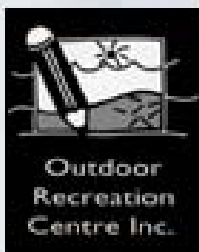


Four Wheel Driving



Adventure Activity Standards (AAS)

**For
Organisations, Guides and Leaders
Conducting Adventurous Activities for Participants
(Commercial or Non-Commercial)**



- Written by the Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc.
- Endorsed by Victoria's Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Tourism Sectors
- Supported by Victorian State Government



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- Camping Association of Victoria
- Canoeing Victoria
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award (Vic.) Inc.
- Guides Victoria
- Indoor Rockclimbing Gyms of Australia
- Adventists Outdoors (Vic) – Wild Ed.
- Scouts Australia – Victorian Branch
- Victorian Outdoor Education Association
- Victorian Sport and Recreation Association of Persons with Intellectual Disability Inc.
- Tourism Alliance (formerly Victorian Tourism Operators Association)

MANAGED BY THE AAS STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTING:

- Verve – knowledge & skills
- Camping Association of Victoria
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Parks Victoria
- Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Tourism Training Victoria
- Tourism Victoria
- Tourism Alliance (formerly Victorian Tourism Operators Association)
- Victorian WorkCover Authority



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CONTENT PROVIDED BY AND ENDORSED BY AAS WORKING PARTY

- Four Wheel Drive Victoria



- Australian Adventure Experience



- Victorian Scouts 4WD Team



- Safe Trek 4WD



- PNL Four Wheel Driving Pty Ltd



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IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this publication has been gathered through widespread industry consultation. All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that it is accurate, relevant and current at the date of publication. Nevertheless, the Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) are only advisory and general in nature and should not be relied upon to meet individual or specific requirements. They are recommendations for voluntary application to adventure activity providers and participants. They are not binding on any person or organisation and have no legal force.

The AAS will not cover each and every circumstance of an adventure activity. Nor can they, when adhered to, entirely eliminate the risk or possibility of loss or injury. Consequently they should be used as a guide only. Whenever using the information contained in this publication or any AAS, all adventure activity providers should carefully evaluate the specific requirements of the intended adventure activity and the persons participating in it. If necessary advice should be obtained from a suitably experienced and qualified professional person.

This publication and the information and the AAS it contains are made available on the express condition that Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc. Victoria (ORC), the authors, consultants and advisors who have assisted in compiling and drafting this publication and the AAS are not rendering professional advice to any person or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person as a consequence of reliance upon anything contained in or omitted from this publication.

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ADVENTURE ACTIVITY STANDARDS - WHY HAVE STANDARDS?

AAS are voluntary guidelines for undertaking potentially risky activities in a manner designed to promote:

1. **Safety** for both participants and providers,
2. **Protection** for providers against legal liability claims and criminal penalties, and
3. **Assistance** in obtaining insurance cover.

These AAS are **NOT** statutory standards imposed by law.

BASIS OF LEGAL LIABILITY

Legal liability for personal injuries or property damage is primarily governed by the law of:

1. **Contract**; and
2. **Negligence**.

Although provisions of statutes such as the *Trade Practices Act* (Cth) and the *Fair Trading Act* (Vic) are also relevant.

CLAIMS IN CONTRACT

For there to be a claim in contract there must be a legally enforceable agreement (i.e. a contract) between the person who has suffered injury or loss and the provider against whom the claim is being made. For example, there is a contract between a provider and a client, where the provider agrees to provide services for payment. The contract can be in writing or oral, or both. The claim in contract can only be made by one party to the contract against the other party, unlike a claim in negligence, which is not so limited.

Apart from the express terms of the contract, the law will usually imply certain terms into a contract that require a service provider to do a number of things when providing that service. Those implied terms might include a requirement to provide competent guides and instruction, safe equipment, and a general requirement to exercise the degree of reasonable skill and care which is to be expected of a competent provider. Some of these terms will be implied by sections of the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (Cth) and the *Fair Trading Act 1999* (Vic).

If injury or damage occurs because the provider did not exercise reasonable care in the provision of the service a court will find there was a breach of the contract entitling a party to claim compensation (damages) for the loss or injury suffered.

CLAIMS IN NEGLIGENCE

Over recent years the Law of Negligence has undergone substantial legislative change in Victoria. These changes are set out in the *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic) (as amended).

The essential elements of a claim in negligence are:

1. a duty of care being owed by the provider to take reasonable measures for the safety of their clients / participants;
2. a breach of this duty of care, and
3. the breach of the duty of care being a **cause** of the harm suffered by the participant.

A successful claim in negligence against a provider will result in an award of damages against that provider to compensate for the loss or injury thereby suffered.

Although the law does not automatically impose a duty of care, it is likely such a duty will be imposed when one party (the provider) assumes responsibility for another in the provision of adventure activities.

The duty of care is a legal requirement imposed by the courts on a provider to take reasonable care to protect a client or participant from foreseeable harm or loss.

If a claim is made and a court finds that a duty of care is owed, the court must then decide what is the appropriate level or standard of that duty of care, to determine if the provider has acted reasonably or alternatively has breached the duty of care. The standard of care is determined by all the relevant circumstances and the particular facts of each case. A court will have regard to the experience of the providers and the clients, the conditions at the time, and ultimately may seek the guidance from experts in the field. A court will find that the standard of care has not been met, (i.e. there has been a breach of the duty of care) if the evidence, **on the balance of probabilities**, establishes that the provider has not acted reasonably in the circumstances. If that conduct has caused loss and damage the provider will be liable to pay damages to compensate the party who has been injured or has suffered a loss.

For example, in an outdoor recreation activity some participants could find themselves in a situation suited to more advanced participants. There may be persons in the group who have been lead to believe by the provider that a certain skill level was not required and enrolled to join a group mis-described as being for “beginners”.

If, an accident occurred due to their inexperience, and these “novice” participants were injured, it is possible that a legal action to recover damages might be based as follows:

- in the law of contract, against the provider, if it can be demonstrated that the provider incorrectly described the group as being for “beginners”; and
- in the law of negligence, against the leader and guide, as well as the provider because of a failure to adequately instruct, advise and perhaps supervise the group.

The duty of care of the provider is higher than that placed on the ordinary citizen because the provider has agreed to provide services for a reward or assumed a responsibility of care for others e.g. by holding him/herself out as experts or specialists who have agreed to take participants into potentially dangerous or remote situations.

Whilst not an exclusive list the following is a guide to the standards that must be met by an provider, guide, instructor, teacher or staff member:

- ensure the activity is appropriate for the skills and experience of the intended participants;
- ensure the intended activity is appropriate given the known, expected and forecasted conditions;
- provide adequate staff/leader supervision;
- provide competent and appropriately trained staff/leaders;
- provide safe and properly functioning and adjusted equipment;
- provide reasonable food and safe shelter (if relevant to the activity);
- provide reasonable guidance, instruction and direction to participants; and
- depending on the activity, have an adequate knowledge of the area in which it is to take place and be able to provide reasonable first aid, emergency backup and rescue.

The law will require the provider to protect participants from known hazards, but also from those risks that could arise (that is, those that the provider, instructor, teacher or staff member guide should reasonably have foreseen) against which reasonable preventative measures could be taken.

In these circumstances, in order to limit potential for legal liability and to minimize the risk of injury, each organisation needs to implement risk and safety management processes, which have identified foreseeable risks and put in place measures to control such hazards. For the same reasons, all providers, leaders or guides ought, as a minimum, to have completed appropriate first aid and activity specific training.

This is particularly so where the activity is a specialised one. In these circumstances, as a participant will be seen as relying on the expertise of the provider, leader or guide, a high duty of care will be imposed because they will be considered as having a responsibility for the control, guidance and protection of the participant.

All of the elements of any claim must be proved by the claimant **on the balance of probabilities**. (i.e. more probable than not.)

DEFENCES AGAINST CLAIMS BY PARTICIPANTS

Establish No Negligence

The most obvious defence to a claim in negligence is for the operator to establish that he / she acted with all reasonable care in the circumstances – that is, was not negligent.

In attempting to do so the following questions must be considered:

- was the risk of harm foreseeable?
- was the risk not insignificant? and
- would a reasonable operator have taken additional precautions that would have prevented the harm?

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In determining whether a reasonable operator would have taken additional precautions a court will consider the following (amongst other relevant things):

- the probability that harm would occur if care were not taken;
- the likely seriousness of the harm;
- the burden of taking precautions to avoid the risk of harm, and
- the social utility of the activity that creates the risk of harm.

Voluntary Assumption of Risk

If it can be proved, on the balance of probabilities, that a participant was fully aware of and freely accepted the risk of suffering injury in an activity then this will be a defence to a claim in negligence. It will not be a defence, however, if the injury was caused by the inexperience or incompetence of the provider, defective equipment, inadequate supervision or instruction as it is highly unlikely that any participant would have consented to accept such risks.

If the risk of harm was an obvious one then there is a rebuttable presumption that the person who suffered the harm was aware of the risk.

Duty to Warn

A person who owes a duty of care to another person to give a warning, or other information in respect of a risk, satisfies that duty if reasonable care is taken to give that warning, or other information. This is potentially very important in the context of an Adventure Activity where it may be prudent for the provider to give all participants printed instructions and warnings (where appropriate) and obtain signed acknowledgements.

Contributory Negligence

If the accident was caused or contributed to by lack of reasonable care on the part of the participant then this will be a partial defence, according to the apportionment of responsibility made by the court between the provider and the participant. In cases of extreme acts of negligence by the participant, contributory negligence can be very high (e.g. 80 / 90%) and sometimes a complete defence.

Inherent Risks

A person is not liable in negligence for harm suffered by another person as a result of an inherent risk. An inherent risk is a risk of something occurring that cannot be avoided by the exercise of reasonable care.

Waiver to Sue / Exclusion of Liability Agreements

Amendments to the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (Cth) and the *Fair Trading Act 1999* (Vic) now enable the suppliers of "recreational services" to limit their legal liability to their customers, who are 18 years of age or over for death or personal injury. This is done by having a written Waiver to Sue signed by each customer prior to the supply of the services. A Waiver to Sue is a legally enforceable contract not to sue the supplier of recreational services should the customer be

injured or killed by the provision of the service. The Waivers must be carefully drafted and, in Victoria, must comply with the wording set out in the *Fair Trading Act*. The use of a signed Waiver to Sue under this Act enables suppliers of recreational services to exclude their liability for negligence and to limit their liability to injury or death suffered by a customer caused by **reckless conduct** described in the *Fair Trading Act* as **“Gross Negligence.”**

To qualify for this legislative protection the service provided must come within the meaning of “recreational services” as defined in the *Trade Practices Act* and the *Fair Trading Act*.

Pursuant to these Acts “recreational services” mean services that consist of participation in: -

- (a) sporting activity or a similar leisure - time pursuit, or
- (b) any other activity that involves a significant degree of physical exertion or physical risk and is undertaken for the purposes of recreation, enjoyment or leisure.

GOOD SAMARITANS, VOLUNTEERS, APOLOGIES

Good Samaritans

Under the *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* (as amended) an individual who provides assistance, advice or care to another person in an emergency or accident, where there is no expectation of payment by money or other means, will not be able to be sued for any injury or harm he / she causes.

Volunteers

Volunteers are also protected by this Act from liability for injury to another when they are providing a community service within the scope of the work provided by their community organisation.

Apologies

This Act also provides that a person by saying that they are “Sorry” or apologising for causing injury or harm to another does not constitute an admission of liability **provided it does not** include a clear acknowledgement of fault. Likewise, a reduction or waiver of fees payable for a service is not an admission of fault or liability.

LIMITATION ON CLAIMS FOR PERSONAL INJURY DAMAGES

The *Wrongs Act* provides that an injured person cannot obtain damages for pain and suffering unless they suffer permanent whole person physical impairment of greater than 5%. If the injury is psychological / psychiatric the impairment must be greater than 10%.

This Act also imposes a cap on damages for pain and suffering of a maximum of \$371,380-00 (indexed annually) together with other limitations on claims for both past and future economic loss.

APPLYING THE ADVENTURE ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Having suitable risk management programs and strategies in place, and ensuring the AAS are met, will minimise the likelihood of injury or loss. However, evidence of compliance with such programs and the AAS will also assist in the legal defence of claims and in proving that a provider and its leaders have acted reasonably in the circumstances (i.e. were not negligent). It is also likely such programs will assist providers in obtaining more favourable insurance arrangements.

DISCLAIMER

The above comments on legal liability in Contract and Negligence and defences and limitations thereto, including recent legislative changes, do not purport to be a complete and accurate description of the law on these topics. Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc., its servants and agents are not by these comments providing legal advice to any person, company or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person, company or organisation as a consequence of or in reliance upon anything contained in, implied by, or admitted in this document.



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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

There are many and varied activities that are encompassed in four wheel driving. This document sets out a series of guidelines that are recommended for commercial and non commercial activities that involve leading a group of people on a four wheel drive tour or activity. With the support of Four Wheel Drive Victoria, The Victorian Scout Four Wheel Drive Team and various commercial Four Wheel Drive Operators these guidelines have brought together the interests of the participants to protect the interest of the parties involved and to provide guidelines that will enable organisations, leaders and participants to benefit from the knowledge of the many people that enjoy the four wheel drive activity.

It is acknowledged that there are differing duties of care that apply to both commercial and non commercial activities. For the purpose of AAS, four wheel driving is best described as vehicle touring and vehicle based camping using a four-wheel drive vehicle. Whilst AAS apply primarily to this activity when conducted over difficult, remote or unsealed roads/tracks, it is applicable to all group trips involving dependant participants, commercial or not.

1 PLANNING

Before setting out, the planning section of the activity standards contains the documented administrative aspects of AAS. It is here you will find the requirements that should be completed before undertaking any activity plan.

1.1 ACTIVITY PLAN FOR FOUR-WHEEL DRIVING

Route selection is the most important consideration when creating an activity plan. Organisations and leaders should select track sections that meet the objectives of the trip. To do this, consideration should be given to the following:

- Objectives of the trip (desired outcomes).
- Group size.(see 2.6)
- Group skill/experience level.
- Track characteristics (technical difficulty and surrounding environment).
- Access and remoteness of area.
- Weather conditions and environmental impacts.
- Characteristics of the area (alpine, desert, snow).
- Duration of trip.
- Suitability / availability of vehicles.
- Foreseeable equipment requirements.

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The leader and support personnel on a four-wheel drive trip/tour should:

- Have the required skill and experience to conduct the trip satisfy the planned objectives and effectively manage incidents.
- Have knowledge of the specific areas being visited.
- Have four-wheel driving and recovery skills that are commensurate to the trip characteristics.
- Have the ability to instruct and assist participants and cope with an incident / emergency.

For the benefit of advising participants track classification is recommended as follows:

- **GREEN**
All Wheel Drive. High Range. Road tyres.
- **BLUE**
Mainly High Range but Low Range required Road tyres.
- **BLACK**
Significant Low Range. Standard 4WD Ground Clearance. All Terrain Tyres. Should have 4WD Driver training
- **RED**
Low Range. High Ground Clearance. Mud Terrain Tyres. Winch/ Recovery Equipment. Experienced Driver

A responsible non-participating person should be informed of the trip plan details, the agreed departure, return times and participant list to be made available to rescue services in the event of an emergency.

1.2 PRE TRIP DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is often seen as a chore and not a minimum requirement. There are however, certain details which a leader and/or organisation should be aware of to maximise safety.

- Emergency Strategy (including details set out below in 1.4).
- Participant's name, address and emergency contact details.
- Medical information. Note that leaders should advise participants to have sufficient medication, if required, considering any foreseeable incidents or delays and to inform the leader of any special medical requirements.

Commercial participants and non-club members:

- Should provide signatures to acknowledge inherent risks following a clear introductory briefing.
- Under the age of 18 should have the signature of or be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

1.3 RESEARCHING SITE-SPECIFIC HAZARDS

Trip leaders should consider foreseeable hazards and the potential impacts of these hazards and how they should be reasonably dealt with in planning the trip.

It is recommend that this information be documented, and if so, made readily available within the organization. Post trip reports on track conditions and hazards encountered may be passed on to appropriate bodies.

Useful contacts for track and weather conditions are;

- The Parks Victoria Information Line Ph: 13 19 63.
- The Parks Victoria Website www.parkweb.vic.gov.au.
- The Bureau of Meteorology Website www.bom.gov.au/weather/vic/.
- The Departments of Primary Industries, Sustainability & Environment Ph: 13 61 86.
- The Departments of Primary Industries, Sustainability & Environment website www.dse.vic.gov.au.
- Four Wheel Drive Victoria Ph: +61 3 9857 5209.
- Four Wheel Drive Victoria Website www.vafwdc.org.au.
- Contacting the local pub, post office or store in the area you are going to.

1.4 EMERGENCY STRATEGY

Every emergency strategy should be written to manage incidents and minimise their escalation.

Trip leaders, an appropriate external contact and participants should be made aware of those details relevant to them.

A copy of the documented emergency strategy should be carried on the trip and a copy should be kept with the relevant external contact.

The emergency strategy for a four-wheel drive trip should be specific to each area and contain:

- Access and egress routes (tracks, trails with approximate distances).
- Refuge points and helipads where appropriate.
- Contact details for key organisations (for example land manager, emergency services) and how they are best contacted. (These may be available from the parks being visited)
- Planned start and finish time of the trip.
- Details of how communication with emergency services can be obtained, if and when necessary. It is important to be aware of areas where normal communication equipment (mobile phones) will not operate, so the need for specialist equipment (sat phone HF radio) should be considered.
- Agreed time/s to communicate with the designated external contact.
- Strategy if the external contact does not receive agreed communication.



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1.5 RESTRICTIONS TO PARTICIPATION

Operational restrictions to a four-wheel drive trip include weather, equipment, track condition vehicle condition and restrictions dictated by land manager and environmental factors (flood, drought, fire)

Individual participation may be restricted if:

- Participants deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs which may affect performance.
- Participants who are unable or unwilling to follow instructions.
- Participants with unroadworthy vehicles.
- Participants with unsuitable vehicles for the planned tracks.
- Participants with ill prepared vehicles for the planned trip (tyres, load, equipment).

2 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRIP LEADER / SUPPORT PERSONNEL

This section includes all aspects of the activity plan that involve both the trip leader and the support personnel. This section covers the specific skills recommended for the basic requirements of leading, supporting and driving.

2.1 COMPETENCIES

2.1.1 Competencies for commercial trip leader/support personnel

In the absence of a single established and recognised national training qualification for all four-wheel drive activity providers, trip leaders should be confident of having satisfied a process of skill acquisition which should be at least equivalent to that described by the following selected units from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

A statement of attainment for these units is not compulsory. However the inclusion of this section is intended to provide a suitable benchmark describing the skills that a leader should have as described within the National Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package.

The driver skills indicated below are generally included in (or equivalent to) most available accredited four-wheel drive training courses.

GENERIC	UNIT CODE
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<p>These units relate to generic competency (soft skills) expected of any individual in a position of Leadership or Management in the outdoors.</p>	<p>LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT SKILLS: Respond to emergency situations Provide First Aid Facilitate a group Deal with conflict Undertake risk analysis of activities Apply sport and recreation law Follow defined Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures</p> <p>OUTDOOR RECREATION SKILLS: Operate communication systems and equipment Plan outdoor recreation activities Guide outdoor recreation sessions Navigate in tracked or easy untracked areas Plan for minimal environmental impact Interpret weather conditions in the field Use and maintain a temporary or overnight site</p>	<p>SRXEMR001A SRXFAD001A SRXGRO001A SRXGRO002A SRXRK001A SRXINU002A</p> <p>SRXOHS001B</p> <p>PUAOPE002A SROODR002A SROODR005A SRONAV001B SROOPS002B SROOPS004B SROOPS006B</p>
<p>The following areas of competence relate specifically to the expected competency of a guide on a four-wheel driving trip.</p> <p>As a pre-requisite for any four-wheel driving in Victoria, any driver should possess a current driver's licence appropriate to the vehicle being driven.</p>	<p>Drive and recover a four-wheel drive vehicle Guide 4WD tours Drive a 4WD vehicle in difficult terrain using advanced technique Co-ordinate recovery of a 4WD vehicle using advanced techniques Vehicle Inspection</p>	<p>SRODRV001B SRODRV004A</p> <p>SRODRV002B</p> <p>SRODRV003B TDT B4 97</p>

Details of these units can be accessed free by logging on to the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), National Training Information Service website at www.ntis.gov.au.

The following will enable you to locate the unit you are interested in viewing.

1. On the opening page select 'Training Packages',
2. On the Training Packages Page: Insert SRO03 (03 as in the year 2003) to the box requesting "Training Package CODE" and search.
3. Select "Outdoor Recreation Industry"
4. On the left of the new page select "Units of Competency"
5. The page which opens will have a complete listing of unit codes and unit titles. Find (easiest by unit code) and select the unit you wish to view. Each unit has key aspects of the unit (elements), details for each aspect (Performance criteria) and other information relevant to the assessment of the unit by a recognised training organization (RTO) such as the "Range of Variables" and "Evidence Guide".

(Please note that some units contain pre and co requisite units which are displayed in "2. Interdependent assessment of units" in the **Evidence Guide**. The contents of these are an essential component of the unit for which they are pre/co-requisites.)



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The above units are components of national training courses that encompass the specification of knowledge areas and skills relevant to the outdoor recreation industry and the application of that knowledge and skill to a standard of performance required in the workplace.

2.1.2 Competencies for non-commercial trip leader/support personnel

The trip leader and/or support personnel should have the following capabilities at a level appropriate for the trip being undertaken.

- First aid skills.
- Capacity to respond to emergencies.
- Interpersonal skills (dealing with conflict).
- Navigational skills.
- Four wheel driving techniques.
- Vehicle recovery skills.
- Risk assessment.
- Operation of communication equipment.

2.2 FIRST AID

A leader or support person on a four-wheel drive trip should have appropriate first aid skills for the planned trip. It is recommended that at least one adult should hold a current remote first aid certificate on any trip which is, at any point, estimated to be more than two hours from emergency medical attention. (It is worth noting that ambulances do not travel off good gravel roads so two hours from emergency attention could for example be five minutes up a rough track just an hour from the CBD.)

On any four-wheel drive trip, there should be at least one accessible first aid kit which should be appropriate for the trip

2.3 SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRIP LEADER

The following are the responsibilities of a trip leader. Individual tasks may be delegated but the responsibility remains with the trip leader.

It is the trip leader's responsibility to accurately communicate to the participants the difficulty and complexity of the trip to allow the participant to evaluate his/her level of knowledge, ability, skill and equipment to participate in the trip (or not).

The trip leader should:

- Complete trip plan
- Collect waiver forms signed by participants prior to trip where appropriate.
- Research and plan for likely hazards/incidents/emergencies.
- Ensure that minimal environmental impact message is conveyed and adhered to.

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- Assess driving experience/capabilities within group are appropriate for the planned conditions and the trip to be undertaken.
- Ensure a full brief is clearly carried out and understood by all support personnel and participants. (See 2.5)
- Check weather reports prior to trip and if possible, every day on a multi day trip.
- Check that all vehicles and equipment are prepared and loaded in an appropriate manner for the trip.
- Confirm head count before, during and immediately following the trip.
- Maintain awareness of the physical and psychological condition of the group and respond appropriately.
- Control the pace of the group and rest group if necessary.
- Ensure, to the best of your ability, that all participants avoid situations beyond their known capabilities.
- Appropriately designate responsibility to support personnel.
- Appoint external contact to notify SES, Police etc if not contacted by designated times.
- Notify external contact of safe return/completion.
- Check first aid kit and communication equipment prior to trip.
- Ensure that the objectives of the trip are satisfied with appropriate consideration for safety.
- Ensure that any incidents are documented and reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Complete the incident report and file with organisation

2.4 SUPPORT PERSONNEL

All persons acting as support personnel should support and assist the trip leader according to the trip plan and manage any incident or emergency according to the emergency strategy if the trip leader becomes injured or incapacitated. (See 2.6 and 2.7).

The last vehicle in the convoy, “tail end Charlie”, has the responsibility for keeping the trip leader informed of the progress or delays of the group and for ensuring that gates are left open or closed as found by lead driver.

2.5 COMMUNICATION AND AUTHORITY

As for all outdoor activities involving group participation, all participants and trip leaders should use an agreed and understood system of communication. It is essential that this system be devised before the trip and agreed as a component of the pre trip briefing.

Every communication system requires a clear full briefing. This may be delivered differently according to organisational preference and, where relevant, the length and complexity of a trip but should include and is not limited to each and every element of the following.

- Convoy procedure.

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- Introduction of trip leader, support personnel roles and responsibilities, description of trip, location and objectives.
- Strategies for environmental conservation including Flora, Fauna and rubbish removal (See section 4, Environment and conduct).
- The nature of the activity, inherent risks, emergency strategy, group conduct and communication requirements.
- Equipment, clothing, supplies and fuel requirements required for the trip.
- Confirm participants have understood the brief (acceptance of risk).
- Confirm that all participants in control of a vehicle have the appropriate competence.
- Confirm that all participants in control of a vehicle are free of the effects of alcohol/drugs.
- Explanation of required documentation, including completion and signing of waiver if required.

2.6 GROUP SIZE

For the safety of both the group and the environment, the maximum group size for a four-wheel drive trip is recommended at 10 vehicles.

Any group of greater than 10 vehicles may be split and each resulting group should independently adhere to AAS before negotiating single track sections and/or fragile environments.

AAS recommend that no more than 30 participants are included on four-wheel drive trips. This is primarily an environmental issue so if a group of greater than 30 individuals is deemed to be reasonable, then extra consideration should be given to minimise the environmental impact of the group at rest areas, camping grounds and during any vehicle recoveries. Trip plans should account for these extra considerations.

3 EQUIPMENT

Equipment requirements vary with the objectives of the trip plan and the environmental conditions likely to be endured. When planning equipment requirements for a four-wheel drive trip it is important to plan ahead as much as possible for all eventualities taking into account the appropriate access information and forecast weather conditions.

3.1 EQUIPMENT RELATING TO THE PARTICIPANTS AND TRIP LEADER'S VEHICLE

The following equipment is the recommended requirement for any vehicle on a four-wheel driving trip and is the minimum considered reasonable to minimise the occurrence of; and appropriately deal with incidents encountered, maintenance and servicing that may be required during the journey.

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- Vehicles should be suitable for the planned conditions and those conditions that are reasonable to assume may occur during the trip.
- Vehicles should be in a roadworthy condition and should be registered.
- It is recommended that vehicle recovery points are mounted to the front and rear of each vehicle.
- Each vehicles should also carry minimum recovery gear appropriate for the trip;
- A dynamic recovery strap (snatch strap).
- Two rated bow shackles (minimum 3.2 tonne rating).
- One Axe or handsaw (pruning and or a bow).
- One shovel.
- Spare parts appropriate to the nature of the planned trip (duration, remoteness, track complexity).
- A tool kit suitable for the vehicle and the planned trip. (It is essential to note that the basic tool kit supplied with a vehicle may not be suitable in a remote scenario).
- Each vehicle should also carry the following:
 - A fire extinguisher accessible to the driver.
 - Sufficient fuel, oil and water for the trip and foreseeable delays/detours.
 - Vehicle manual.
 - A tyre pressure gauge.
 - Emergency supplies of food and water.

These do not represent an exhaustive list and additional consideration should be given on every trip. Driver training is advised to fully explain additional, more complex provisions.

3.2 EQUIPMENT RELATING TO THE PARTICIPANTS.

The following equipment requirements apply to all participants.

- Participants should have appropriate clothing for the duration and objectives of the trip.
- Food, water, medication and sleeping equipment.
- Emergency requirements

3.3 EQUIPMENT USED BY THE TRIP LEADER.

The trip leader has responsibility for the easy access to and correct use of.

- Appropriate primary and emergency communication system for the group.
- The first aid kit.
- The primary navigation equipment.



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3.4 EQUIPMENT CONDITION, MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE.

All vehicles should be in good condition to be suitable for the trip and regularly serviced to ensure minimal environmental impact.

All equipment stored in or on the vehicles should be secured appropriately and all vehicles should be cleaned before and after each trip and between eco-sensitive areas.

4 ENVIRONMENT AND CONDUCT

Four-wheel driving is a great way to enjoy the tremendous variety of outdoor experiences offered by Victorian and Australian parks, forests and other reserves. The following represent acceptable conduct for the long-term sustainability of both the activity and the environment.

1. Support four-wheel drive touring and vehicle based camping as a responsible and legitimate family recreational activity, enjoy your recreation and respect the rights of others.
2. Obey the laws and regulations for recreational vehicles which apply to public land.
3. Always utilise recognised vehicle tracks and where possible, rest locations. If this is not possible (around camping areas) access should occur only at locations with a robust surface on which the vehicles will have minimal impact.
4. Always seek permission before driving on private land, never disturb livestock or watering points and leave gates as found.
5. By law, all plants, animals, historical and archaeological sites and geographic features are protected so disturbing any of these is illegal and should be avoided.
6. Tying to trees or other vegetation should always be avoided (camping, vehicle recovery). If this is not possible, tree trunk protectors' and extreme care should be taken to eliminate damage from rope movement.
7. Track erosion should always be minimised and care should be taken when there is potential for excessive wear and tear (wet areas, steep climbs and descents and setting up recoveries.)
8. Always adopt minimal impact driving practices and camping practices.
9. Always keep your vehicle mechanically sound and keep your vehicle, camping and personal equipment clean of soil to reduce emissions and the spread of pest plant species, transporting seeds or soil-borne pathogens such as Phytophthora.
10. Be aware of total fire ban requirements. Total Fire Bans may be implemented regionally so be sure to check daily and be aware of fire regions that cover the route. Contact your local fire authority or local land manager for details regarding your legal responsibility.
11. Where fires are permitted:
12. Fires should only be lit in a properly constructed fireplace or pit minimum 30 cm deep and 1 metre wide.
13. At least three meters around the fireplace or pit must be clear of flammable vegetation.
14. Do not leave fires unattended.

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15. Fires should be completely extinguished with water before leaving the campsite and pits should be backfilled. “safe to touch, safe to leave”
16. Persons are encouraged to use alternative fuel stoves whenever possible.
17. All campsites should be located at least 20 metres from any waterway.
18. Faecal matter should be buried at least 100 metres from any waterway, 150 mm deep (6 inches) and should be carried out from any water supply catchment area.
19. Carry out all rubbish, including foodstuffs as they may harm native wildlife.
20. Always use biodegradable soaps and detergents. Dispose of washing water at least 100 metres from any waterway.

5 DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Organisation - A group of persons organized for a particular purpose and assuming the role of providing a four-wheel driving activity (Activity Provider) being commercial (for profit) non-commercial (not for profit / community) or recreational group.

Participant – A person who joins with the trip leader to participate in and be part of the trip.

Support personnel – A person or persons who is allocated an activity within a group of participants on a four-wheel drive activity with the intention to assist in offering the experience of the activity and satisfying the objectives of the trip. (Commercial or not)

Trip leader – A competent person who co-ordinates the entire group “including the support personnel” to satisfy the objectives of the trip. (Commercial or not)

Urban - Urban trips are defined in AAS as any trip which is at no point any more than 2 hours from emergency medical attention.

Remote - Remote trips are defined in AAS as any trip which is at any point more than 2 hours from emergency medical attention.

Emergency Medical Attention – Definitive medical attention being that of a medically qualified person (paramedic, doctor). This may be getting definitive medical attention to the injured participant/s or by getting the injured participant/s to definitive medical attention.

Summary of abbreviations.

AAS	–	Adventure Activity Standards
ORC	–	Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc. Victoria
ANTA	–	Australian National Training Authority
NTIS	–	National Training Information Service

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ITAB	–	Industry Training Advisory Board
SRTA	–	Sport and Recreation Training Australia
NOLRS	–	National Outdoor Leaders Registration Scheme
QORF	–	Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation
CBD	–	Central Business District
Cth	–	Commonwealth

6 FURTHER INFORMATION

AAS encourage all operators, owners, leaders, support personnel and participants to

- Undertake appropriate leadership and 4WD training.
- Obtain relevant information from map shops, camping stores, 4WD professionals, DS&E, Parks Victoria, 4WD Associations and clubs.

Numerous books and magazines are available on current 4WD issues.

The Outdoor Recreation Centre Victoria Inc. would like to acknowledge the following background reading included in the planning of this document.

1. The Victorian State Government existing standards, guidelines and codes of practice.
2. Ross Cloutier – “Legal Liability and Risk Management in Adventure Tourism”
3. ANFWDC nationally accredited 4WD Training. ‘Trainee guide’
4. Sport and Recreation Training Australia – “National Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package”

The Outdoor Recreation Centre Victoria Inc would also like to extend sincere thanks to the members of the working party who invested their own time and expertise to represent their respective organisations in support of this document (details can be obtained from the Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc.)