avoid revegetation areas altogether
- Choose durable surfaces like rock, gravel or sand to load and unload your craft
- Avoid trampling shorelines while exiting and entering the rivers, lakes or ocean
- Tie up craft with damage the rocks or vegetation that is used; use padding if necessary
- Carry boats over dunes and soft riparian areas; do not drag them
- When entry and egress is from the water, leave boats below the dune level unless tides or wave action prevent their safety
- Do not dig into dunes or create new tracks
- Avoid steep areas that are more prone to erosion once disturbed
- Use established campsites
- Other wise camp on rock, sands, or gravel where impact is smallest. When these can't be found, then on areas with durable grasses or weeds

- Actively manage your group at the site to minimise trampling and damage to the surrounding vegetation
- Keep group sizes and campsites small
- Avoid digging, landscaping and trenching around tents
- Use self-supporting tents, rather than tarps or systems that rely on guys etc. from flora
- When leaving a campsite, “naturalise it”; “fluff up” flattened grasses, brush away boot prints and replace any rocks that have been kicked or moved
- Avoid damaging live shrubs, woody plants or branches
- Protect water sources by camping at least 20 metres from rivers and billabongs
- Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and tracks
- Do not clear campsite areas and if you are staying more than one night, move your tent to minimise damage; stay only one night

3. Dispose of Waste Properly*

- Pack and carry out all rubbish including leftover food and organics
- Inspect your campsite and rest areas for rubbish and spilled food before leaving
- Be careful not to drop rubbish while walking
- Human waste and waste water should be disposed of at least 100 metres from any waterway
- When available, use established toilet facilities
- In other situations, carry a trowel and deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug in topsoil – usually 10-15cm deep and at least 100m from water, camp and tracks. If toilet paper use is necessary, use it sparingly and bury it deeply or preferably, carry it out. Natural toilet paper like smooth stones, grass, sticks or bits of bark can make it possible to avoid man-made toilet paper all together. Cover and disguise the hole when finished. (In water catchment areas, human waste should be carried out.)
- Urinate on bare ground away from vegetation and tracks
- Pack out all hygiene products in a suitable container
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 100 metres from streams and pools
- Avoid using any soaps or detergents; if they must be used, use only small amounts of biodegradable soaps and detergents; scatter strained dishwater
- Hand sanitisers are a good alternative for personal hygiene
- All campsites must be located at least 20 m from any waterway

5. Leave What You Find*

- It is illegal to excavate, disturb or remove archaeological, historical and cultural artefacts from any public or wilderness lands
- Respect indigenous sites to ensure their longevity; land managers can advise you on these locations
- Do not touch rock art, which can be damaged by the natural oils from human skin
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them
- Avoid spreading non-native plant and animal species that are generally impossible to eradicate once they are introduced; do not transport flowers, weeds, wood or aquatic plants into or out of the wilderness
- Avoid transporting mud in the soles of boots, on tent pegs and walking poles by washing thoroughly before and after travelling; use wash stations immediately where provided
- Check clothing and all gear and burn or dispose of all hitchhiker type seeds before and after travelling in different areas

5. Minimise the Impact of Fire*

- Observe Total Fire Bans and campfire regulations; liaise with local land management staff

- Use a lightweight stove for cooking or use a candle lantern for light when possible
- Where fires are permitted, use designated, constructed fireplaces only
- Keep fires small; use of fallen fuel and sticks
- Extinguish fire completely
- Be careful of improper cigarette butt disposal. Take butts with you

6. Respect Wildlife*

- Minimise noise at campsites
- Minimise interaction with wildlife including feeding

7. Be Considerate of Your Hosts and Other Visitors*

- Respect the wishes and regulations of all hosts – indigenous, pastoral, land managers and locals
- Take the responsibility to ensure that your group behaves with respect for the hosts and other users. Set out reasons and expectations early in the trip
- If you land at the edge of private property, be courteous and make yourself and your intentions known to the person
- Use gates not fences and leave gates as you find them
- If possible camp out of sight and sound of other visitors
- Let everyone enjoy nature's sounds. Keep noise to a minimum. Talk quietly especially when in large groups
- Avoid the use of bright lights, radios, electronic games, mobile phones and other intrusive urban devices

Further information is located at www.Int.org.au

REQUIREMENTS OF LEADERS

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

- accept responsibility for the planning, preparation and conduct of the activity
- maintain current skills, qualifications and experience as required
- accept responsibility for the environmental preservation of the site and surrounding area

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 rafting activity.

Responsibilities of Leaders

Leaders are required to accept the following responsibilities in the preparation of the trip plan

- To use professional 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*
 - 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)
 - Communicate the risks relating to the activity to the group in a pre-activity briefing

- Match the experience / capabilities of the group to the conduct of the activity and the conditions
- Monitor the physical and psychological state of the group throughout the activity; control the pace and spread of the group
- Confirm participant “head count” pre-departure; monitor throughout and confirm at conclusion
- Ensure all incidents and accidents are documented and reported in writing to Outdoors WA in writing within seven (7) days
- Site / route based risks*
 - Be familiar with the selected site(s) / route(s) and the scope of variation of conditions at the site(s) / route(s); check weather forecasts and water conditions pre - departure
 - Appropriately manage hazards
 - Be aware of and comply with the land / site manager’s guidelines including minimal impact
 - Manage the whole group effectively; ensure that your group behaves with respect for other users
 - Ensure that all dependent participants remain within sight and earshot
 - Appoint appropriate external contacts to notify police etc. if not contacted by designated time/s
 - Notify appropriate external contacts of safe return / completion
- Equipment based risks*
 - Check suitability, condition and use of all equipment prior to, during and on return
 - Ensure correct use of equipment by all dependent participants
 - Maintain and service all equipment in keeping with manufacturer’s specifications
 - Ensure that a First Aid Kit and communication equipment suitable for the location are in good order
- 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 Department of Environment and Conservation or other land manager
 - Report any perceived breaches of the Rafting AAS to Outdoors WA

Competencies of Leaders

Leaders require a range of technical and group facilitation skills to effectively conduct group rafting activities. Leaders are deemed to be competent to lead rafting activities if

- they are currently registered in the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS)* as a rafting 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
 - appropriate first aid qualifications
 - within one hour from definitive medical care – Senior First Aid required
 - beyond one hour from definitive medical care – an advanced / wilderness

/ remote First Aid qualification is required

*** 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 grade of water being rafted /type of rafting activity to be undertaken ie. Rafting Guide Grade 3 Water**

*** the NOLRS is based upon the Outdoor Recreation Training Package**

OR IF

- they hold a current white water guide or instructor qualification administered by the Australian Canoeing Award Scheme* relevant to the grade of water being rafted. (Qualifications in the Scheme require renewal after three years)

*** This Scheme is based upon the National Outdoor Recreation Training Package**

Further information is located at www.canoe.org

REQUIREMENTS / RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANISATIONS

Organisations / centres sanctioning the conduct of rafting activities for dependent groups of people are required to

- Maintain current and appropriate insurance
- Provide and maintain a point of contact for leaders during activities
- Report incidents and accidents to relevant jurisdictions in writing within seven(7) days
 - Insurers
 - Land Managers
 - Outdoors WA (recommended)
 - Australian Canoeing
- Provide leaders with the necessary resources to conduct the activity 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 rafting activities

EQUIPMENT

Equipment requirements vary with the objectives of the activity, the group characteristic profile and the environmental conditions likely to be encountered. When planning equipment requirements for a session it is important to consider all possible eventualities and to select equipment that will minimise cultural and environmental impact of the activity.

Participant's Equipment*

The following equipment requirements apply to all dependent participants

- Personal clothing to protect against sun, wind, rain, cold
 - EG wetsuits, thermal underwear, fleece, paddling jackets
 - suitable footwear (ie old track shoes, wetsuit booties); thongs are NOT suitable
 - sun protection

- Craft suitable for the proposed activity, conditions and participants
 - Stability levels
 - Durability
 - Suitable as buoyancy aids (to maintain positive buoyancy)
 - Capable of being towed by rope or hand (have end loops)
 - (Preferably) be constructed of highly visible materials (ie bright colours)
- Paddles suitable to the craft and the participants' skill levels
- Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)
 - Participants must wear an appropriate PFD at all times while on the water
 - PFD's must be consistent with the Australian Standard for Type 1 or 2
 - PFD's must be the correct size
 - PFD's have an attached pealess whistle to attract attention in an emergency situation (recommended)
- Drinking water
- Helmets must be worn by all participants at all times whilst on the water such that they
 - Provide ample protection to the forehead, temple and back of the head
 - Fit so as not to move, but not to be so tight as to be uncomfortable
 - Have an effective strap / buckle to fix the helmet securely in place
 - Have a good system to absorb the shock from impacts and to provide a separation distance between the outside of the helmet and the paddler's head
 - Helmets used on rivers greater than international river grade 2 should meet European Standard CE 1385

Leader's Equipment*

The following equipment requirements, in addition to that listed above, apply to leaders conducting dependant group rafting activities

- Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)
 - Leaders must wear a PFD with a whistle consistent with the Australian Standard for Type 2 or 3 at all times while on the water
- Rescue equipment
- Throw bags (minimum 15 metres floating rope)
- Suitable quick release equipment to tow another raft
- Rescue knife
- Slings, karabiners and pulleys (for Grade 2+ waters)

Group Equipment*

The following equipment is required for all dependant group rafting activities

- Spare paddle(s)
- Raft repair kit (comprehensive in the case of extended expeditions)
- Roll of duct tape
- Appropriate First Aid resources
- Communication equipment (as appropriate to the location)
 - Mobile phone, UHF radio, marine radio, satellite phone, EPIRB or marine VHF radio (if greater than 2 nautical miles from shore)
 - Signalling mirror / torch

- Signal flares
- Suggested emergency resources (relative to the location and duration of the activity)
 - Waterproof matches
 - Fuel stove
 - Small tent or alternative
 - Space blanket / sleeping bag
 - Drinking water
 - Closed cell foam mat / sleeping mat
- Bailing device
- Navigation equipment
 - Map and compass
 - GPS for extended rafting expeditions
- Additional dry clothing

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;
- **Competency** - minimum industry agreed standard of skill and knowledge necessary for a specific activity being conducted at a specific level
- **Responsible Adult** – adult person deemed, by the outdoor leader, as adequately capable of accepting responsibility for selected aspects of the management of the group and or its participants in conjunction with the safe conduct of the activity
- **Flat Water** – defined as waterways where a wave will not be generated larger than 0.3m
 - sheltered and calm waters (eg swimming pool, dam, inland lake, sheltered inlet, large river pool, marina)
 - minimally affected by wind; minimal slow moving flow of water
 - ease of access to shore; participants are not more than 100m from shore
- **Open Water** – defined as waterways large enough to allow the paddler to be more than 100m from shore and have wind generated waves of >0.3m
 - open lakes, inlets and the ocean
 - subject to tidal, wind and current changes
- **White Water** - defined as a waterway where current or tidal movement is sufficient to create micro flows producing features such as eddy's, waves, drops and whirlpools
 - **International River Grading System** - provides an indication of the degree of difficulty of a rapid and/or river.
 - **Grade 1: Easy** - slow to medium flowing water with very small, regular waves or riffles; relatively few obstacles, with an easy path to find and follow; suitable for novices
 - **Grade 2: Medium** - rapids are straightforward with medium sized, regular waves; the path through rapids can be clearly seen from the water and is often indicated by well-defined chutes or 'V's of water; some obstacles that

require maneuvering around, but paddlers with a good command of basic strokes can easily miss them

- **Grade 3: Difficult** - rapids have moderate, irregular waves and strong currents; maneuvering is required to follow the preferred route; small to medium sized stoppers may have to be negotiated; route is difficult for inexperienced paddlers to see and scouting is advisable; suitable for experienced Whitewater paddlers, with the ability to roll an advantage
- **Grade 4: Advanced** - rapids have large waves and powerful confused currents; drops are big and stoppers can be large and unavoidable; fast maneuvers may need to be made; route is not clear, and scouting may be needed; suitable only for very experienced whitewater paddlers with consistent skills and reliable rolls
- **Grade 5: Expert** - extremely long, obstructed or powerful rapids; rapids may contain very large unavoidable drops, waves, and stoppers and turbulent, unpredictable currents; fast and accurate maneuvering is necessary; eddies may be very small, turbulent and scarce; route is complex and scouting is highly recommended; suitable only for expert paddlers, who are willing to accept the higher level of risk; rolling in adverse conditions is essential; swimming is very dangerous.
- **Grade 6: Extreme** - rapids are extremely technically difficult, powerful and unpredictable; rarely paddled, and if they are paddled successfully they are usually downgraded to Grade 5 plus; river cannot be paddled without severe risk to life.

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 canoeing, kayaking and sea kayaking.

Other references include

- Australian Canoeing Safety Guidelines www.canoeing.org.au
- 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 kayaking 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