



INSTITUTI I KËRKIMIT DHE ZHVILLIMIT BARLETI



# ADVENTURE GUIDE TRAINING WORKBOOK



Regional Cooperation Council

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# Welcome!

## **Welcome to the Adventure Guide Training Course.**

This specific guide training course was designed and organized to help you on your path of becoming an excellent adventure travel guide, thereby considerably contributing to the competence of adventure travel guides along the Via Dinarica trail and Western Balkans as a whole.

The course has a mixture of classroom activities and field training.

The workbook covers the basics of what is taught on the course - both the workbook and the course contain information and exercises to help you develop core competencies as an adventure travel guide. These competences are defined by the International Adventure Travel Guide Qualification and Performance Standard, and they are:

1. Technical Competencies
2. Wilderness Medicine and First Aid
3. Customer Service and Group Management Skills
4. Natural and Cultural History Interpretation
5. Sustainability

## **Learning Objectives of this Course**

By the end of this course you will:

1. Grow in & polish leadership skills that characterize a superb adventure guide performance.
2. Understand the fantastic job, the complexity and rewards of being an adventure guide.
3. Meet the challenge of being a trip leader and dealing with human behaviour and relationship outside the comfort zone.
4. Obtain an overview of the fundamental customer service, content delivery, and general technical skills that an adventure travel guide should be competent in.
5. Be even more clear about the paramount importance of safety of guests and everyone else, that being first, compared to satisfaction and fulfillment with the tour, which - although very important - still being second.
6. Have a clear understanding of constant growth being a necessity if we are to be up to the task in the ever changing industry of adventure travel.

And those who after this course come out convinced that no amount of training is ever too much and that there is always room for improvement, they truly grew in knowledge and experience and their leadership skills were indeed perfected as much as possible.

As it is the case with any training, so does this adventure guide course serve as a stepping stone and motivation for guides to continue learning and improving their skills also on their own after the course: from experienced colleagues during actual trips, from reliable sources/ literature, as well as to continue attending other trainings offered by other organisations, such as Mountaineering Association, etc. All that will then further perfect your skills, knowledge and experience as an adventure travel guide. And, coming back to this workbook from time to time, will also tell us how much we've grown in the skills and understanding of the knowledge contained in it.

# Adventure Travel Industry Concepts & Trends

## What is Adventure Travel?

Adventure travel is a type of tourism, involving exploration or travel with potential perceived and actual risk, and requiring specialized skills and physical exertion in the natural environment. Adventure tourism has grown in recent decades, as tourists seek different types of experiences while on vacation. According to Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), adventure travel is defined as having three attributes: interaction with the environment, physical activity and cultural exchange. When two of these are present it is adventure travel. At the core of adventure travel are trips that include all three elements.



Adventure travel combines at least two of these traits.  
The core of adventure travel combines all three.

While adventure is frequently attributed to high adrenaline activities, a majority of adventure travel would be classified as “soft adventure” versus “hard adventure”. Soft adventure includes activities that require the guest to have little to no training prior to participating in the activity, such as hiking, or has a greater emphasis on location specific content, such as wildlife watching. Hard adventure includes activities that are highly technical or extended expeditions, such as rock climbing or mountaineering.

# Adventure Travel Industry Global Market Value

Up to recently, the travel and tourism industry was the world's largest commercial service sector, employing 1 in every 11 people on Earth (as of 2015) and it steadily kept growing until this 2020, which brought another dimension to the practice and understanding of tourism altogether. Prior to this global pandemic times, the industry had such a global reach, significantly impacting the economic well being of people and the environment. The vast majority of adventure tourism is dominated by small businesses working in rural areas and wilderness environments. Therefore, adventure travel is even more dependent than other forms of tourism on human and nature capital, and views the protection and promotion of these resources as central to its continued success.

## The Role of a Guide

The adventure travel guide plays an active role in encouraging a love of nature and nurturing an adventurous spirit. More than just a vacation, the adventure trip builds core human values of respect for all things, curiosity for new lands and culture, and a love of learning about oneself and the earth. These values are an antidote to some of the most vexing problems of the modern world: the too-fast pace of life that challenges contemplation; intolerance for the unknown whether it be in politics, religion or business; violence against nature, animals, humans.

Why do travelers choose to seek adventure trips? What do they escape? What do they hope to find? A predominant answer does not exist, as each person has their own agenda. Your personal answers to these questions probably explain your choice to become an adventure travel guide and desire to train yourself to be a great professional.

Adventure travel guides play a crucial role in the ability for travel to be transformational and meaningful. They guide people:

- **On a trip towards nature:** There is a kind of survival necessity, especially from those who live in big urban areas, to reconnect with nature. The ability to reconnect with nature is one of the reasons adventure travel is growing at a sustained pace.
- **On a trip towards the other:** Modern life and technologies often mean feeling disconnected. On an adventure travel trip, people are exploring new relationships, other ways of life, and other cultures and beliefs. These human experiences happen within the travel group and the communities they visit.
- **On a trip towards wellbeing:** Adventure travel is an internal journey. The experiences allow travelers to change rhythm from day-to-day life, test physical capacity, look for mental challenges, or time for contemplation.

**What is expected from an adventure travel guide?**

- Facilitate safe and enjoyable experiences, while understanding that it is trip leader who is ultimately responsible for everything related to the trip
- Provide the highest level of customer experience
- Represent the company ethos and values
- Advocate for the communities and environment
- Experts in the destination and activity
- Skilled in customer relations, communications and leadership
- Be flexible, fun, engaging and spontaneous

Adventure travel guides are expected to act within the law of the country at all times and to ensure that all members of the group also remain within the law. This includes the use of illegal drugs.

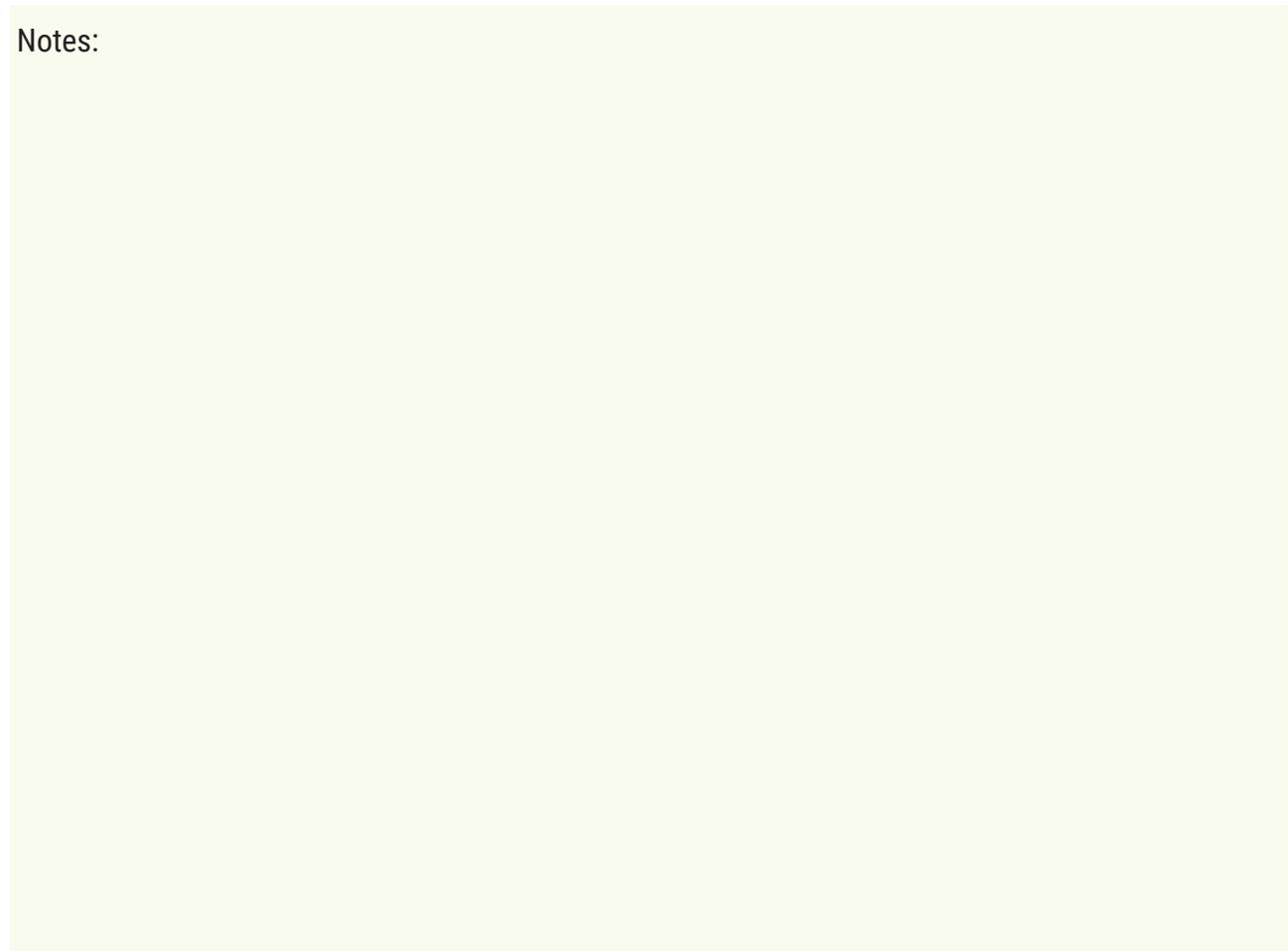
Should something illegal take place on a trip, it is the guide’s responsibility to immediately communicate that with the company he/ she works for, which will then act accordingly.

Guides avoid and must prevent discrimination against any group or individual, including those of a different race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. This requirement refers to members of the group, other tourists or travelers and the local population.

And, lastly, a guide is expected to enjoy oneself while doing all of the above - this being basic and condition, in the first place, for doing a job of an adventure travel guide.

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Notes:



# Adventure Travel Guide Core Competencies

In an effort to support the industry as it continues to expand and professionalize, the ATTA initiated the creation of the Adventure Travel Guide Qualification and Performance Standard. The standard was developed by a volunteer industry working group made up of participants from 15 countries, including guides, business owners, and travel industry partners. This standard is offered to the industry as a voluntary guideline. Both new and experienced guides may refer to the standard as a benchmark for evaluating their own performance.

Prior to this global standard, it was difficult for guides and businesses to determine the breadth of skills a guide required, and typically emphasized primarily technical and medical skills. The standard was developed around the concept that an adventure travel guide must equally possess five core competencies:

**Technical Skills:** The Technical Skills competency is directed to activity specific technical skills as well as general technical skills - abilities guides must possess regardless of what activity they are leading. For all activities, a guide should have the fundamental skills in: safety and risk management and natural phenomena evaluation, meteorology, navigation. These techniques are used during the trip as well as for trip logistics and preparation. It is essential that all guides obtain training required to conduct each activity safely.

It is important to stress that technical level and physical aptitudes are necessary to guide people and it is an essential part of a guide's credibility. However, it takes a mastery in all five core competencies to become a complete adventure travel guide.

**Wilderness Medicine and First Aid:** The often remote nature of adventure travel trips, the presence of physical activity, and often both, means a higher likelihood that a guide will need to respond to a medical emergency at some point in his / her career. The Adventure Travel Guide Qualification and Performance Standard states, "Guides must possess a first aid certification based on the recognized protocol for the amount of time required to reach definitive care (hospital or clinic)." It is the guide's responsibility to know and obtain the required training and certification, which is not part of this training course. We will also discuss the protocol for certification and the responsibility of a guide in regards to administering care.

**Customer Service and Group Management:** Adventure travel leads people outside their comfort zone, which often makes a guest less predictable and more challenging to manage. Guides are in the unique position to manage this along with providing a high quality and safe experience. Additionally, a guide should have a refined set of leadership skills to be able to manage groups through a variety of situations. Oftentimes, adventure activities take place amongst the local community, which requires being capable of intercultural communication and interpersonal skills.

**Natural and Cultural History Interpretation (content delivery):** An adventure travel guide is expected to be an expert and effectively communicate information on the region's natural history, cultural heritage and current events. Guides must develop communication skills to cover a potentially wide variety of contexts for both the culture and place, as well as the interests of the audience. Content delivery techniques are applied in formal educational settings and informal situations, such as mealtimes and casual conversation.

**Sustainability:** A core value of the adventure travel sector is a focus on environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. Guides operate sustainably by minimizing environmental impacts and modeling sustainable practices to guests. It is a guide's responsibility to teach guests about minimum impact and behaviors that best respect local culture and wildlife. Also, central to ensuring the positive impact in communities, is a guide's interaction with local partners and ability to share local culture and history.

In the end, we realize the ideal adventure travel guide covers a wide range of disciplines: athlete, diplomat, teacher (biology, geography, history), environmentalist, medical practitioner.

### ***Complete Exercise 1***

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# ■ Trip Organisation

Adventure travel requires a detailed and accurate plan. A structured plan keeps the group organized, on schedule, and helps to eliminate confusion. The guests are given an electronic copy of the plan prior to the start of the trip. It is crucial that the plan reflects the trip itinerary entirely and in every detail, for that is what guests paid for and expect to be delivered to them by their trip leader; nothing in the notes should be unclear or ambiguous thus left for guests to interpret it or misinterpret it. That way we create realistic expectations and make the guide's job much easier.

The trip notes are usually provided by the tour operator or tour agency a guide works for, but it is the guide's responsibility, prior to the trip, to confirm that this was completed, guests got the most up to date version, and also that the guests understand important details.

As a guide you should spend time before the trip starts communicating the details of the plan to the group and answering any question. Details that need to be conveyed to the group include:

- Duration of the trip
- Daily itineraries (length of route, activities, structured breaks)
- Technical and physical difficulty
- Gear list
- Meal/ water plans
- Potential environmental issues

It is very important to stick to the plan communicated, and to avoid changes if possible. If, however, plans do have to change, explain precisely to all members - and make sure each guest understands the reasons for the change, and the details of the new plan.

For the sake of safety not being compromised, backup plans and alternatives are devised when designing a trip. Needless to say, the guide has to be completely familiar with all backup plans prior to the trip, and must not lead a trip if not being fully confident in one's own capability as the guide for the trip; that is taken care of prior to the trip by whatever additional training is needed for the guide.

Well designed trip is the one in which everything was thought of down to smallest detail, so to make sure it is completely feasible, while providing for the best possible experience to a prospect guest.

Also, *faultless* pre-trip activities of the office staff, that include bookings of all soughts, etc. are basic to well organized and well realised tour, thus being of enormous help for the guide so he/ she can be focused on guests and the itinerary only, and thereby, if necessary, be ready for anything that comes unexpected along with changes/ challenges that might follow.

When preparing for a trip, a guide is briefed by office staff on all details of the trip, including trip notes, special needs and agreements with partners, arrival and departure details with plans for guests' pick up times and places, rooming lists, etc. Then, the guide prepares food according to the number of people, diets and allergies, while preparing equipment needed for the trip according to the activities, number of people, age (adults/ children), etc.

During a trip guide is always punctual – never late - in fact the guide is there 5 or 10 or 15 minutes earlier, waiting for guests, using the opportunity to socialise with those guests who come earlier (for the reasons explained later in the workbook).

Guide discusses with guests any relevant safety issues such as the likelihood of theft and precautions, walking the streets at night, avoiding civil disturbances, etc. Also, explains to the group any relevant health issues such as, e.g. the need to use bottled drinking water in Kotor, Monte Negro, etc.

Guide also provides a guideline to guests regarding photography, taking into account cultural sensitivities, military and police installations, border crossings, embassies, dress code if there is one, etc.; guide documents the trip with interesting photos needed for his/ her company as well.

And, as always and in all activities, a smooth and effective/ timely communication within the whole team - from both ends: guide in the field and colleagues in the office - during all stages of trip preparation and implementation, is the key to successful realization of a trip.

Good communication is important also after the trip, so the lessons learned from the past experience are for sure considered when making improvements to all future trips. To facilitate that, upon completion of a trip, according to the company's procedures, the leader usually writes the online trip leader report. Apart from that, a trip leader also uses the occasion of meeting an office staff, when submitting a financial trip report, to bring up everything that is of any importance for the company to know; this we do, for it is proven to ensure our product to continuously grow in its competitiveness towards supremacy on the global market.

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# ■ Psychology of guiding

Successful realisation of well thought of, planned and organised trips, ultimately, completely depends upon how good is the psychology of guiding.

In order for the psychology of guiding to be totally effective and successful, it all starts with a guide being genuinely empathetic and compassionate for all fellow human beings and everything else in creation. Then, also having attention to details of human behaviour and everything around as well, the guide will be able to notice any change and then promptly and accordingly react to it. Having attention to details will also help us “ scanning ” of guests’ abilities, skills and expectations, being crucial for meeting their expectations while not compromising safety...even more so: to exceed guests’ expectations by providing safe & superb adventure and cultural experience.

(Please note that only both adventure and cultural experiences being there ensure the maximum fulfillment with the trip.)

For that to happen, smooth and effective communication is necessary to bring our guests, being on one side - and us, service providers, being on the other side - together.

In saying that, we, guides, understand language barriers and *cultural differences* require additional attention and care.

So, guides are alert on verbal communication and, even more so, on non-verbal communication, i.e. all that being communicated on the level of feelings/ emotions as well as through face gestures and body movements. The just mentioned greatly helps bridge language barriers, which one (guide) should never get out of mind, thus always make sure to clarify a message or just a word even, should anything in the guest’s words and/ or behaviour indicate non-understanding or possibly a different/ wrong understanding of guests - or our own, in that matter.

Just like language barriers being seemingly obvious yet requiring additional attention, so cultural differences, even though often being more subtle, require equal attention from us guides. Possibly different mindsets, habits, upbringing, understanding of the same thing, etc. all, naturally, ask for explanation however banal a topic may seem to be.

An example: when checking a restaurant menu westerners will, by default, always make sure not to order a dish containing a veal meat nor carp fish....while never showing their surprise when noticing it in the menu nor asking why it is there; back home where they come from it is known that veal meat isn’t eaten because of mistreatment of the young animals, while carp fish is always put back in the water when angled, for its flesh isn’t good for human consumption since it lives in waters saturated with fertilisers.

..so we always make sure to clarify the menu offer explaining that both veal and carp in the countries of West Balkans are known to be most desirable on a menu, by all those who like it, for their excellent quality and remarkable taste.

In this example we’ve pointed out a cultural difference in (to simplify) diets, and also being rather timid and never or rarely bringing up the issue of cultural differences they, international guests of ours, notice - so it is then us guides to make sure everything is clarified and explained.

Knowing all that, guides ensure that they and their message are well understood at all times by each and every guest and everyone else involved. Thus, nothing is left to chance, and everything has to be made clear and clarified in communication right away.

So, understanding expectations is a very important part of customer service for the Adventure Travel Guide. This includes both the expectations your guests have of you and their trip, as well as your communication with them about what they can expect during their time with you. It is important to communicate clear expectations early, and reevaluate often. This is important for two reasons:

1. It allows guests to know what to expect so they can mentally and physically prepare themselves.
2. It highlights when we exceed expectations. To exceed expectations, we need to be empathetic, as mentioned earlier. What do our guests need and what do they want?

- What are some basic expectations of your guests?
- Do guest expectations differ depending on where they come from?
- What are some tactics you use to exceed the expectations of your guests?
- How do you balance the “customer is always right” philosophy with the need to keep guests and the environment safe (safety always being of primary importance)?

Expectations can be divided up into two categories: Physical and Emotional.

Examples of physical expectations include: Is the guest too hot or too cold? Are they hungry or need to use the bathroom, etc.

Emotional expectations include: Is the guest nervous about the activity we are about to do? Does he/she worry about being the slowest one in the group? Does the guest feel comfortable traveling with you? Emotional expectations relate to how we perceive and express ourselves, how we develop and maintain social relationships, and how we cope with challenges.

We are more familiar with attending to physical expectations. Emotional expectations, being harder to assess, are often overlooked. Attending to emotional expectations, adhering to sound psychology of guiding, provides a great opportunity to exceed expectations and provide for transformational growth.

Opportunities to exceed expectations occur throughout your time with guests. Get to know why they chose to travel with you. What have been some of their favorite travel experiences in the past? To exceed expectations means to consider not just the structured time, but also the non-programmed moments each day - travel time from place to place, breaks between activities, free time to explore, meals and after the meals. Mapping out the prospective expectations in advance and being prepared adds tremendously to the experience of guests.

Guests highly value the time we take to get to know them. Even if we know of, or work for some companies who do not expect (or even advise) their guides to be with guests out of designated times for activities, meals, etc. - i.e. apart from everything that is prescribed by the trip itinerary - it is crystal clear that what we learn out of “structured time” is useful for both customizing quality experiences, as well as familiarizing ourselves with medical or safety concerns. Then, these personal relationships also help to build the group’s trust and respect for us as a guide.

Build relationships with your group members by:

- Understanding each group member and their needs
  - Learning everyone's name right away (find a way to do it)
  - Spending personal time with each individual - equal time and attention, ideally
  - Asking questions and actively listening
- Investing in activities that create group cohesion
- Asking for help from those who can
- Distinguishing between those who need attention and those who prefer to do it their own way
- Giving special attention to elderly people and kids

Doing all of the above greatly increases guests' satisfaction with the trip, making them feel that this was "absolutely fantastic trip - the best trip ever - largely thanks to the best guide one could have", and so on. ..and that's a WOW effect created..

The guide may further "enrich the content" by - name it: singing/ playing a local song in local language; bringing a cake on a trip/ hike and then on top of the mountain melt a chocolate, pour it over the cake and offer it to the guests; bring guests along and pay visit to your friends: a local family in a remote highland village you're going through; take guests to your favorite ice cream shop, or a coffee bar you know they'll love the character of, etc.

That's what we see guests on our trips and trips of other companies around the world highly appreciate. It is from guests' reviews and feedback that we even better understand expectations of contemporary/ future adventure travel consumers, along with their visions of the "WOW" effect; it's their reviews that we analyse, and then reassess our own attitude, progress and achievements in that regard. And that is what "polishing guiding psychology skills" include. So, from them we learn, and then put into practice lessons learned, constantly improving the product we offer.

Right after a trip it's good to send a general email to everyone, in which we express our gratitude to them for a great trip we've had. Then we also sent a personal email to each guest: for them being a great company to be with, recalling something we enjoyed doing together with the guest, like rock climbing, talking about plants, history, and similar. That way we enliven fond memories we all have of our trip in West Balkans and guests keep enjoying the memories well after the trip.

And, in the group email we also thank our guests for writing a trip review, being very important for us since we keep trying our best to improve each and every aspect of the trip.

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# Group Management

Managing a group, while skillfully using the tool of psychology of guiding, comes down to the basics of all relationships, which is a respect for everyone and everything, starting with ourselves and continuing with our guests, colleagues, partners, locals, nature itself, etc. Being genuinely respectful towards everyone around is of a great help also in a service industry such as the adventure tourism one.

It is common efforts of everyone involved in providing the tourism product that lies the key for success, for only working together, while respecting everyone and everyone's time and efforts, can provide superb satisfaction with the trip for everyone involved directly and indirectly.

And, if there is a lack of respect towards anyone, then that poses a threat necessitating its treatment, resulting, eventually, in proper and timely group management.

# Customer Service & Group Management Skills

## What is customer service and why is it important?

Adventure travel guides operate in the service sector. This is what differentiates us from strictly educators, or facilitators of adventure activities. Customer service is the act of taking care of the customer's needs by delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met.

However, customer service differs from a classic hospitality service situation, such as a restaurant or hotel. Customer service for an adventure travel guide - being based on the psychology of guiding - includes group management, adjusting for varying abilities of individual guests and group as a whole, and balancing safety with the philosophy "the customer is always right", as mentioned in the context of guiding psychology.

Adventure travel strives to take people outside their comfort zone in order to facilitate transformational growth and personal enjoyment. This happens when we visit and live in different environments with new people as well as by participating in adventure activities that are challenging both physically and emotionally. These basic changes in an individual's daily habits, along with the inherent challenges of adventure activities, are what provide an opening for growth and transformation. And can also cause people to become more intense, less predictable, and potentially difficult to manage. This zone is relative for all travelers, and will require assessment by the guide.

Our guests possess their own values, philosophy, difficulties, culture and way of life. Our baseline customer service goal as a guide, as we said earlier, is to meet guests expectations while understanding and providing for their needs, all without compromising safety of anyone involved. ..this being so important we keep repeating it.

For that to happen there are times when people (guests) are to be encouraged and there are the times when we, as guides/ trip leaders have to discourage them, both according to the must of, firstly, providing a safe experience and, secondly, also a fulfilling one. Having been clear about that, we never cross the line compromising safety nor do we, for the same matter, take people into the terror zone. Adhering to this simple principle we always provide the best possible adventure, which is also a safe one.

Just a note: at the times when the trip leader has to discourage guest/s for joining an activity for which their skill/ fitness level is not up to the task, it is important for the colleagues (assistant guide, skipper, driver, etc.) to be coherent with the trip leader and be fully supportive of his/ her decisions and, also, not to be trapped into becoming a “good cop” in the contrary to the “bad one”, as sometimes guest/s try to see/ define guides in their mind and within the group. Would, however, guides/ partners have different opinions on the same matter, then that is to be discussed, needless to say, away from the guests, then come up with the best solution, and present it to the guest/s and apply it.



## Assuming an Active Leadership Role

Your role as a guide is to be the leader of your group, which is not as simple as standing in front of the group or showing them the way on the trail. Instead, leadership requires a set of skills, knowledge, and experience. As a leader, you should be able to:

- Effectively and timely communicate with other guides and the group
- Demonstrate the ability to plan and implement group activities
- Maintain a positive attitude through potentially adverse conditions
- Possess the ability to make tough decision for the betterment of the group
- Display competence and confidence in your technical skills
- Possess awareness and understanding of your own limitations
- Empower and educate the group

All of the above means the guide/ trip leader holds ultimate responsibility for all relationships and interactions during the entire trip - however remote to the actual trip itinerary activities they seem to be - as long as they may have an impact on either safety or fulfillment of guests and anyone else involved, that long they requires from us guides our attention and management.

Invaluable asset to a lead guide is guide assistant: since not being focused on all details at all times as much as the lead guide, the guide assistant has a broader comprehension of what is going on in the trip as a whole. Thereby, the guide assistant timely and discreetly communicates to the lead guide everything noticed, thus helping the lead guide conduct activities in a better fashion, meaning in a safer way and to greater satisfaction of guests and everyone involved.

## Managing Group Challenges

At the heart of an adventure is the perceived and real sense of the unknown. Adversity and uncertainty are bound to show up, and it is up to you as a guide to manage these challenges. Managing group challenges starts at the planning stages before the trip begins, and continues as the trip progresses. Group challenges can manifest in a variety of situations (severe weather, injuries, transportation, etc.). Steps to managing group challenges:

- Prior to start of the trip, ensure individual's experience, abilities, skills match the planned activity
- Establish clear goals and communicate when group members make progress
- Encourage individuals to meet challenges in a safe and responsible manner
- Tolerate mistakes and fears of those who have difficulty
- Only split the group if absolutely necessary, and even then only if we have resources for doing that, meaning we're two guides so the assistant guide can be/ stay with a guest or the other part of the group

## Managing Group Conflict

People respond to physical and emotional challenges differently. Even with strong planning and facilitation, group conflicts might arise. Whether a group of strangers or a married couple, you will inevitably be put in a situation where you will have to mediate a conflict. Here are some useful steps towards conflict resolution:

1. Recognize and identify when conflict arises (ideally foresee it before it arises).  
Discuss potential impacts with co-leaders.
2. Remain calm, control your own emotions and be aware of all verbal and nonverbal communication amongst the individuals involved.
3. Discreetly isolate the conflict and only include the entire group if necessary.
4. Be democratic by giving all sides the opportunity to explain their problem and ensure individuals do not feel attacked.
5. With an objective view, be educated on both sides of the story in order to create a practical solution.
6. Seek compromise to resolve the conflict so it does not manifest in the future.

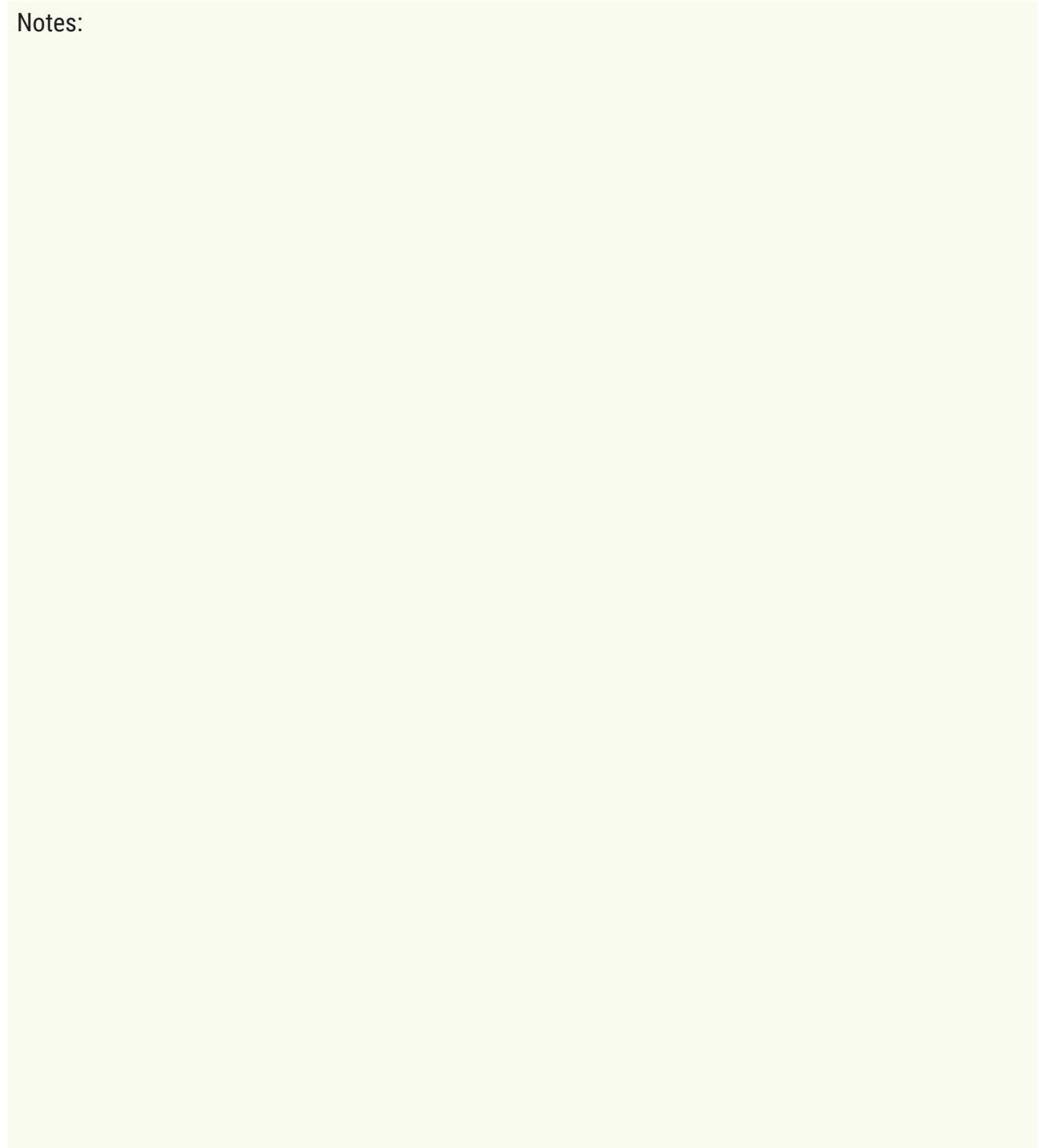
At the times when stresses and strains often dominate individual and collective consciousness, having different opinions may trigger discussions among people; noticing it at an early stage - when it did not yet turn into arguing - it is crucial that we take people's attention away from the conflicting opinions and back to the cause of both parties being there in the first place, which is the trip itself, with its beauties, etc. By doing so we send a clear message to them and the whole group that we're here to enjoy (the trip with its itinerary and activities, scenery, etc.) and nothing that diminishes the joy is welcomed.

So, attention to details and prompt reaction - thus we avert the conflict before it arises, which is the best practice of group management.

### ***Complete Exercise 2***

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# Risk assessment and management

Thorough Risk assessment and management is based on a sound group management and, ultimately, effective guiding psychology. Thus, it represents a major component of excellent guiding skills, particularly important in the realm of adventure tourism.

## Safety Management Systems

Safety management has become a crucial issue for adventure travel companies as demand is constantly growing. Accidents are a real threat to survival of companies, activities, and even destinations. The travel industry has issued an international standard for Safety Management System ISO 21.101.

## International Standards for Adventure Tourism

The purpose of these standards is to set out the minimum requirements for Safety Management Systems and communication to guests. These standards are a product of gathering best practices in the market. It helps organize and control safety and creates a cycle of continual improvement towards fewer or no accidents. The International Standards for Adventure Tourism are independent entities since they apply to different aspects of adventure tourism:

### **ISO 21101 – Adventure Tourism – Safety Management System:**

The minimum requirements for a Safety Management System for adventure tourism activity providers.

### **ISO 21103 – Adventure Tourism – Information to Participants:**

The minimum information that shall be communicated to participants and potential participants before, during and after the activity to ensure safety.

A Safety Management System provides the framework for continual improvement and contributes to the delivery of safe adventure tourism activities. The Safety Management System approach encourages providers to analyze their adventure activities, understand participants' requirements, and define and monitor the processes that ensure safety.

# Risk Analysis

The base of a Safety Management System is risk analysis. The idea is first to identify all threats/ risks involved in an adventure travel operation. After listing all risks (inventory), for each risk it is given 2 marks: probability mark and consequence mark.

Probability Mark:	Consequence Mark:
Give a mark from 1 to 5 to probability according to this frame:	Give a mark from 1 to 5 to consequence according to this frame:
5 - Almost Certain	5 - Catastrophic
4 - Probable	4 - Serious
3 - Possible	3 - Moderate
2 - Improbable	2 - Not serious
1 - Rare	1 - Light

Your risk analysis, or RA, is the multiplication of the 2 marks:

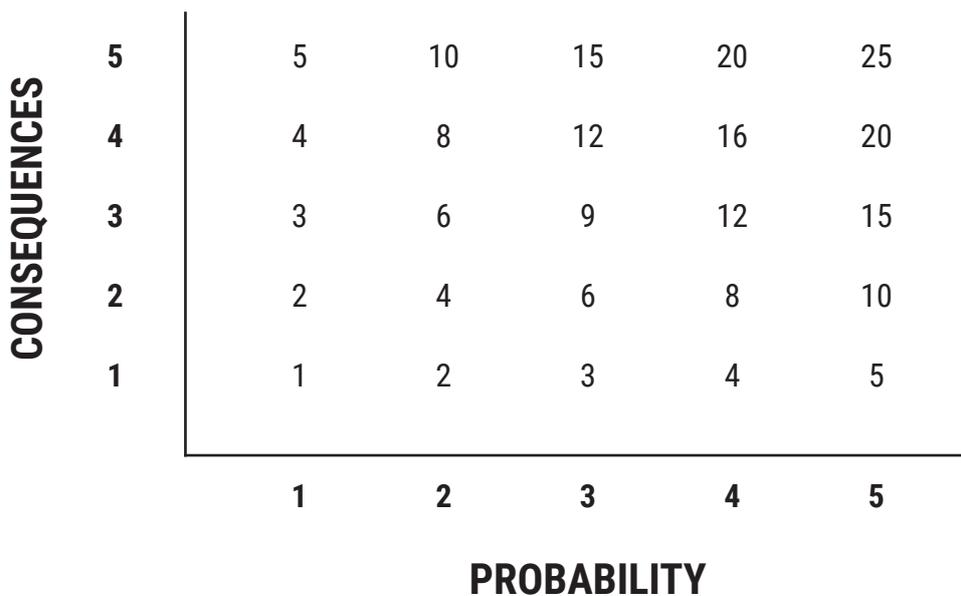
$RA = \text{Probability} \times \text{Consequences}$
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Your risks will range from 1 to 25

1 = 1X1: Rare and Light = Acceptable

25 = 5X5: Almost Certain and Catastrophic = Abort Operation

This is the accepted matrix of RA:



It is upon each company to decide what is its acceptable maximum Risk Analysis mark; all risks above this mark should receive special attention, called Risk Treatment. And it is up to a guide to follow the rule established by his/ her company.

Having in mind that the average adventure traveler wants adventure and not a risk, adventure outdoor companies usually allow for the maximum acceptable RA mark of 6; consequences 4 and 5 are regarded as unacceptably high, thus a risk treatment is also a *must* here because one wants to avoid any consequence near catastrophic or even serious one - however insignificant a probability might be. Also, probability of 5 (almost certain) requires serious consideration/ analysis *even* if consequences would have been only 1 (light).

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Notes:

## Risk Treatment

Risk Treatment is finding solutions to bring the risk back to an acceptable level. This implies making changes in operations to lower probability and/or consequence of each risk. These changes can be:

- Better information to the guests prior to the trip
- New or better equipment to meet with the required level of your operation
- Training for each person involved in operations (guides, drivers, cooks, etc.)
- Bringing on board expert staff, e.g. mountain rescue team members, etc.
- Briefing guests on emergency behaviors before and during the activity, and so on

After you finish Risk Treatment, you should be able to have all your risks reduced so to be within the maximum acceptable Risk Analysis mark you are comfortable with. It is essential to verify if these solutions already exist on the market, as it's much better to use pre-existing best practices. Also, it is important to verify the solution is affordable, since an un-affordable solution is not a viable solution.

Changes take place all the time so it is certain that the risk analysis is to be repeated in the course of an activity/ trip; continuously have an eye on what's going on from the point of view of risk analysis, so to foresee, i.e. timely identify any forthcoming threat - and then manage the risk by choosing and applying appropriate treatment. If, however, under given circumstances all feasible treatments are still not enough to bring the risk down to acceptable level, then we as trip leaders are to decide not to go there in the first place, i.e. to stop with the unacceptably risky activities and to proceed with a plan B, which is the best possible alternative for the initially planned activity/ trip.

The best possible alternative here would be an activity/ itinerary with risks within acceptable maximum RA mark, which is also the most fulfilling for guests, while not creating undesirable consequences of any sought in regard to anyone and anything, including guests, company, partners, nature, the trip budget, etc.

In that case it is essential to keep the guests informed, i.e. clearly explain to the guests the reason for changing the itinerary so that they understand that the change is for the sake of their safety and benefit, thus ensuring for the greatest possible joy and fulfilment of their own.

## Summary

It is essential to give guests the correct and complete information before the trip. Pre-trip planning and information to the guests help minimize potential accidents and possible disappointment and frustration with trips. Since guides apply the operational and safety procedures, it is important to have consistent training and evaluation.

### ***Complete Exercise 3***

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Notes:

# Emergency Procedures

Experience shows that - in spite of perfect guiding psychology, group management and risk assessment & management - it is certain that non-planned situations and/ or issues may pop up at any time of a trip, day and night.

Should it happen that someone gets ill or injured - and for that to have least impact on the wellbeing of the ill/ injured person and anyone else involved - it is proven good to have an emergency plan well thought of and ready at hand.

And it is up to each and every outdoor adventure company to have such a protocol put in place, and make sure both guides and office staff are fully knowledgeable about what to do, and for that sake also practice the emergency communication on the regular basis.

So, whether in wilderness or in urban settings, guides should be prepared and equipped with an emergency action plan (see an example of Emergency Procedure below) that includes protocol for managing an accident. This plan should address possible scenarios regardless of probability of the scenario occurring.

Having put in place such a procedure developed down to details, and applying it in case of an emergency, considerably reduces stress of the moment, thus diminishing possibility for making mistakes while also saving time, which, ultimately, for the ill/ injured member of the party might mean the difference between life and death.

Laminated Emergency Action Plan is thus always to be on us guides, and at hand, e.g. in the lid of our backpack. Similarly, almost identical one is to be prepared and ready for use by office staff.

Before you start a guided trip, make sure you have:

- Emergency Action Plan, i.e. Emergency Procedure
- Complete First Aid Kit
- Good communication with your company's office colleagues (mobile phone, enough phone credit)

To be up to the task, one needs to annually obtain/ refresh First Aid knowledge through Basic Life Support (BLS) training (or better one), along with a practice of Wilderness First Aid and rescue, as well as discuss and practice protocol in case of emergency, i.e. Emergency Action Plan.

To get an idea of important bits and pieces of information and plan of action, we bring up here an example of the Emergency Procedure produced at an adventure travel company for the use of its guides on their trips; it is a product of time tested knowledge and experience and, as such, is subject to change the moment something else is confirmed to be more practical thus better.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE for Guides

Below are the guidelines for communication and action. Except for points **1** and **2**, there is no hard rule for the order in which to take action.

Where possible, follow the order as set out below.

**1. Get the injured or ill person/s to the nearest medical facility** as rapidly as possible. This must take priority over any other plans or activities. If you are unhappy about the standard of the local medical facilities (e.g. a local hospital) go to a private clinic or doctor if one exists. Get the telephone number, name and address of the hospital facility and the attending doctor.

**2. If in the field with no paramedics next to you** to attend to the injured/ ill person, **start applying first aid yourself, asap**. If among guests there is someone with more medical experience, their aid is most welcomed. Never do we perform actions outside of our certified protocol

3. Report the emergency to your company, i.e. let the office staff know asap about what is going on **making sure you provide the most important details by using the emergency report checklist below**. The office staff will immediately contact the Paramedics/ Mountain Rescue Team/ Emergency phone number/ Police department, etc. and give further instructions to the Trip leader/ Guide in the field within minutes.

4. If there is no network and finding it means looking for too long, then try contacting an Emergency phone number (might be different for each country) right away and then your company asap.

5. The leader and/ or office staff should have full details of the injured, including passport details, details of personal travel insurance, next-of-kin addresses and telephone numbers - *in case it is needed*.

6. If mobile phone coverage is not available for reporting the accident to your company, then send an sms message to the office mobile phone number. If there is no immediate answer, then send the same message to other company staff members according to the previously prepared list.

7. Should no one be available, only then contact the mountain rescue service or call Police.

8. Make sure the contact person in the field remains reachable at all times for further contact with the company/ Paramedics/ Mountain Rescue Team, etc.

9. If the injured party is subsequently evacuated, a written copy of this report (list of the details mentioned above) must go along with the injured to inform any attending doctors of the circumstances of the incident; another copy of it should stay with the trip leader, later on to be handed over to the company staff in the office. In the same way, telephone number, name and address of the hospital facility and the attending doctor are to be handed over to the company office.

10. Refer ALL inquiries from the press to the company office, and under no circumstances give any details to the press.

11. **NEVER**, under any circumstances, contact parents or relatives directly unless with the express permission, i.e. request of the company office.

## → EMERGENCY REPORT CHECKLIST for guides

<b>1. Trip name</b>	COMPANY..  MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM..  POLICE, PARAMEDICS, FIRE POLICE..  ..THE SAME APPLIES FOR COUNTRIES THE COMPANY DOES TRIPS AT, INCLUDING PHONE NUMBERS OF PARTNER COMPANIES IN EACH OF THE COUNTRIES
<b>2. Leader name</b> / Assistant name	
<b>3. Phone number</b> of the contact person	
<b>4. Exact location</b> (e.g. Sutjeska National Park, Suha jezerina valley)	
<b>5. Name of the injured person</b> / age/ gender	
<b>6. Nature of the accident</b> - When it happened - Present state of health of the injured person - Possible threats	
<b>7. What has been done so far?</b> - By whom - What are the effects of the actions undertaken (e.g. CPR, by trip leader, now conscious, etc.)	
<b>8. Write down the opinion of the trip leader on</b> - How serious the injury is - Is evacuation of the injured person needed or not - If needed: • are the group & the injured <b>able to take care of safe evacuation themselves</b> <b>OR</b> • <b>is outside help necessary</b> for safe evacuation (meaning the group has no means/ resources to conduct safe evacuation themselves!)	
<b>9. Weather condition and Road/ trail condition</b> (e.g. thunderstorm approaching; muddy road, only passable with a 4x4 vehicle, etc.)	
<b>10. Present state of safety of the rest of the group and next steps</b>	
<b>11. Other guides</b> / assistants/ trainees / partners / drivers / guests <b>assigned duties</b>	
<b>12. Is someone else also trying to organize rescue</b> etc. apart from our company - and if yes who? ..the company's office to get in touch with the involved party(s) so as to coordinate its activities.	

Similarly, the adventure company's office staff has a procedure to follow, serving the same purpose of reducing stress and saving precious time. The procedure is printed on a sheet of paper and is placed at hand in the office for use by whosoever of the office staff happens to respond to an emergency phone call from the field/ trip.

Apart from the same emergency phone numbers, it is as following:

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURE for office staff**

Upon receiving an emergency/accident report call, the person in the office who happens to pick up the phone does the following:

1. **Stay calm** and focused on the information you are about to receive!
2. Remind the reporting person **to stay within phone reach!**
3. Take the checklist of information reported from the scene (**please see the emergency checklist below**) and fill in all details (if some information is missing, remember to ask the questions!)
4. Finish the call saying that the company office will get back to the reporting person with the instructions asap, i.e. within minutes

### **After you have received a phone call about the accident:**

1. Inform the company's office staff member/s (previously decided which ones) about the situation, sharing the details of the Report you received from the field (including trip leader's opinion on the necessity for safe evacuation and/ or involvement of Mountain Rescue Team/ Paramedics, etc.)

Do *brainstorming* with them (with previously designated staff members) about the further actions.

2. After the brainstorming/ consulting with the office staff member, and in case outside help is needed, the office staff informs whosoever needed, e.g. Paramedics/ Mountain Rescue Team/ Police, etc. about the situation, passing on the details of the Report checklist, starting with the phone number of the contact person in the field and so on. If a Mountain Rescue Team was contacted, they will then plan and execute appropriate rescue activities in coordination with the company and whosoever needed, e.g. Paramedics, etc.

3. After contacting whosoever was needed to be contacted - which shouldn't take too many minutes - the person in the office gets back to the trip leader in the field with the information on what has been done so far, so the trip leader knows what's going on; at that point in time the office staff is updated on the current situation in the field. (After that call the trip leader makes sure to convey to the rest of the group/ guests what actions were taken so far!)

Afterwards, every now and then, the office staff calls the trip leader to check the state of health of the injured member of the party, and to hear what is going on with the rest of the group, and instructs the leader on what next to do with the rest of the group. That is also the time to update the group in the field on the progress of all rescue activities.

4. Note: throughout all these activities the office staff keeps the track of all decisions and actions taken along with their timing, using the tables below.

5. If Paramedics is also informed, the company office staff gives them the phone number of the Mountain Rescue Team so they get in touch with the Team because it is them who will take over the injured person from the rescue team (they will agree where to meet to do so - ideally as far in the outdoors as possible for paramedics to approach the rescue team, so to attend the injured person asap.)

6. If the accident results in death, or if there was any unlawful/ criminal aspect to the accident, the company office staff informs the Police, giving details of the accident, including phone numbers of the contact person in the field as well as the Mountain Rescue Service(s), so Police can coordinate its activities with the Mountain Rescue Team/ the company, etc.

The company office staff also informs the family.

In case the deceased was a foreigner, the company office staff also informs the appropriate embassy, and coordinates further actions with them, making itself available for the embassy for any further inquiries.

7. If finding it necessary, the company office staff prepares/ writes information in form of a press release and provides it to the media; it is highly recommended that the company does this before the media hears about it & finds the event interesting to report on, so as to prevent any misinformation going out. That way the company presents the media with the firsthand information, while promising them updates on the progress, on the regular basis.

## → EMERGENCY REPORT CHECKLIST for office staff

<b>1. Trip name</b>	
<b>2. Leader name</b> / Assistant name	
<b>3. Phone number</b> of the contact person	
<b>4. Exact location</b> (e.g. Sutjeska National Park, Suha jezerina valley)	
<b>5. Name of the injured person</b> / age/ gender	
<b>6. Nature of the accident</b> - When it happened - Present state of health of the injured person - Possible threats	
<b>7. What has been done so far?</b> - By whom - What are the effects of the actions undertaken (e.g. CPR, by trip leader, now conscious, etc.)	
<b>8. Write down the opinion of the trip leader on</b> - How serious the injury is - Is evacuation of the injured person needed or not - If needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are the group &amp; the injured <b>able to take care of safe evacuation themselves OR</b></li> <li>• <b>is outside help necessary</b> for safe evacuation (meaning the group has no means/ resources to conduct safe evacuation themselves!)</li> </ul>	
<b>9. Weather condition and Road/ trail condition</b> (e.g. thunderstorm approaching; muddy road, only passable with a 4x4 vehicle, etc.)	
<b>10. Present state of safety of the rest of the group</b> and <b>next</b> steps	
<b>11. Other guides / assistants/ trainees / partners / drivers / guests assigned duties</b>	
<b>12. Is someone else also trying to organize rescue</b> etc. apart from our company - and if yes who? ..the company's office to get in touch with the involved party(s) so as to coordinate its activities.	

<b>LIST OF THE COMPANY STAFF INVOLVED IN THE OFFICE</b>

<b>- DECISIONS TAKEN, BY WHOM - ACTIONS TAKEN, BY WHOM</b>	<b>TIME</b>

The previous is an idea of the emergency plan devised by the company offering adventure travel. Likewise, it is for any company in the field of adventure tourism to come up with its own emergency plan and procedure that will be there ready to be put into practice in case of need.

Notes:

# General knowledge

Need for technical competences is to be fulfilled by obtaining specific trainings, i.e. acquiring technical skills, knowledge and experience related to the activities included in the trip itinerary. For that reason guides are inspired to attend and successfully accomplish all needed trainings, offered by mountaineering associations and other relevant institutions.

With this module - and this guide training as a whole - we wish to make sure we're all on the same page by going through and further "digesting" both common and specific knowledge, as follows.

## Sustainability and leave no trace practice

A core value of the adventure travel sector is focus on sustainability, including environmental and social responsibility. Guides play an essential role by: interacting with local partners and local communities, sharing local culture and history, minimizing group environmental impact, and teaching minimum impact best practices on local communities. As a guide, it is important that you:

- Explain the environmental issues of the area you visit.
- Educate guests on respecting wildlife.
- Stress in what way the environment is under pressure.
- Give information about the ecosystem, fauna & flora.
- Tell the changes in environment that occurred over the last decades, both good and bad.
- Tell about good initiatives that are taking place in the area.

Minimum impact in adventure travel is a key issue. Leave No Trace is becoming the global standard best practice for outdoor recreation and adventure. This segment will provide a brief overview of the Leave No Trace curriculum and its application to adventure travel and adventure travel guides.

You must be an example and follow the best practices as determined by The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics:

1. Plan Ahead & Prepare: Using techniques and equipment to minimize impacts as much as possible.
2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces: Looking at different surfaces and assessing durability. Issues of impacts while traveling and at camp and rest stops.
3. Dispose of Waste Properly: Both issues of litter and human waste management in a variety of settings and seasons.
4. Leave What You Find: Exploring impacts and ethics of removing natural objects and/or cultural artifacts.
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts: Looking at when and where it is and it isn't appropriate to have a fire, as well as alternative options.
6. Respect Wildlife: Issues around impacts especially during sensitive times of year. Appropriate wildlife watching techniques. Produce no unnecessary noise when in the outdoors so as not to disturb wildlife - unless you want to timely alert them on your presence in case you move through remote areas largely populated with beasts.
7. Be Considerate of Others: Reducing impacts on those living and working in highland villages, as well as their interests and livelihoods. Reducing impacts and conflicts with other recreational users.

Proper Sustainability and Leave No Trace practice makes us travellers - guests and guides, both - always welcomed back by people and nature - and both of that being there - is a proof of a job well done: job of travel industry as a whole.

**Additional principles exist, and must be adhered to, as designated by “ Beyond Leave No Trace”:**

1. Educate yourself and others about the places you visit
2. Purchase only the equipment and clothing you need
3. Take care of the equipment and clothing you have
4. Make conscientious food, equipment, and clothing consumption choices
5. Minimize waste production
6. Reduce energy consumption
7. Get involved by conserving and restoring the places you visit

**Complete Exercise 4**

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Notes:

## **Reasons which jeopardize safety in the outdoors - objective & subjective hazards**

General understanding of reasons which jeopardise safety in the outdoors is that they can be of objective nature - a danger which is in the outdoors irrespective of our presence there or not - and of a subjective cause, which all has to do with human factors, i.e. human judgment and human error.

Whereas hazards such as poor weather, rockfall, swift rivers, avalanches, landmines, etc are already there, it is our presence in the outdoors at the wrong time and the wrong place that turns an objective threat into a subjective one, with possibly undesirable consequences. We can manage or mitigate some of the objective hazards, but we can't eliminate them. ..we can't stop a lightning storm, but we can think ahead of time and plan to get off the ridge before it comes in. It's up to a guide when encountering an objective threat to timely use sound judgment and decide if tackling the hazard is within competence of the guide's own and, in fact, of each single guest - especially the least fit & skilled one - and the group as a whole. Then the guide needs to use the best risk management techniques possible to mitigate the danger and keep the risk at an acceptable level (please refer to Risk Assessment and Management module).

So, not all but definitely most of the dangers in the outdoors can be regarded as being largely of subjective nature. That is a common understanding of many experienced mountaineers, also expressed in words of Phil Powers in his book NOLS Wilderness Mountaineering, saying: "It should be clear that it is impossible to separate objective from subjective dangers completely."

It is one's own frame of mind, judgment, skill level and experience that determine the level of subjective hazard. That is being influenced by fatigue, dehydration and hunger; an exhausted, dehydrated and poorly nourished person simply can't make the same good decisions one would make if one was well rested and well hydrated and fed. And a guide has to make sure this is the case throughout the trip.

Subjective hazards may manifest themselves as early as when designing and planning the trip; water, food, equipment, etc. that we bring, along with our emergency plan, may determine whether or not people stay safe and healthy. Bringing bad or inappropriate gear or not having a contingency plan is human error, not something wrought by nature.

Objective hazards of the backcountry will always be there, be it a weather system or a steep rock face or a stream etc. waiting to be negotiated but it is our state of mind, our judgment, our skill level, our planning and our timely decisions - all according to the fitness and skill of each member of the group we're leading - that will help determine just how safe or dangerous our trip is or might become.

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Notes:

## Strategies for dealing with various situations in the outdoors

### → THUNDERSTORMS

Summer in Dinaric Alps is the time of the year when thunderstorms are most common, while occasional lightning strikes may take place throughout the year, including winter season.

If - in spite of a very good preparation for a trip, i.e. well checked weather forecasts, along with close observation of the skies and the elements during our times out there - we happen to be caught in a thunderstorm, we follow basic tips - dos and don'ts - of correct behaviour in order to reduce risk/ danger as much as possible, as described below:

#### **WE AVOID:**

- Peaks, ridges, rock faces, including being at their edges, as well as being right at the foot of it;
- Being on/ by lonely boulders, by lonely houses, under lonely trees as well as high/ large trees in a forest; trees dominating over ridges even if they are in the middle of a forest; edge of a forest, i.e. tree line .
- Puddles, pools, rivers, lakes, sea and their shores, also in populated areas (cities, villages and tourist resorts); boat ride; swimming in the open, especially in the sea.
- Walking in trails saturated with water (walk aside of it).
- Standing and moving along/ across seemingly dry waterbeds; land depressions.

- Peaks, ridges, rock faces, including being at their edges, as well as being right at the foot of it;
- Being on/ by lonely boulders, by lonely houses, under lonely trees as well as high/ large trees in a forest; trees dominating over ridges even if they are in the middle of a forest; edge of a forest, i.e. tree line .
- Puddles, pools, rivers, lakes, sea and their shores, also in populated areas (cities, villages and tourist resorts); boat ride; swimming in the open, especially in the sea.
- Walking in trails saturated with water (walk aside of it).
- Standing and moving along/across seemingly dry waterbeds; land depressions.
- Standing at an entrance of a cave, or at bottom/ end of caves; standing at an open door or by an open window - be it a house in the middle of a city/ village, or our vehicle.
- Small caves with low ceilings; depressions in rocks.
- Having walking poles fixed on our backpacks with tips facing upwards ;
- Using phones and electronic devices, e.g. GPS, be it in a watch, etc.;

**NOTE:** Even though, up to this day, it has not yet been scientifically validated to attract lightning, we, however, switch off our phones, GPSs, walkie talkies and similar devices which emit/ receive electromagnetic waves, in order to even more diminish probability of attracting an electric discharge.

- If caught in a via ferrata, base yourself so you can't fall down a cliff (in case of being stricken by lightning and then losing consciousness), and - when stable and safe - unclip yourself from a cable, metal ladder/ steps, bolts, and also stay away from them, if possible.

**NOTE:** Lightning/ electric discharge anywhere along a cable directly impacts all those hooked onto the cable.

#### **WE DO:**

- Check out several different weather forecast websites and radio stations for weather reports prior to a trip and in the morning of the trip (see the theme of "Local Meteorology & Natural Phenomena"); if internet network is available during the hike, check the weather forecast again at the beginning & during the hike and compare it to the current look of the skies, i.e. how correct/ wrong the forecast appears to be;
- Continuously and closely observe the skies/ the elements and pace of their changes that take place throughout the day, including checking for winds' directions and their intensity and pace of change, temperature changes (particularly sudden drop of it) - the overall look of the sky/clouds;
- Observe possible flashes of lightning even before they come close enough for thunder to be heard;
- Determine the direction of movement of thunderstorm - whether it is approaching or going away from us - by time delay between a flash of lightning and sound of thunder: if the time delay is becoming shorter the thunderstorm is approaching us, in which case we IMMEDIATELY look for safest possible area so to be ready to apply lightning drill - the behaviour as described in this theme (below) if needed.

**NOTE:** Even though rarely, it happens also that a lightning strikes without any "warning" of distant thunders, i.e. it strikes all of a sudden, right above/ next to us; while that is quite unpredictable, we still try to foresee such a possibility and work on being as close as possible to the safety of, e.g. forest/ vehicle/ building...

- Say it takes one second for sound to travel some 330 meters; if it happens that the time delay came down to let's say 6 seconds it means that the lightning took place 2 km away from us, meaning we're well within reach, necessitating **immediate** lightning drill, as described below.

**NOTE:** Some literature speaks about 6 seconds, yet another about **15 seconds** as the time to react promptly; experience shows that **those 15 seconds** should be the time to look around for the best nearby area for spreading the group and then initiating a lightning drill - which would be to spread the group and go down into a crouch. So, we instruct the group to spread to the distance of some 6-7 meters between each other; before going down into a crouch put aside on the ground (some 10 meters away) any metal item, e.g. poles, ice axe etc.; crouch ideally on a dry surface, e.g. mattress, backpack (not touching metal frame/ parts), etc., **having feet together and not apart, and head low.**

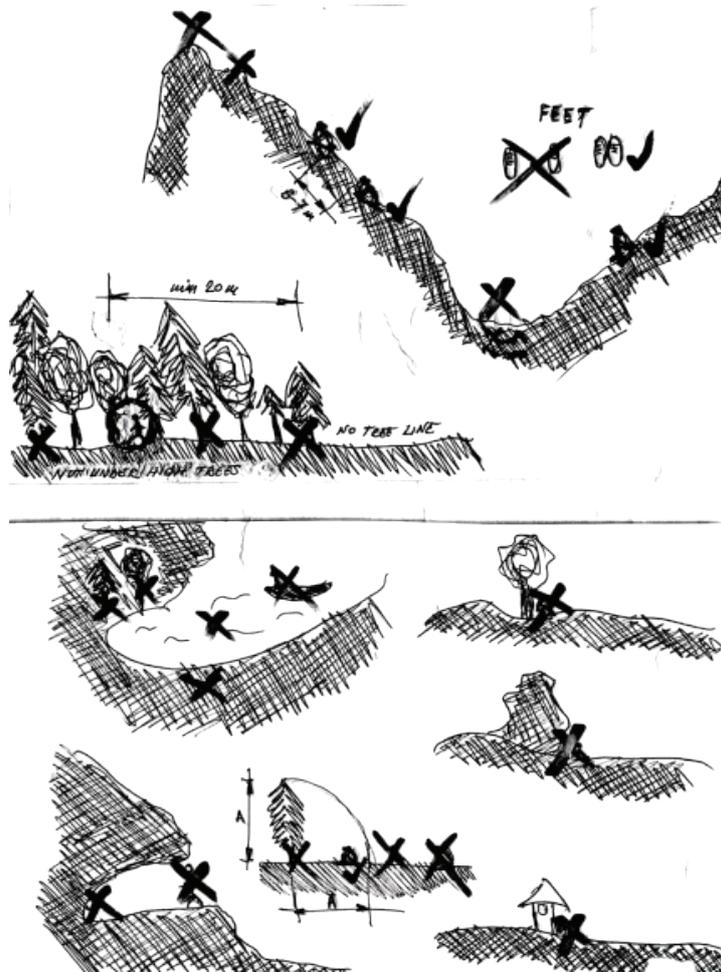
One should be aware that anything but the described procedure drastically increases risks.

This swiftness in reaction is even more important - **CRITICAL & CRUCIAL** - if we or someone in our group notice hair standing on end, or tingling skin, or notice a buzzing sound produced by something metal, be it a wedding ring, or see corona effect on a metal - in which case we should **LITERALLY IMMEDIATELY** spread the group and **RIGHT AWAY** go down into a crouch, as already described, because of the **imminent** danger of an electrical discharge/ lightning strike.

- If in a vehicle (and building, too), close all doors and windows, and do not touch door, windows nor ceiling (we should do so even though a closed environment, such as a vehicle, is supposed to be perfectly safe according to the Faraday's cage principle); if close to a forest we drive away from open field road into the forest, i.e. into more sheltered/ protected place (we don't park/ stay at the edge of the forests but we drive into it);
- If carrying poles fixed on backpacks, face the tips downwards, and cover whole poles with plastic bag, etc. - anything - so the metal/ carbon is not exposed directly to the elements.
- Anything metal we'd carry on our backpack now we put into it so no carabiners, flask, etc. hang outside.
- If in water get out of it asap, if possible.

### **THE BEST - SAFEST POSSIBLE - AREA IN THE OUTDOORS would be:**

- If nearby, seek shelter in cars/vans, shelters, buildings, making sure the windows & doors are all closed completely.
- Forest, into which we'd enter and stay minimum 20 meters away from its edge, not under/ near a high tree, on as dry ground as possible, with the feet put together (not apart, in order to diminish impact of a possible lightning surface discharge), with walking poles put away, and the rest as described above;
- If away from forest, van, etc. and getting there isn't an option not having enough time for that, safest would be to do the lightning drill away from the peak/ ridge, and not at the foot of a slope either but in the middle of it.
- If caught near a lonely tree/ boulder/ structure (house...) do not stay at the foot of it or next to it but rather go down into a crouching position close to its perimeter while still being within it, as shown on the drawing below.



Thunderstorms across Dinaric alps usually last on average from some 15-20 minutes up to an hour; in saying that, there might be only one or two strikes altogether, or a thunderstorm might also rage for hours on end, which doesn't happen often though.

NOTE: Have in mind that first lightnings of an approaching thunderstorm can - and often do - strike before a precipitation starts!

Also bear in mind that lightning can strike more than once on the same spot, and that in matter of seconds; it can also strike in the side wall of a structure/ building, even if it is properly grounded/ protected against lightning strikes, i.e. the electric discharges.

Lightning often comes in waves, so be aware of those breaks in between the waves of thunders: it might hit again soon and with equal or greater force even, also after the precipitation is over, i.e. clouds drifted away (air being humid then, increasing its conductivity manyfold). Thus after a last thunder was heard at least 15 minutes ago, we proceed with the trip/ hike but being very alert so if another thunder wave is approaching we swiftly act as described above.

While reacting properly we remain calm. That will reduce stress of the moment guests might experience, while also making them even more receptive for what they are about to be instructed to do; we explain the reasons for doing what we've done, thus they are also aware of the fact that we know what we are doing and that they are indeed in the best possible hands. ...as they really are.

**Conclusion: Prevention**, as usual, is the best management for this issue, too, i.e. “what am I doing up there in the first place?!? ..when a thunderstorm is approaching!!!”

So, we try to foresee what’s coming by applying knowledge and experience gained in this training and from any other relevant and reliable knowledge sources as well, bearing in mind that it is also important to (be able to) distinguish rainstorm from thunderstorm; whereas imminent thunderstorm is the time to remain in the safety of e.g. forests, rainstorm only, is an opportunity we don’t miss: the chance for our guests to experience beauty of Dinaric Alps in its raw form - something they also come for. When presented to them that way, our mountains and pristine nature are appreciated, along its beauty, also for coming across just a few hikers even during multiday trips, and for its not-well-done trails, too.

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Notes:

## → ROCKFALL

If you have ever seen a rock flying down, or heard the menacing whir and hum of a free-falling rock, you know the deadly speed and force of rockfall. Falling rocks are one of the leading causes of accidents in mountaineering, and can be a serious threat when canyoning and rafting. Probably the only way to completely eliminate the danger of rockfall is to stay out of the mountains and canyons. But you can reduce the danger by knowing something about the nature of falling rocks—the where and when—and then by choosing your route and timing carefully.

Any route that is steep and rocky at least has the potential of falling rocks. But some steep and rocky areas are much less stable than others. You can begin your evaluation of the route by looking for clues of recent action. Recall the saying “rolling stones gather no moss.” If you see piles of rubble and fresh scars at the base of steep pitches, you have obvious evidence that the area is prone to rockfall. Rock piles covered with moss and lichen, by contrast, suggest more stability.

Climate, weather, season, and time of day affect the stability of rocks too. Areas that receive lots of freezing and thawing will be less stable than moderate climates with the same rock composition. Spring thaws dislodge rocks that have been kept stable by winter’s ice. The daily cycle of freezing and thawing affects rockfall too. The slopes are most stable in the early morning before the sun begins melting snow and ice. East slopes receive the first sun and thus the rock will begin to loosen on those slopes first. South slopes follow and finally west slopes.

Also, during and after rainfall, when soil gets saturated with water, otherwise being rockhard the soil becomes soft and unable to support stones it was able to hold easily when dry. Then footholds turn unstable and release the rocks, especially when trod on, sending them down and endangering people below.

You can allay the danger of falling rock in several ways:

- Try to stay on ridges and avoid couloirs. Rocks, like water, follow couloirs.
- Plan your route so that you are crossing the areas prone to falling rock when dry, during the early morning before the ice has melted or before other people are already up and above you
- Do not take breaks in the middle of the combat zone. Find a sheltered place to take a break.

Keep your group close together so falling rocks don't have a chance to gain speed. On switchbacks you greatly reduce the risks of rockfall by keeping everyone on the same zig or the same zag and then "corralling" the group at the turns. In other words, every time the trail makes its switchback, wait for the entire group to catch up before taking the turn. It takes longer to travel this way, but you ensure that no one is below you.



- If you have to cross an area with rockfall potential, take the shortest route across that exposed area even if it means making the other part of your route longer.
- If you have a helmet, wear it across the area in doubt.
- If you see a rockfall and it has the potential to hit anyone in the group, right away yell "Rock!" loudly. Better to cast the false alarm than to study the weight and speed of the missile as it gains terminal velocity. At that point the person below will have only milliseconds to react.
- Make sure all members of the group know what to do when a rock falls in their direction. If you're at the base of a cliff or near a big boulder, press up close to the steepest part and pull your backpack onto your head. Rocks falling down steep slopes or cliffs tend to get bounced away from the slope, often in random and unpredictable directions. If available, try to hide behind the nearest big tree or, better even, a large boulder.
- Tread lightly. Big packs, big boots, and fatigue make clumsy feet. Clumsy feet kick rocks. Stop all chatting and concentrate on your foot placement when there is a dangerous rock field.

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Notes:

## → RIVER CROSSINGS

Even though on our trips we might not have problems crossing streams, usually being narrow and shallow ones, easily negotiable by going from stone to stone - yet we do have to know what to do in such cases so safety remains intact.

Giving a hand or providing guests with walking sticks often does the thing.

When using the rock hopping method remember that the rocks may be slippery or unstable, so first check them out yourself. The walking stick will help both with balance and for checking the stability of the rock before you step on it.

If room allows, guide & assistant, and if needed some of the more agile guests, may be stationed at more difficult areas to lend a hand to others. Or, if it can be done safely, each person can give a hand to a person behind him/ her.

Those who have already crossed can position themselves downstream to be there in case someone does slip/ fall in.

If we can use each other's hand/ help safely then, apart from making crossing easier, it will also build up a feeling of camaraderie in the group and add a sense of achievement for everyone in the group.



Sometimes crossing a stream with desire not to get shoes wet might necessitate taking the shoes off before negotiating a few meters of ankle-deep stream - and that is only if we are sure there is nothing we can cut our feet on! Otherwise, if really necessary to cross a stream, we remove socks, pull the insoles out, and cross in just the boots. Once on the other side, we drain the boots, put the insoles back in, put dry socks back on and, if available, even a plastic bag over the foot before putting the boots on. ...and remove the bags a couple of hours later.

It would be very unusual that we have to face a raging river on our trips, but if we do, we would follow best practices, as described later in the text.

Now, on a topographical map, a river is but a thin blue line that tells little about the speed, force, and volume of the water. When you spread your maps out and plan your route, you can estimate a river's size by looking at the amount of terrain it drains, but you won't know for sure until you get to the river itself. River crossings are at once exhilarating, challenging, frustrating, dangerous, and satisfying. On a nice summer day, crossing a river can be the highlight of the trip. On a cold, rainy day when the footing is slick and the current strong, crossing a river can be dangerous and frustrating.

Rivers get smaller the higher you hike up the valley because they have fewer and fewer tributaries. If the spot where you want to cross looks too big, take a look at your map and see if there is a tributary joining the river nearby. Perhaps you can hike up to that tributary, cross it, and then cross the main river. Look for braids in the river where the total volume of water is divided into two or three channels, and then choose the shallowest place to cross each channel.

## **IN THE EVENT OF A FALL**

If you happen to fall into the water - and it is less than knee deep - it is okay to stand up, get yourself together and move on, You're wet now and wading may be the easiest way to continue across. Be careful of an uneven and slippery bottom.

If you're going to cross a stream higher than knee deep, before going into the water everyone should undo buckles and loose shoulder straps on one's backpack in case it needs to be thrown away. If you've fallen in water that is higher than knee deep, roll onto your back, shed your pack, and point your feet downstream, keeping them up and in front of you so you can use your feet to ward off rocks, and sidestroke or backstroke your way toward shore or away from hazards.

To people, such as kayakers, who habituate the waters, perhaps the most dangerous hazard is the strainer. Should you find yourself heading toward a strainer without the possibility of avoiding it, your goal is to avoid getting sucked under it. River guides advise actually swimming toward the strainer to pick up speed so you can better swim up onto it.

The first in your group to cross the river can act as spotters downstream from the crossing. They should be prepared to help fallen members escape the current but should keep in mind their own limits in wading out to help. If you can't reach the downed person with just your arm, try a stick or a pile jacket if they are close enough. Failing that, throw them a rope if you have one. And finally, only as a last resort should you swim to their assistance.

River crossings are one of the more dangerous parts of a travel day, therefore always be ready to change your route or turn back if the river is too strong.

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Notes:

## **→ FLASH FLOODS**

Adventure activities taking place in and on bodies of water necessitate knowledge of all possible scenarios, especially undesirable ones. One of them would be finding oneself at a riverbed of a canyon at an onset of a flash flood.

Flash flood is usually caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time, generally less than 6 hours of the rain event. It can come without prior warning, sometimes within a few minutes after, e.g. a sudden release of water due to a dam failure (the dam in a canyon/ gorge built by the river itself taking down debris made of trees and branches, etc and piling them up into a dam).

Flash floods are usually characterized by raging torrents that rip through river beds, mountain canyons or urban streets, sweeping everything in front of them.

Staying safe is always crucial, and indeed so in case our trips and programs take us through canyons and along riverbeds. We need to be aware that very small streams, creeks, gullies, dry streambeds that appear harmless in dry weather are often the most dangerous areas when flash flooding occurs.

To ensure safety, the key is, as always: prevention . So, before going for the trip we check flood and fire history and weather forecasts, making sure to also cover the areas upstream of our destination. And in the area we have to know all the ways out, should an escape route be needed. Then, we need to be aware of that in the context of our group, and, particularly, the least fit & skilled member of our party. When on the spot we observe everything - keeping our eyes and ears open - being especially alert on changes of any kind, e.g. changes of windblow especially if it picks up in downcanyon direction while blowing steadily, then also what is floating in the water, changes of water volume/ level, speed and colour of water (turning murky), also sounds we hear (rumbling?!), etc. so as to take timely decisions.

If we notice any of these changes or hear the roar of water coming towards us, we get to high ground **immediately!** ..that means up the nearest hill to safe height , or if not feasible placewise/ timewise, then at least to get on rocks and higher piles of debris.

Btw, we do not cross moving water - as little as 15cm deep (above our ankles) of rushing water could be enough to knock us off our feet (and also there could be boulders rolling underneath that) - so we turn around and go another way. We do not decide to swim. We do not drive through flood waters (most of flood victims are people trapped in motor vehicles); note that it takes less than a foot-deep moving water for a car to be pushed. Also, we stay off bridges over fast-moving water.

If, however, caught in a flood, we don't panic, but we point our feet downstream, using them as a barrier between us and what we may encounter. That will allow us to keep our head up a little bit to see what's going on and what lies ahead; that is also a good way to feel for the ground if the water is getting shallow and if we can touch it. ..then that might be a point to get out. And if we see a tree or branch we don't immediately reach for it because piles of any sought of debris can turn into traps, and possibly pull us under. Instead, we try to move toward a slower current or beach and there we're more likely to get out safely.

Conclusion is that comprehensive risk assessment and constant reassessment in the course of our activities, followed by timely risk management, should there be one, is a must if we're to be in the areas prone to flash floods and enjoy safe activities and our times there.

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Notes:

# Importance of fitness, energy conservation, adequate hydration, nutrition and hygiene on multi day Adventure trips

Hazards when in the outdoors, as described earlier, are largely down to a human factor.

In the context of these topics, experiences of longer multiday adventure tours show that trip leaders have to make sure everyone in the group - all guests and themselves, too - do adhere to everything mentioned in the title throughout the trip and until the very last day.

Imagine a guest misdoing something from the above - anything. ..don't need to think much: often we have guest/s joining a trip being less fit/ skilled than required, etc.

Imagine also a guide not being up to the task of leading an adventure trip lasting 5 or 10 or 20+ days: not being skilled enough to safely handle a group in any and all situations, or not fit enough, i.e. much more than actually needed for the trip, or not resting well, spending energy unnecessarily, not having mental stamina to last longer than needed, forgetting to hydrate frequently and throughout the day every day, eating poorly and so on - the guide would not enjoy the trip as much as he/ she should and would otherwise and - much more importantly - would jeopardize the safety of the group thanks to reduced ability to make right decisions because of lack of rest, dehydration, lower energy level and patience and tolerance, etc.

A 1-2 day trip could easily stand some of the above wrongdoings of the trip leader to oneself but a longer adventure tour would for sure take a toll, if not in terms of safety then for sure in the quality of job done; such a trip would be experienced by guests as "an average" one - actually meaning: money wasted - "I could/ should have gone elsewhere, for another trip.."being thoughts of guests then..

And that is exactly why this training is organised and offered: for all guides along Via Dinarica to grow in multiday adventure trips leadership skills, and understanding that only polishing all guiding skills - by having attention on them at all times - can transform and evolve a good guide into a superb one!

Again: that includes practicing all of the above and not neglecting anything.

- Prehydrate: Drink extra water before you start a strenuous activity
- Make drinking water a habit. If you just rely on your sense of thirst, chances are you will get behind in your hydration. To get a rough idea of the quantity, make sure to drink not less than half a liter of water for every hour of moderate activity in moderate temperatures, and up to a liter if the activity is strenuous and heat is excessive; beware not to overhydrate by monitoring how much you drink
- Make it easy for yourself to drink water often by keeping your water bottle in a convenient place or by using a hydration reservoir
- Drink small amounts often, practically a few sips every now and then (like tennis players do..)
- Avoid sugary drinks: sugar impedes the body's ability to absorb fluid
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Both are diuretics and cause the body to lose water through urination, thereby accelerating dehydration.
- When active for longer time, make sure to replace electrolytes, including sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium, with dried fruit and nuts and fruits, e.g. bananas, etc., while in the evenings/ breakfasts have soups, mixed dishes, root/tuber vegetables and legumes, and dairy products, or, only as substitutes, by using electrolyte replacement sport drinks in the course of activity and afterwards

- Consume foods with high water content. If you feel like you cannot drink enough water, focus on consuming water lush fruits and vegetables
- Do not forget to hydrate sufficiently in cold weather, and at altitude in particular
- Don't stop drinking when you stop with the activity: you should continue to intake fluids even after completing it so to replenish water and electrolyte loss
- For one's own use in case of dehydration, and/ or need to control effects of diarrheal illness, one can pack oral rehydration salts - again: just in case of need

Intake of water should be balanced with food intake. In case of not having enough water for the activity/ hike etc., reduce food intake to minimum (especially heavy-to-digest one) because it necessitates water for digestion itself, thus increasing dehydration.

In regard to nutrition, many calories are burned in the course of a strenuous activity. Studies that consider nutrition in context of human performance and energy loss, say that an hour of hiking uphill while carrying a heavy backpack consumes as much as 600-650 calories.. Thus, one needs plenty of nourishment - to eat plenty of food to keep one's energy levels up while active outdoors.

On multiday trips it is particularly important to intake enough food/ nutrients - so have a substantial breakfast, use each opportunity to help yourself with the snack you're offering to your guests during the day's activities, make sure to eat enough at lunch time especially if it is a picnic one, while for dinner feel free to have a big one, possibly including a soup. That way, along with proper hydration, the body and mind will keep providing for the best performance necessary for an adventure trip leader to tackle any challenge in the best possible way.

It goes without saying that hygiene on long lasting outdoor trips is to be taken seriously, and that becomes especially obvious in context of bacterial and virus contaminations. ..frequent washing hands and use of hand sanitizers by each and every person in the group, especially right before meals/touching food; anything reused to be well washed, e.g. plates, cups, cutlery; cross contamination to be avoided in context of everything, starting with, e.g. trailmix distribution: not offering it from a box, which everyone goes in with their fingers, but rather pouring it into their hands from a zip lock bag, and so on.

These measures greatly reduce the probability of catching wilderness acquired diarrhea (WAD) saving everyone from trouble/ misery; otherwise, it becomes quite a task for the trip leader to manage it, especially when in unimaginably remote areas, as some corners of Dinaric Alps indeed are.

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Notes:

# MANAGING ALLERGIES AND DIETS OF GUESTS

Some trips' guests give us information in advance about their health conditions, including allergies and dietary needs. That is very helpful because being aware of that ahead of time helps us, service providers, to act accordingly and timely, e.g. inform/ alert restaurants' chefs about allergies/ diets; helps us obtaining necessary food; brings our attention on a guest who, e.g. has recently undergone a surgery and is still recovering from it, etc.

## ALLERGIES

In the past, if we didn't have that information prior to a trip, we would remind guests at the beginning of a trip to tell us guide/s - if they wish us to know - about their health conditions, allergies and dietary needs, and they could tell us that in private. Nowadays, however, due to privacy violations, thanks to technological development of social media and IT in general, in western cultures value of privacy becomes increasingly important, making our guests less and less inclined to be talking about their private matters, including allergies even, and, rarely though, diets.

And those guests who do tell us about their allergies/ special diets, if in any doubt, we ask what they usually eat, thus making our job easier while looking for/ avoiding certain foods etc.

Telling us about these private matters also makes us responsible for making sure they are getting what they asked for.

(At that point in time it's good to remind the guest about the obvious and sensible: their own responsibility of having their medicaments - Epi pen/s, etc. - at hand at all times.

NOTE: Never do we bring along an EpiPen with the idea to apply it to our guest, nor we are allowed by law to do it to our guests.)

To ensure that the guests are not getting what they don't want - or must not have in case of allergies - the company we work for ahead of time organises and books, if necessary, adequate meals wherever we'll be eating out in restaurants; we guides follow the same instructions while obtaining food according to the special allergy/ dietary needs.

Accepting to lead the trip, a guide acknowledges his/ her responsibility that comes with it, first of all being the safety of everyone involved. Thus, during the trip it is up to the lead guide to make sure that the agreements with the restaurants are not breached - as they often are, unfortunately - so the guests are really getting what they asked for. For the reason of risk management the guide's engagement is a must because of the Balkan mentality of chefs and waiters who often take things easy, not being aware of the severity of the situation with serious to catastrophic consequences as a result of cross contamination while preparing / packing / serving the food.

To be exact, for this situation to be prevented, the guide must remind the waiter to kindly remind the chef of what was agreed earlier.. And then the guide has to check once again with the waiter, at the time of food arrival, that the dish is safe to be served to the guest.

..so much attention and talk about this now, but it's a must - should we react responsibly upon the information given to us by guests about life-threatening consequences of mistreatment of their allergy issue. Needless to say, such protocol saves the person, and also everyone else of enormous stress and trouble, by preventing the worst.

This procedure is adopted by a responsible employer, who makes sure guides adhere to it for the sake of safety and wellbeing of everyone, and, thereby, also the company itself.

## What to do in an emergency

A life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) can cause shock, a sudden drop in blood pressure and trouble breathing. In people who have an allergy, anaphylaxis can occur minutes after exposure to a specific allergy-causing substance (allergen). In some cases, there may be a delayed reaction or anaphylaxis may occur without an apparent trigger.

### Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis include:

- Skin reactions, including hives, itching, and flushed or pale skin
- Swelling of the face, eyes, lips or throat
- Constriction of the airways, leading to wheezing and trouble breathing
- A weak and rapid pulse
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Dizziness, fainting or unconsciousness

Some common anaphylaxis triggers include:

- Medications
- Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish
- Insect stings from bees, yellow jackets, wasps, hornets and fire ants
- Latex, found in many disposable gloves, syringes, and adhesive tapes

If you've had any kind of severe allergic reaction in the past, ask your doctor if you should be prescribed an epinephrine autoinjector to carry with you.

### If we're with someone having an allergic reaction with signs of anaphylaxis:

- Immediately call a local medical emergency number (in Bosnia being 124)
- Ask the person if he or she is carrying an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, others) to treat their allergic attack
- If the person is having an autoinjector, he/ she will use it by pressing the autoinjector against their thigh
- Have the person lie still on his/ her back, and elevate their legs – do not allow them to stand or walk
- Loosen tight clothing and cover the person with a blanket. Don't give the person anything to drink
- If there's vomiting or bleeding from the mouth, turn the person on his or her side to prevent choking
- If there are no signs of breathing, coughing or movement, begin CPR. Do uninterrupted chest presses – about 100 every minute – until paramedics arrive
- Get emergency treatment even if symptoms start to improve. After anaphylaxis, it's possible for symptoms to recur; monitoring in a hospital for several hours is a necessity.

If you're with someone having signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, don't wait to see whether symptoms get better. Seek emergency treatment right away. In severe cases, untreated anaphylaxis can lead to death within half an hour.

An antihistamine pill, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), isn't sufficient to treat an anaphylaxis. These medications can help relieve allergy symptoms, but work too slowly in a severe reaction.

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Notes:

## DIETS

Some of our guests require diets with meat, some with no meat, etc. There are number of different diets people/ our guests stick to; following is an information on some diet requirements we need/ wish to fulfill on our trips:

### **Vegetarian diet**

**No:** Meat (red meat, poultry, seafood and flesh of any other animal); food containing by-products of animal slaughter, such as animal-derived rennet and gelatin, etc.

**Yes:** Grains, beans, vegetables, mushrooms, fruits, nuts, herbs, seeds; stuffed/ grilled/ breaded etc. vegetables; risotto; pasta; vegetarian pates, ajvar, etc.

### **Flexitarian (semi-vegetarian) diet**

A predominantly vegetarian diet, in which meat is occasionally consumed (usually in small amounts).

### **Pescetarian diet**

A vegetarian diet which includes only fish and other seafood but not flesh of other animals. Most pescetarians, though, maintain a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet with the addition of fish and shellfish.

### **Lacto-ovo vegetarian diet**

A vegetarian diet that includes eggs and dairy products, thus all phyllo pastries but burek (meat one), etc.

### **Lacto-vegetarian diet**

A vegetarian diet that includes certain types of dairy products but excludes eggs and foods which contain animal rennet; eggs-free phyllo pastries with potatoes etc.

### **Ovo-vegetarian diet**

A vegetarian diet that includes eggs, but excludes dairy products; phyllo pastries with potatoes, spinach alone (no cheese), pumpkin etc.

### **Vegan diet**

In addition to the requirements of a vegetarian diet, vegan diet:

**excludes:** all animal products, including eggs, dairy products, honey, gelatin, etc.

**includes:** plant-based foods including fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, grains, beans, nuts, and seeds; peanut butter; soy milk and soy cheese, etc.; muesli, corn flakes, etc.; coconut milk; stuffed/ grilled/ fried vegetables; risotto; ajvar, etc.

### **Gluten-free diet**

**No:** Protein gluten; grains such as wheat, barley (malt, malt flavoring and malt vinegar are usually made from barley), rye, and a cross between wheat and rye called triticale; many other grain products, foods, sauces, cakes, sweets and beer unless labelled gluten-free, as well as food additives, such as malt

**Yes:** Beans, seeds and nuts in their natural, unprocessed form; fresh eggs;

Fresh meats, fish and poultry (not breaded, batter-coated or marinated); fruits and vegetables; gluten-free bread (& corn/ rice bread); soy; most dairy products, etc.

### **Diabetic diet**

**No:** Sugary foods; fruit juice; dried fruit; white rice, bread and flour; full-fat dairy; fatty cuts of meat; packed snacks; baked goods, etc.

**Yes:** Watermelon \*, bananas \* and other sweet fruits \* ; walnuts; broccoli; spinach; olive oil; fish; blueberries; cinnamon; turmeric; Bosnian cuisine \*, etc.

*\* Note for diabetics: Consume in moderation; check blood sugar level frequently and watch the carbs!*

*The information given above is here to give us a general idea of the diets and, as such, it isn't all comprehensive. Thus, for exact and total information on the diet requirements always refer to the guests, for they know what they want/ don't want to consume. ..and they'll appreciate your attention and concern for their fulfilment with food, and trip in general, and revere it as a highly professional act of their trip leader/ guide!*

**NOTE:** Be aware of cross-contamination, e.g. while preparing and serving food etc. as some guests are quite particular about their food and eating habits. For that reason we always ask our hosts, particularly household accommodations, to serve meats separately , e.g. burek (meat phyllo) from non-meat p hyllo pastries, etc.

So, having an eye on all this and managing it timely and properly, removes obstacles to enjoy all parts of a trip by both guests and guides.

### **Complete Exercise 5**

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Notes:

# Weather

## Local Meteorology & Natural Phenomena

Natural phenomena are a curiosity for our guests and an element of safety. An adventure travel guide should be able to explain local phenomena. We should also know how to deal with these phenomena and guarantee our group's safety.

Meteorology is the science that studies atmosphere on planet earth and its changes. Its most famous application is weather forecast that is obviously important in an outdoor activity. We make sure to always check several different forecasts (international & local, too) ahead of time so as to get a clear idea of the most probable weather pattern during the trip.

Keep updated prior and along the trip so to have most accurate information on what is most likely to be expected - and then always to be alert while on a trip, constantly comparing forecasts with the actual skies and the elements, according to which to take decisions then.

Thus, it would be intelligent for observing the skies to turn into a habit, practiced both in a city and in the outdoors, thereby to keep learning about the skies and, namely, clouds: how they look like and what they mean for us when on a trip or being out there in general.

It is essential that guides acquire knowledge about local meteorology as well. Obtain complete information about the area we are traveling to, including:

- Minimum/ maximum temperature during the day and night
- Probability of precipitation
- Information about wind, its direction and speed
- Check for change in patterns across the day and night in context of temperature, precipitation and wind behaviour; remember to check out areas where the wind blows from, so to try to foresee the pace and nature of change that might be hitting the area of our trip
- Historic record of precipitation at that time of the year, along with the situation of the past week/s
- If we travel at seaside, tide schedule

## Meteorology in Western Balkans

The Western Balkans are prone to multiple hazards such as heat and cold waves, precipitation that causes floods as well as landslides, droughts and forest fires and earthquakes. Climate variability and climate change, new land-use patterns and increasing human settlements in vulnerable areas may compound such problems. Floods, storms, heavy rain, hail, drought, landslide or landslip, snow deposits and avalanche, extreme air temperatures and earthquakes are all natural phenomena that can affect the job of an adventure guide.

Be prepared to explain to your guests what to expect in the season of travel, and reinforce the idea that unpredictable weather is common and that it necessitates constant consideration and possibly adaptation to the changes.

### **Complete Exercise 6**

Notes:

# Wilderness First Aid and Rescue

The often remote nature of adventure travel trips, the presence of physical activity, and often both, means a higher likelihood that a guide will need to respond to a medical emergency at some point in his / her career. The Adventure Travel Guide Qualification and Performance Standard states: "Guides must possess a first aid certification based on the recognized protocol for the amount of time required to reach definitive care (hospital or clinic)." The training would be Basic Life Support (BLS) First Aid course as a minimum, or more comprehensive ones offered to Mountain Rescue Teams (which include the training in BLS and AED), or those Wilderness Medicine ones such as Wilderness First Aid, and Wilderness First Responder being the best one, all provided by certified organizations/ instructors.

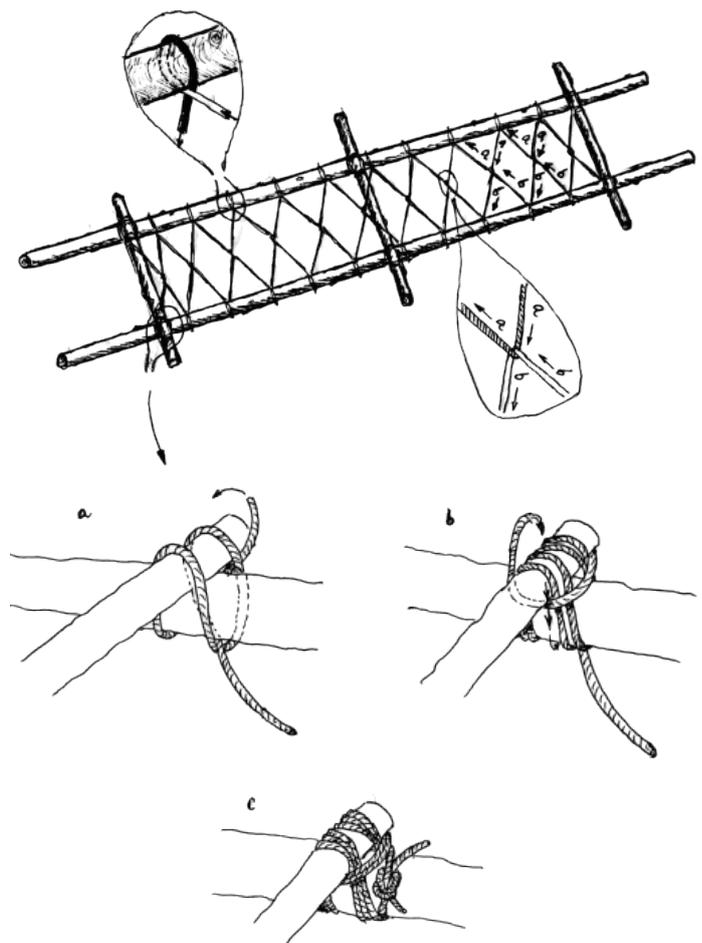
It is in the interest of an outdoor adventure company - being also its responsibility - to employ guides who are knowledgeable and certified in First Aid and CPR. Likewise, a responsible guide will, from his/ her side, make sure to successfully complete the training and refresh it on the regular basis. The training/ refreshment is often being organised and/ or paid for by the company guides work for.

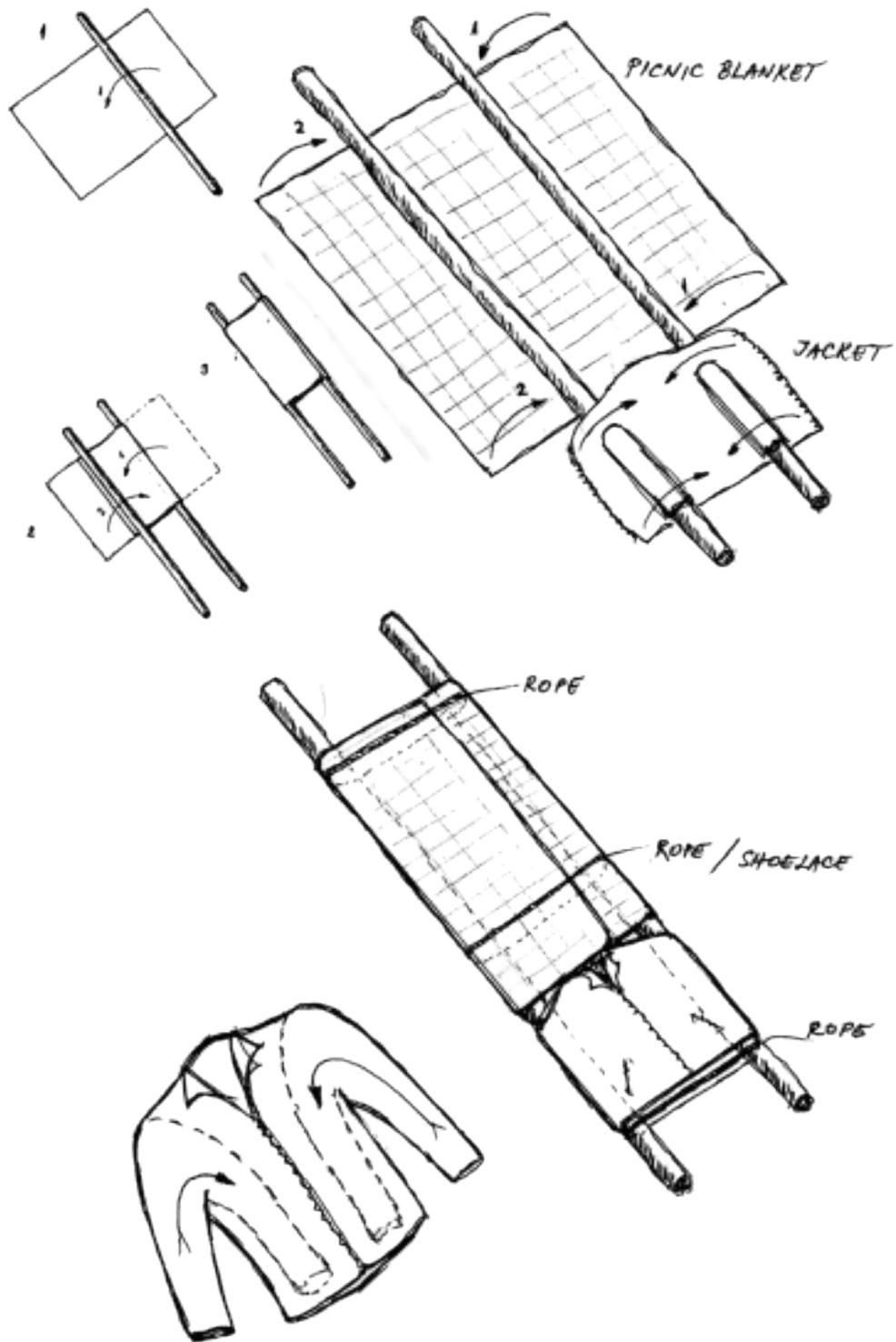
NOTE: When providing a first aid we need to bear in mind that we should not perform actions outside of our certified protocol. Also, in the presence of people trained in first aid, the one with more comprehensive training/ certificate is to take the lead in case of need for first aid.

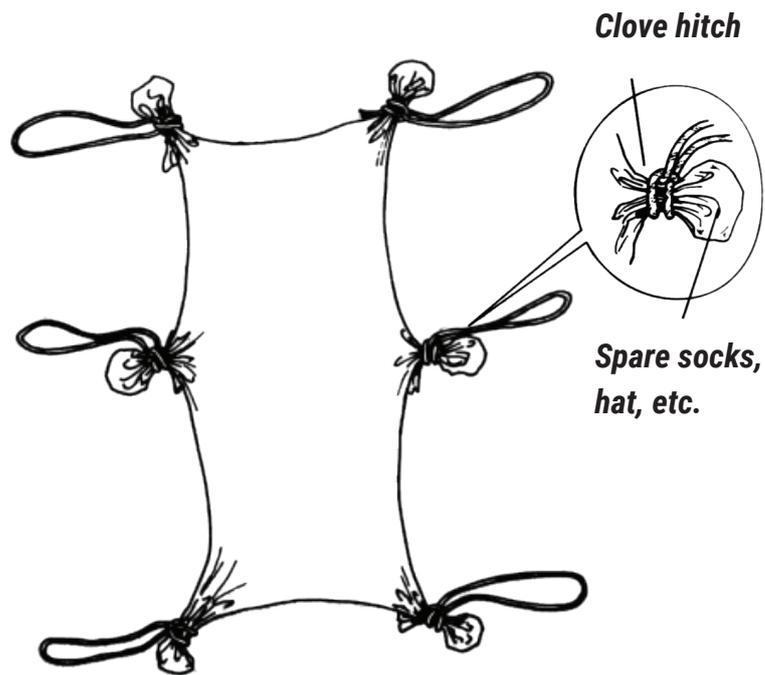
We practice First Aid in the outdoors along with practice of Mountain Rescue. For that we apply the knowledge of first aid using material found in our first aid set, and then improvise with whatever material we might find at hand on a trip, including walking poles, branches, shoelaces, bandanas, newspaper, etc. - anything and everything available - for immobilisations and so on.

The same we do when doing Mountain Rescue, making improvised stretchers and caring them; we use picnic blanket, jackets, vests, shirts, poncho, prusics, rope, wood, backpack, etc. we find out there - everything and anything we have at hand, and - most of all - our creativity, resourcefulness and "thinking out of box".

Then we also practice carrying a "wounded" member of a party so as to feel the weight and become aware of pluses and minuses of stretchers we made (and ways of caring them), and make improvements on them and then check them again and again. ..improvements like adding prusics/ rope/ etc. around shoulders (used as aid for caring) better insulated for more comfort while caring the person, adjusting the length of the prusics so it corresponds to the length of our arms for sharing the weight equally; also using backpack for that purpose, etc.







***Poly bag stretcher.***

**Use the wounded person's backpack as pillow or to lift legs as shock prevention, etc.**

**NOTE:** Always remember to have the wounded person use toilet before being placed on & fixed to a stretcher. Also, make sure the person is well protected from cold/ heat from below and above, using pieces of clothes, an emergency blanket, etc.

All along we keep refreshing the knowledge gained in our past first aid trainings by discussing and brainstorming proper - the best ways - of solving different kinds of health issues we may come across out there. In doing all that we keep growing in knowledge and experience of wilderness first aid and rescue, all for the sake of better/ best response in case of need.

### ***Complete Exercise 7***

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Notes:

# Public Speaking

Public speaking is the process of communicating information to an audience, done verbally and nonverbally.

Modulating the tone and volume of voice, speed of talk, changes in its dynamics, with the valuable use of pause when we want to add importance to what comes right after the pause, all accompanied with naturally adequate mimics and gestures - all of that adds colours to the message highlighting its significance. Such public speaking skills are particularly crucial for the stories we keep telling throughout the trip.

Feeling the audience and adjusting the type, quantity and timing of a message - while delicately spicing it with wit - makes a speech easily digestible and charming. That results in our audience - guests on our trips - assimilating information we give them; then, understanding its importance, they want to follow our instructions on what to do and not to do at what time; and when we want to "sell" them something, they buy it because they're clear we know that is the best under given circumstances.

Bonding with them, apart from performing the activities we both are passionate about, is also enhanced through our talk, which enlivens in our & their awareness the prime cause of being there in the first place, being to safely enjoy the excellent trip itinerary and our times together.

## Presenting to the Group

A variety of techniques exist to successfully present to a group. The techniques you choose to implement depend on the group and your own personality, however some techniques are universal:

- Display confidence and competence
- Maintain eye contact
- Be prepared with a thoughtfully organized and clear message
- Give clear and concise directions and information in a timely manner
- Keep the group well-informed at all times in order to adjust for changes in plans

All of the above, as mentioned, is based on competence and confidence we naturally radiate with - being knowers of the comprehensive reality of a trip and circumstances we're talking about; it is competence and confidence that add authority to our speech, giving weight to the content of briefings and debriefings we do on our trips.

### **Complete Exercise 8**

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Notes:

# Content Delivery - Storytelling & Interpretation

Well handled tool of public speaking helps painting a clear picture of a story on the canvas of the mind and heart of a listener. Storytelling is a fundamental and powerful content delivery method used by guides throughout the world. Human beings have been sharing culture and history through stories for millennia.

Storytelling is an effective means of communication for several reasons:

1. Stories touch our emotions
2. Stories are a more intimate way to connect the audience and storyteller
3. Audience has greater retention
4. A way to showcase our values

Different types of stories exist to be used for different purposes, a story from:

1. Your life
2. The life of someone you know
3. News or current events
4. Historical events
5. A hypothetical situation - "Imagine if you were here in 1984 at the time of Winter Olympics..."
6. Fiction with made up characters or events

An adventure travel guide is expected to be knowledgeable in subject matters presented on tours, which, apart from the knowledge of trip itinerary itself, include: natural history, cultural heritage and current events. Knowing facts and statistics is not enough; the ability to communicate and educate effectively must also be present. Guides must look to develop both knowledge and skill in communicating to cover a potentially wide variety of contexts for both the culture and place, as well as the interests of the audience. Content delivery techniques are applied in both formal educational settings, as well as in informal settings such as casual conversations, e.g. during and after meals.

Developing these techniques while matching content delivery - timing, topics, emotions, quantity - to the interest of a guest and group of guests, will increase your ability to exceed expectations of your guests.

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Notes:

## Using “Thematic Interpretation” to Tell the Story

A popular technique to help you capture and tell the story is Thematic Interpretation. A theme is the thread that logically connects all parts of a trip together, e.g. Via Dinarica concept on a Via Dinarica trip. By identifying an overarching story (theme), a guide can narrow the focus of the content he/ she will present. This increased organization and focus increases retention of the presented information and desired takeaway message.

Note: A story has to be truthful above all - that being an obvious must in anything we tell to our guests anyway.

Interpretation is the technique of incorporating the story (theme) into the ongoing flow of the trip. It is a way for the guest to connect more intimately with the destination’s culture and environment. To deepen understanding of people, places, events and objects.

Thematic Interpretation is a tool to accomplish the following:

1. To guide the development of the trip into an organized program
2. Help your guests comprehend abstract or difficult to grasp content such as natural history or geology.
3. Increase relevance to your guests

Thematic Interpretation is based upon the concept that people use experiences to form their perception of the world around them. If we want to convey information or a message we need to either work within our guest’s existing knowledge and life experiences (relevancy), or use new experiences (adventure travel) to reframe their former understanding of the world.

## Interpretation Techniques for Adventure Travel

Thematic Interpretation is a powerful tool to meet and exceed the expectations of the modern adventure traveler. Guiding is not about spewing out facts and figures. It is about crafting a journey to discover oneself, and connect the traveler to the destination visited. One of the pioneers of interpretation is Freeman Tilden. We have adapted his principles from his book *Interpreting Our Heritage* to be more relevant to for Adventure Travel guides:

1. Make sure what you share with your guests is relevant to their interests and needs.
2. Our job is not to share information, it is to use information to help connect our guests to our destination.
3. Interpretive guiding is an art, and like any art requires constant practice and learning.
4. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but to provoke your guest to think and feel.
5. People have different ways of learning - we need to be ready to adapt to our guests.

A key requirement for both interpretation and guiding is making the experience and content relevant by:

1. Personalizing Content to the Guest
  - a. What are they interested in?
  - b. Why did they decide to choose our trip or company?
  - c. Where are they from?
2. Working within their Existing knowledge and life Experiences
  - a. Where have they traveled in the past?
  - b. What have been the profound moments in their life?
3. Using Experiences, Not Facts, to Teach
  - a. People are inspired by new experiences, and learn more quickly when doing.
  - b. They also are more open-minded on a subject when they have seen it first hand.  
(e.g. rare wildlife)

When guests go back home after a trip, they remember the trip being fabulous by overwhelming experiences they've had, and most often by a superb guide that made them happen. And storytelling is largely to be thanked for such outcome, for the trip leader who is full of knowledge and is great orator full of enthusiasm for doing what he/ she does - stories told by such trip leader stick to guests' mind and heart as inspirations in their own lives, and motivate them to share it with everyone they are in touch with as something precious, and for many years on end.

Such is the impact of good storytelling skills, which are to be polished continuously and enriched by yet more attractive stories - so the growth of us guides never ends - and with that: fulfilment . :)

### ***Complete Exercise 9***

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Notes:

# Exercises

## Exercise 1: Adventure Travel Guide Concepts

*Get to know your own skills: Considering the five core competencies of the Guide Standard, list all skills according to your own capacities. First list the ones you feel you excel at, and last the one you have more to learn.*

*Come back to this and evaluate your progress **annually** , adding other things you have to grow in.*

Skills you are good at:	Skills you need to improve:

## Exercise 2: Group Management

*Indulge into case studies of group management.*

Working in groups, each group recalls a critical group management situation you have faced on a trip, in the context of topics discussed previously. Describe how the situation was managed - both the good and bad decisions, and is there anything that could have been done differently/ better.

Then all together we analyse what are the pluses and minuses of the solutions and actions undertaken, including - if/ when - the first and all other mistakes/ wrong decisions happen, and do brainstorming on what else could have been done, and then, again all together, we choose the best solution for each example.

## Exercise 3: Risk Analysis

*Indulge into case studies of risk assessment and management*

Working in groups, each group come up with an experience related to the topic and present it to everyone by describing how you managed the situation/ risk, pointing out both good and bad decisions, and was there anything that could have been done differently; then all together we analyse what are the pluses and minuses of the solutions, and then do brainstorming on what else could have been done, after which we together choose the best solution for each example.

## Exercise 4: Leave No Trace Principles

Give an example of how you plan on enacting each Leave No Trace Principle.

Leave No Trace Principle Example	Example
Plan ahead and prepare	(Ex. Schedule your trips to avoid high use)
Travel and camp on durable surfaces	
Dispose of waste properly	
Leave what you find	
Minimize campfire impacts	
Respect wildlife	
Be considerate of others	

## Exercise 5: Strategies for dealing with various situations in the outdoors

Indulge into case studies of the Strategies for dealing with various situations in the outdoors.

Working in groups, each group come up with an experience related to the topic and present it to everyone by describing how you managed the situation/ risk, pointing out both good and bad decisions, and was there anything that could have been done differently; then all together we analyse what are the pluses and minuses of the solutions, and then do brainstorming on what else could have been done, after which we together choose the best solution for each example.

## Exercise 6: Local meteorology and natural phenomena

Choose a location; think of a trip and do the preparation in regard to local meteorology and natural phenomena, say starting a few days in advance.

Practise conveying a decision/ change to a group of guests.

## **Exercise 7: Wilderness First Aid and Rescue**

*Practice wilderness first aid and mountain rescue.*

Using material found in a first aid kit, and also everything/ anything else we find at hand, we practice treatment of bleeding, wounds, fractures, heat & cold injuries, etc. when in the outdoors.

We make improvised stretchers and practice carrying a person so to improve technique of carrying a person, and to improve the stretchers we made.

## **Exercise 8: Public Speaking**

*Practice of giving different types of briefings/ debriefings on day and multi day trips, having in mind basic principles of communication/ taking to a guest and group of guests.*

## **Exercise 9: Content Delivery - Storytelling & Interpretation**

*Practice content delivery in the context of trips we do.*

With public speaking in mind, through workshops we practice storytelling & interpretation of natural and cultural history , while matching content delivery - timing, topics, emotions, quantity - to the interest of a guest and group of guests.

Choose one specific location that one of your trips visits.

Craft a story that captures the essence of this place and your connection to it.

Describe how this story and location fit into the rest of the trip.

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# ■ Notes







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