



**national  
water safety  
forum**

Beach Advisory Group

## **DRAFT - SKILLS & COMPETENCES FOR COASTEERING GUIDES**

### **VERSION 3: MARCH 2010**

#### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

The information contained within this document is based on a competency based training framework, designed to assist coasteering operators and/or training providers to assess the key skills guides should have whilst leading a coasteering group. This document does not constitute a formal training syllabus.

Training providers should ensure consistency between their course content and the competencies and skills listed within this guidance.

#### **2.0 SCOPE AND DEFINITION**

Coasteering involves traversing along a stretch of inter-tidal zone, often as part of an organised group activity. Participants travel across rocks and through water, using a variety of techniques including climbing, swimming and jumping into water. Wetsuits, buoyancy aids and helmets are commonly used for the activity.

The training information is based solely on providers offering coasteering activities. Further advice should be sought for operators providing additional activities to the public.

The following advice has been obtained from members of the National Water Safety Forum's 'Beach Advisory Group' – Working Group for Coasteering Safety. Members include; RNLI, ROSPA, MCA, RLSS UK, AALS, coasteering providers, governing bodies and associations.

#### **3.0 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

##### **3.1 Age requirements:**

It is recommended that trainee guides are 18 or older by the completion of their competency-based training. However, trainee guides assisting trained guides maybe 16 or 17 but should not lead a group on their own. Providers should ensure they conform to current legal requirements.

To lead a coasteering session guides will have to demonstrate a high level of leadership skills, technical coasteering abilities, rescue skills and soft skills. It is unlikely that candidates will have been able to gain the necessary

experience to lead group's before the age of 18, but guides with exceptional experience and skills at a younger age may be considered. It is good practice for all aspirant guides to log all coasteering leadership experiences as evidence of experience prior to assessment.

### 3.2 Medical declaration requirements:

Meet organisational health requirements.

### 3.3 Pre requisite fitness requirements:

All trainee guides must be competent swimmers when wearing PPE and be able to complete the following fitness requirements prior to the commencement of any other training:

- Tread water for 10 minutes (pool based)
- Swim 200 metres in 5 minutes (swimming pool or an appropriately controlled and risk assessed open water environment)
- Guides should be competent and confident in and around the coastal inter tidal and shore zone (rocks, cliff tops etc...)

### 3.4 Training duration and stages:

In many cases, training competencies will be completed over a long period, whilst assisting trained and competent guides/instructors. Prior learning and qualifications will provide exemption from certain training requirements, such as existing first aid or lifesaving qualifications.

A 'complete' training course, taking the student from zero or very little knowledge/experience to a base level of competency will take around five days (approx. 40 hours).

Once competences and skills training are all completed to a satisfactory level, further assessment observing, assisting and leading sessions should to be undertaken before final assessment. The following training stages are recommended but other pathways maybe used:

#### Stage one:

**Observe** – two logged coasteering sessions observing a competent guide/instructor

#### Stage two:

**Assist** - two logged coasteering sessions assisting a competent guide of instructor

#### Stage three:

**Lead** – two logged coasteering sessions overseen by a competent guide/instructor with client feedback

#### Stage four:

**Assessment** – Candidates should have their skills assessed and recorded

Training sessions should be a minimum of 2 hours in length. The locations, conditions and groups ability should be varied during the sessions.

NB: Trainees can observe sessions prior to full training, if Part 1 and emergency response training has been successfully completed.

#### **4.0 CORE TRAINING ELEMENTS**

The following eleven elements are the key skills and competences that guides should complete before guiding a coasteering group (under supervision as detailed above):

- 1. Personal skills**
- 2. Plan a coasteering activity for clients**
- 3. Ensure appropriate equipment is selected and prepared for coasteering planned activity**
- 4. Briefing clients**
- 5. Lead activity safely**
- 6. Maintain physical welfare of group (initiate emergency response)**
- 7. Maintain physical welfare of group (lifesaving)**
- 8. Maintain physical welfare of group (first aid)**
- 9. Lead activity with minimal impact on environment**
- 10. Conduct activity in a professional manner**
- 11. Complete post-trip responsibilities**

#### **5.0 SKILLS & COMPETENCES REQUIRED FOR COASTEERING GUIDES**

This guide has been developed for the coasteering Industry as a basis for identifying the minimum knowledge and skills required to guide participants in a coasteering activity.

It does not replace the requirement to develop and maintain sound operational practices including the use of individual risk assessments and the development of normal, standard and emergency operating procedures specific to the organisational needs. See safety guidance for further information.

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
<b>Personal skills (pre requisite)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Swim 200 metres in 5 minutes (swimming pool or an appropriately controlled and risk assessed open water environment)</li> <li>2) Guides should be competent and confident in and around the coastal inter tidal and shore zone (rocks, cliff tops etc...)</li> <li>3) Have sound judgement and attitude to act professionally and safely in the coasteering environment</li> <li>4) Meet organisational health requirements</li> </ol>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>Plan a coasteering activity for clients</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Assess the skill level, experience and physical capability of each member of the group</li> <li>2) Establish attainable group objectives</li> <li>3) Select suitable level of activity and site(s) to suit abilities of the group</li> <li>4) Obtain permits or permissions for access where necessary</li> <li>5) Obtain and interpret local weather and sea condition information relevant to the group</li> <li>6) Ensure correct guide/client ratios are met, according to operational procedures</li> <li>7) Assess and minimise and eliminate any hazards where possible whilst forming a risk management plan</li> <li>8) Understand the process of risk assessments, including the difference between a formal and dynamic process</li> </ol>	<b>4 hours</b>
<b>Ensure appropriate equipment is selected and prepared for coasteering planned activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Supervise equipment selection to ensure it is safe and suitable in light of the planned activity</li> <li>2) Ensure equipment is fitted and adjusted correctly</li> <li>3) Check safety and rescue equipment to ensure suitability for the planned activity</li> </ol>	<b>2 hours</b>

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
<b>Briefing clients</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicate the aim of the guided activity to clients.</li> <li>2. Communicate logistic details to clients (including fitting and wearing of PPE)</li> <li>3. Brief group on safety procedures</li> <li>4. Explain symptoms and prevention of hypothermia to assist in self-monitoring</li> <li>5. Outline procedure following an incident to a group member</li> <li>6. Establish verbal and non-verbal communications system for use during the trip and ensure the clients understand the system</li> </ol>	<b>2 hours</b>
<b>Lead activity safely</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Notify any relevant authorities with details of the activity</li> <li>2) Ensure all clients are properly equipped for the activity</li> <li>3) Identify and respond appropriately to potential hazards</li> <li>4) Decide on how each hazard can be negotiated/avoided</li> <li>5) Recognise situations where a hazard needs to be 'scouted'</li> <li>6) Provide guidance of how to negotiate/avoid the hazard clearly and concisely to the group</li> <li>7) Monitor individual clients performance and needs</li> <li>8) Monitor weather and sea conditions and evaluate implications on plans</li> <li>9) Implement appropriate modifications to activity in regard to all variable factors being monitored</li> </ol>	<b>3 hours</b>
<b>Maintain physical welfare of group (initiate emergency response)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Manage the activities of the group to maintain the safest situation</li> <li>2) Respond to any emergency or non-routine situation</li> <li>3) Apply the risk management plan</li> <li>4) Initiate and maintain communications with appropriate emergency services</li> </ol>	<b>2 hours</b>

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
<p><b>Maintain physical welfare of group (lifesaving)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Be able to implement a hierarchy of rescue (Talk, Reach, Throw, Wade, Swim, Row/Paddle, Other aid)</li> <li>2) Demonstrate deep water and shallow water entry techniques</li> <li>3) Demonstrate techniques for survival in the water including cold water survival techniques (HELP position)</li> <li>4) Demonstrate patient assessment, approach and releases</li> <li>5) Be able to perform a range of contact and non-contact tows over 50m's</li> <li>6) Be able to use rescue equipment common in the industry (throw lines, PRE and rescue tubes)</li> </ol>	<p><b>8 hours</b></p> <p>(Or ILS recognised lifesaving qualification)</p> <p>RLSS UK and SLSGB deliver bespoke lifesaving courses for coastering guides</p>
<p><b>Maintain physical welfare of group (first aid)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide emergency care appropriate to the environment and potential risks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Basic life support</li> <li>✓ Management of hypothermia/hyperthermia</li> <li>✓ Management of severe bleeding</li> <li>✓ Management of fractures including suspected spinal injuries</li> <li>✓ Management of stings from marine creatures</li> <li>✓ Management of minor aquatic injuries</li> <li>✓ Management of heat related illnesses</li> <li>✓ Management of head injuries</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>8 hours</b></p> <p>(Or an HSE recognised qualification that includes the competences listed)</p>
<p><b>Lead activity with minimal impact on environment</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Select suitable sites and access points with reference to minimal impact on the environment</li> <li>2) Explain relevant minimum impact practices to the group and monitor their compliance</li> <li>3) Return any site used to equal or greater standard on your departure</li> </ol>	<p><b>3 hours</b></p>

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
<p><b>Conduct activity in a professional manner</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Control the group to maintain a safe enjoyable atmosphere</li> <li>2) Provide clear and concise direction and advice to the group during the activity</li> <li>3) Provide encouragement and show empathy</li> <li>4) Use positive words throughout the activity to refer to clients and avoid using negative or disparaging words</li> <li>5) Avoid negative statements about own organisation, commercial competitors, public bodies and other individuals</li> <li>6) Soft skills such as understanding the environmental, empathy and respect</li> </ol>	<p><b>4 hours</b></p>
<p><b>Complete post-trip responsibilities</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Notify any relevant authority of activity completion</li> <li>2) Complete any post activity administration as per procedures</li> <li>3) Retrieve, inspect, repair and store (or retire) equipment according to procedures</li> <li>4) Evaluate, including client feedback, all aspects of the activity</li> <li>5) Suggest modifications if needed</li> </ol>	<p><b>3 hours</b></p>

**Total course duration = Approx 40 hours**

## 6.0 SUGGESTED TRAINING PATHWAY - OVERVIEW

### TRAINEE GUIDE



#### Part 1 - PRE REQUISITE/ENTRY SKILLS

- ✓ Personal skills and evidence of prior learning and experience



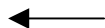
#### Part 2 - GAINING QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- ✓ Plan a coasteering activity for clients
- ✓ Ensure appropriate equipment is selected and prepared for coasteering planned activity
- ✓ Briefing clients
- ✓ Lead activity safely
- ✓ Maintain physical welfare of group (initiate emergency response)
- ✓ Maintain physical welfare of group (lifesaving)
- ✓ Maintain physical welfare of group (first aid)
- ✓ Lead activity with minimal impact on environment
- ✓ Conduct activity in a professional manner
- ✓ Complete post-trip responsibilities



#### PART 3 - POST COURSE/LEARNING

Trainees can observe sessions prior to full training, if Part 1 and emergency response training has been successfully completed



##### Stage one:

**Observe** - four logged coasteering sessions observing a competent guide/instructor

##### Stage two:

**Assist** - four logged coasteering sessions assisting a competent guide of instructor

##### Stage three:

**Lead** – four logged coasteering sessions overseen by a competent guide/instructor with client feedback

##### Stage four:

**Assessment** – Candidates should have their skills assessed and recorded



### COMPETENT GUIDE



#### Part 4 - RE-QUALIFICATION/TRAINING

Certified elements (every 2-3 years) and repeat training for all elements if no guiding has taken place for 5 years or more

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

### **AALS**

**Adventure Activities Licensing Service**  
**44 Lambourne Crescent**  
**Cardiff Business Park**  
**Llanishen**  
**CF14 5GG**  
**Tel: 029 20755715**  
**Email: [info@aals.org.uk](mailto:info@aals.org.uk)**  
**Web: [www.aals.org.uk](http://www.aals.org.uk)**

### **MCA**

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**  
**Spring Place**  
**105 Commercial Road**  
**Southampton**  
**Hants**  
**SO15 1EG**  
**Tel: 02380 329100**  
**Web: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)**

### **RoPSA**

**Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents**  
**RoSPA House**  
**Edgbaston Park**  
**353 Bristol Road**  
**Edgbaston**  
**Birmingham**  
**B5 7ST**  
**Tel: 0121 248 2000**  
**Web: [www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)**

### **RNLI**

**Royal National Lifeboat Institution**  
**Prevention and Lifeguards**  
**West Quay Road**  
**Poole**  
**Dorset**  
**BH15 1HZ**  
**Tel: 01202 663000**  
**Email: [beachsafety@rnli.org.uk](mailto:beachsafety@rnli.org.uk)**  
**Web: [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk)**

## **RLSS UK**

**Royal Lifesaving Society UK  
River House  
High Street  
Broom  
Alcester  
Warwickshire  
B50 4HN  
Tel: 01789 773994  
Web: [www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk)**

## **SLSGB**

**Surf Life Saving Great Britain  
1st Floor  
19 Southernhay West  
Exeter  
EX1 1PJ  
Tel: 01392 218007  
Web: [www.slsqb.org.uk](http://www.slsqb.org.uk)**

## **SLSAW**

**Surf Life Saving Association Wales  
Web: [www.slsawales.org](http://www.slsawales.org)**