

LAND ACTIVITIES – ON THE MOVE

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

This good practice guide has been developed specifically for businesses delivering land-based mobile activities to tourists, including off road tours, horse treks, nature safaris, canyoning, caving, mountaineering and rock climbing. It provides targeted and practical ideas for business sustainability. Further information, tools, and similar guides for other types of tourism businesses are contained in the Ministry of Tourism website: <http://www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability>



HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Implement a health and safety programme for all staff, using templates developed by Worksafe.
- Check clients' gear before departure, and provide spare warm clothing and equipment to borrow if their own is not appropriate for the conditions.
- Require clients to agree to follow your safety policies at the start of trips (e.g. have them read and sign policy statements when registering).
- Ensure all guides and trip vehicles carry satellite phones and survival equipment appropriate to the type of trip, terrain and season. Require guides to hold first aid certificates.
- Create a safety plan (e.g. require guides to phone in to the office at set times, set out the steps to take in emergencies and who to notify in different scenarios). Ensure all staff are well briefed on the plan.
- Join the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Workplace Safety Management Practices Programme. This attracts reduced premiums upon demonstrating that the business health and safety management systems meet the graded requirements.



MANAGING GREY WATER

- Keep streams and lakes clean by carrying water at least 100m from the waterway to wash; this allows soapy water to drain into the soil and be filtered.
- Use biodegradable detergents sparingly, for washing up, and pour out used water at least 100m from any waterways.



CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

- Work with other tourism businesses, councils and community groups, to implement a local 'Trees for Travellers' sponsorship initiative (e.g. native tree planting by tourists to mitigate CO₂ emissions).
- Support local research and conservation efforts (e.g. carry out voluntary reporting of wildlife activity and interactions, for DoC).
- Educate clients as to how they can make a positive contribution to local conservation efforts (e.g. introduce 'adopt a kiwi' scheme or a comparable scheme relevant to the area and setting).
- Implement team building days, e.g. volunteering on a local conservation project.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Provide clients with laminated reference cards to be returned at the end of the trip, explaining outdoor ethics to be followed (e.g. this could be adapted from the DoC Environmental Care Code, this Sustainability Guide and the Treadlightly! principles).
- Provide briefings to clients at the commencement of each trip, outlining sustainability initiatives and environmental protection measures to be followed.
- Improve guides' knowledge of flora, fauna and the local area by reading the DoC Interpretation Handbook.
- Teach guides how to identify invasive plants (weeds) and what to do with them (e.g. cut them at ground level, if pulling is likely to result in seed dispersal, bag and dispose of or burn).



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

The Ministry of Tourism
Telephone: (04) 498 7440
Email: info@tourism.govt.nz
www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability



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MINIMISING WASTE

- List all the wastes generated by the business, and think of what can be done to avoid sending them to landfill.
- Choose from the following waste management options for each waste stream: Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost. Regularly check on progress and costs (e.g. conduct simple waste audits).
- Purchase consumables in bulk, avoiding unnecessary packaging and supply reusable crockery, cutlery and containers to minimise waste.
- Reduce the use of office consumables (e.g. print double sided, keep electronic instead of paper copies, reuse paper, purchase refillable products).
- Adopt a 'Pack it in – Pack it Out' ethic, taking out all waste. Look carefully for food scraps, bottle tops, cigarette butts, packaging, used matches, old tent pegs, and pick up any litter found.
- Make sure all clients understand waste management procedures, and provide biodegradable (e.g. cornstarch) bags on all tours for waste collection.
- Provide labelled recycling containers and an organic bin at the booking office, and ensure staff and clients use them.
- Establish a compost bin or worm farm (or outsource for collection by another agency), so that organic wastes (such as food scraps, tea leaves and tree cuttings) can be converted into fertiliser.
- Segregate hazardous wastes (e.g. batteries, fuel and oil filters, vehicle fluids, oil/fuel contaminated absorbents), and find schemes for the safe handling and disposal of these wastes; ask your council for advice.

Clean vehicles and equipment after travelling through areas with weeds or fungus, to avoid spread into other areas.



PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Ensure guides and visitors are aware of legal restrictions and any special precautions to be followed in the areas to be visited; check with DoC and obtain permission from landowner where access onto private land is required.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards and emergencies.
- Schedule trips to avoid times of high use, and keep groups small.
- Use a map and compass to avoid using paint marking, rock cairns or flagging.



WILDLIFE AND LIVESTOCK SAFETY

- Ensure guides have contact numbers for landowners, maintain regular contact and follow landowners' instructions regarding livestock (e.g. bulls). Notify the landowner if you see dead animals or damaged fences.
- Leave stock gates as they were found (open or closed).
- Drive carefully in areas where livestock or wildlife are present. Allow animals to move off tracks before attempting to pass them. Take particular care in forested areas and at dawn and dusk.
- If an animal is hit, check if it is still alive, take it to a vet or notify the owner.
- Observe wildlife from sufficient distance to prevent changes in their behaviour or habitat – do not attempt to follow, approach, handle or feed wildlife.
- Avoid known nesting and breeding sites.

Purchase consumables in bulk, avoiding unnecessary packaging and supply reusable crockery, cutlery and containers to minimise waste.



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- Develop and adopt a sustainability policy for the business, and review regularly.
- Develop an Action Plan, setting out ways to enhance sustainability performance; make someone responsible for each action and impose a deadline; review to ensure deadlines are met.
- Integrate sustainability into existing management systems and processes (e.g. build ethical recreation principles and contents of this guide into operations manuals).
- Seek to become a carbon neutral certified business, reduce CO₂ emissions as much as possible, and offset those that remain (e.g. by funding native tree planting or energy-efficient schemes to compensate for carbon released from vehicle operation).
- Implement a formal client feedback process which includes sustainability performance as an area for comment; introduce client reward for good ideas (e.g. vouchers).
- Consult a business mentor, to identify ways to operate more efficiently (free up time), develop and grow the business (e.g. NZTE programmes).
- Become Qualmark® endorsed, using this guide to assist in meeting the requirements for environmental accreditation.



RESPECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Follow appropriate conduct when accessing areas of significance to tangata whenua (e.g. wāhi tapu [sacred sites], such as urupā [burial grounds], old battlegrounds, pā, marae and papa kāinga [ancient settlements and reserve areas]).
- Ensure clients observe, but do not touch, cultural or historical structures and artefacts (e.g. adzes, waka, rock art).

Observe wildlife from sufficient distance to prevent changes in their behaviour or habitat – do not attempt to follow, approach, handle or feed wildlife.



FIRE PREVENTION

- Use portable fuel stoves for cooking as they are more efficient than fires, and candle lanterns for light.
- If you do light a campfire, keep it small and contained, use only dead wood. Douse it with water and check ashes before leaving.
- To build a small fire over living vegetation or soil, lay down an old tarpaulin or blanket, and cover it with at least 15 cm of loose sand or soil to insulate it from the fire on top.
- Avoid lighting campfires in sensitive areas (such as alpine grasslands, rainforests, lake, creek and dune areas), as fires will leave permanent scars on soil and vegetation.



MINIMISING USERS' IMPACT

- Use existing roads and trails. Walk / ride in single file in the middle of trails to avoid widening trails.
- Avoid travelling on poorly placed trails (e.g. steep grades with soft substrates), or trails that show signs of erosion.
- Where driving on muddy tracks is necessary, select a gear to maintain torque without spinning wheels.
- To avoid getting stuck in muddy conditions, cross old ruts at an angle, and either straddle ruts and gullies, or drive along the sidewalls.
- Whenever possible, use existing campsites; camp on durable surfaces and set up tents and cooking areas on a non-vegetated area.
- Choose campsites at least 100m from trails and waterways and avoid camping near historical, archaeological or culturally significant sites.
- Clean vehicles and equipment after travelling through areas with weeds or fungus, to avoid spread into other areas.



FUEL EFFICIENCY

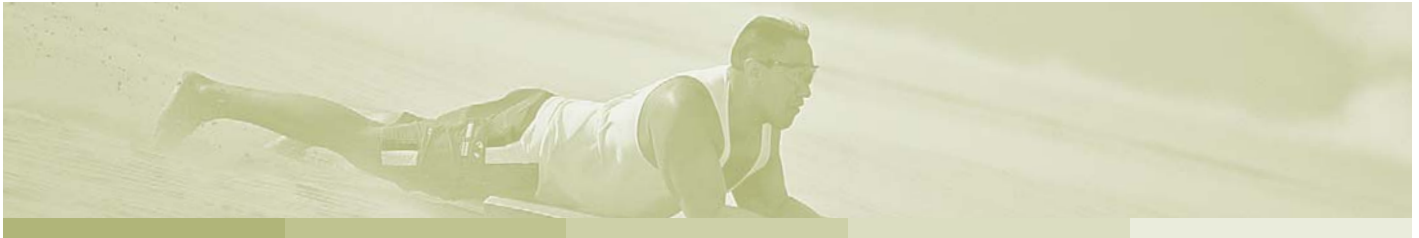
- Require that all drivers undergo a driver education program, which promotes safe and fuel efficient driving.
- Use vehicles that are appropriately equipped to the terrain (e.g. have the right tyres, power and gear ratios and carry a well-balanced load).
- Maintain vehicles regularly to avoid excessive emissions, leaking fuel or dripping oil.
- Tune all engines regularly (in line with manufacturer's specifications), to keep engines running cleanly and at peak performance.



SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

- Review all products and services that you purchase, and advise your suppliers that you will give preference to products that meet social and environmental criteria (e.g. based on distance from origin, biodegradability, efficiency rating, recycled content, ability to be recycled etc).
- Consider 'whole of life cost' in future product sourcing decisions (e.g. whether products can be recycled, sold or donated after use – look for supplier 'take back' schemes for mobiles, appliances, office equipment).
- Use biodegradable and environmentally certified (e.g. Environmental Choice) cleaning agents and other products (e.g. paper or cornstarch bags for waste).
- Where catering is included in trips, buy re-usable or biodegradable food containers (e.g. potato starch or corrugated paper).
- When selecting new vehicles, consider fuel-type, efficiency and emissions (e.g. choose bio-fuel powered, clean burning diesel), as well as safety, passenger comfort and noise generation.
- Use publishers that offer 'green' options for publishing promotional materials and guides (e.g. vegetable-based inks printed on recycled [100% post-consumer content, Process Chlorine Free] paper) and communicate this in printed materials.
- Consider 'sustainable' clothing alternatives when sourcing new uniforms (e.g. Eco Fleece produced from recycled PET plastic, organic merino and cotton fabrics).
- Create written contracts for vehicle maintenance and repair, and ensure these include requirements to protect health, safety and the environment.

Avoid lighting campfires in sensitive areas (such as alpine grasslands, rainforests, lake creek and dune areas), as fires will leave permanent scars on soil and vegetation.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Employ local staff, and offer internships or tourism work-experience.
- Give priority to locally produced goods and services, sourced from medium, small and micro-enterprises (e.g. organic produce for trips).
- Establish a partnership with a local school, and work with local and regional partners to support the school and environmental education (e.g. participation in Education Outside the Classroom programmes, sponsorship, mentoring students).



CONSIDERATION OF OTHER USERS

- Ensure all guides and clients are considerate of other visitors who also have the right to enjoy the natural environment.
- Give way to other users on the trail, and step to the downhill side of trails when encountering horses.
- Take breaks and camp away from other visitors; avoid loud voices and noises.



MANAGING TOILET WASTE

- When travelling with large groups, or to an often-used site that does not have a permanent toilet, consider carrying a portable toilet.
- In areas without toilet facilities, provide hand trowels and unscented toilet paper for clients to dig individual shallow holes (15-30cm deep) well away from campsites, tracks and huts, and at least 100m from any waterways, to bury toilet wastes. Remind clients to use toilet paper sparingly and bury it well.
- Set up a trickle cup and antibacterial soap for hand washing, and advise guides and clients on how to use it effectively.



PROTECTING WATERWAYS

- Always check the depth of the waterway, before attempting a crossing.
- Cross at an existing ford or track crossing, or choose a place with easy access and exit to avoid cutting up banks.
- Where possible, drive straight across, and not along the bed of the stream or creek.
- Do not cross a waterway within 2km upstream of a water-supply intake.
- Investigate whether waterways contain rare species, fish spawning or breeding. If so, avoid crossing or disturbing.
- Wash gear between waterways to prevent the spread of unwanted pests, such as didymo (freshwater algae).



CELEBRATE SUCCESS

- Include sustainability successes in marketing collateral (e.g. web-site, brochures, booking office display, sales calls).
- Share and continue to build on sustainability successes through existing channels (e.g. relevant industry associations and business networks).
- Submit an Expression of Interest to the Tourism Industry Association for the New Zealand Tourism Industry Awards.
- Hold celebratory events for staff, and encourage other local businesses to participate.



WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Develop induction and training processes that include sustainability as a core element.
- Communicate sustainability objectives to staff (e.g. through inductions, training, meetings), encourage suggestions, actively involve them, and reward achievements (e.g. build values into performance criteria for staff).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- Department of Conservation, NZ Environmental Care Code – 10 Point Checklist and Interpretation Handbook, www.doc.govt.nz
- Tread Lightly! Inc, Guides and Tips for Responsible and Ethical Recreation, www.treadlightly.org
- NZ Historic Places Trust Register of Historic Areas, Wāhi Tapu and Wāhi Tapu Areas, www.historic.org.nz/Register
- For details of industry sustainability initiatives and sources of help, refer to the Ministry of Tourism website, www.tourism.govt.nz/sustainability

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