

# Risk Management and state and national standards

This section provides an explanation of Standards Australia's 'Guidelines for managing risk in sport and recreation activities' and the National Sport and Recreation Competency Standards.

Standards simply provide a benchmark of performance - specifying a level of quality.

A standard is usually a published document that sets out procedures and specifications to ensure that a product or service is fit for its purpose and consistently performs the way it was intended.

Sometimes you may hear people talk about 'best practice' when describing the way something should be done. Best practice is a common way of doing things that is considered safe and meets the level of care required.

If Standards Australia's 'Guidelines for managing risk in sport and recreation activities' and the National Sport and Recreation Competency Standards apply to your organisation, you should ensure that your policies and procedures are aligned with them.

## Risk

Standards Australia has developed a handbook called HB 246:2010 Guidelines for Managing Risk in Sport and Recreation Activities so there can be a consistent national approach to risk management rather than variations across organisations and geographic locations.

The main objective is to provide a healthier environment and 'legally' safer operating environment for all sport and recreation organisations and their participants. Not only will this result in fewer injuries, it will also lessen the potential for any legal ramifications, criminal and civil, that may follow from a failure to operate with appropriate caution.

The handbook has been prepared mainly for volunteers on boards or committees at club, association, state or national levels.

The handbook is not prescriptive; rather it provides a broad approach including definitions, processes and guidance to allow sport and recreation organisations to make sense of risk management and apply it in a practical sense.

To purchase a copy of the booklet, visit the SAI Global<sup>107</sup> website.

## Training

Training is another area where national standards have existed for some time.

National training packages are a major feature of vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. They are national products developed in conjunction with an industry to meet current and emerging skill requirements. Training packages provide the building blocks from which training programs, leading to nationally recognised qualifications, can be developed.

The VET sector provides education and training for people entering the workforce in trades and technical occupations or for paraprofessional jobs. It covers education and training for the thousands of occupations not covered by university training.



<sup>107</sup> <http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/results2.aspx?searchType=simple&publisher=all&keyword=guidelines+for+managing+risk+in+sport>

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The Sport and Recreation Training Packages (sport, fitness, community recreation and outdoor recreation) each contain a number of national qualifications that are recognised across state, territory and organisation boundaries. Each qualification, such as the Certificate III in Community Activity Programs, is made up of a selected group of competency standards.

Competency standards are statements that specify the level of skills, knowledge and their application to required performance standards for various positions and roles in the workplace. They can be used for three main purposes:

1. training - developing training programs for individuals and organisations
2. performance - staff selection, promotion and performance reviews
3. work allocation - job descriptions, organisational restructuring, work organisation.

There are literally hundreds of units of competence (core and elective) in each training package and they cover generic industry skills such as communication, administration, risk management and finance. They also cover activity-specific skills such as instructing a gymnastics class, working with people with a disability, planning a group exercise class and applying abseiling skills.

In some cases you may not need an entire qualification and you might only choose to undergo training and/or assessment for certain relevant units of competence. You would then be issued a statement of attainment listing the units you have completed. Statements of attainment are qualifications and can only be issued by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

These standards and training packages have been developed with input from key industry people Australia-wide to make sure they can be used as benchmarks for performance, which makes them also useful as part of a risk management program. You can compare your existing staff competence against these benchmarks to identify possible areas of risk.

Training staff and volunteers to complete their tasks safely is an important part of risk management.

For more information about sport and recreation industry related training contact Service Skills SA<sup>108</sup> (SSSA), the National Industry Skills Council responsible for sport and recreation.

## Industry Specific Training

Your organisation may also consider arranging for industry-specific training and, depending on the sport and recreation activity you are involved in, also arrange for industry accreditation, coaching and officiating training as part of your organisation's risk management strategy.

## Adventure Activities

The South Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) have been developed to assist organisations, guides and leaders to plan and undertake outdoor adventure activities with dependent participants.

The AAS are voluntary guidelines. They are not binding on any person or organisation and have no legal force; however, they are designed to promote:

- safety for both participants and providers
- information for providers against legal liability claims and criminal penalties
- assistance in obtaining insurance cover.

The AAS reflect minimal acceptable standards of behaviour expected when planning and undertaking outdoor adventure activities with inexperienced and dependent participants.

The AAS can be modified to reflect the experience of group members and the particular situation of the adventure activity where there may be less dependence upon the group leader for guidance and instruction.

Regardless of the extent to which the AAS is adopted, each organisation, guide and leader has a duty of care to complete a risk analysis of the activity and develop a risk management approach to address potential and unexpected situations.

For more information about AAS visit the Recreation SA<sup>109</sup> website.

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.servicesskillssa.com.au/industry/sport-recreation.html>

<sup>109</sup> [http://www.recreationsa.org/?page\\_id=422](http://www.recreationsa.org/?page_id=422)

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## **Fitness Industry Code of Practice**

The objectives of the Recreation South Australia - Fitness Industry Code of Practice are to:

1. Provide high-value services and facilities and enhance consumer confidence in the industry.
2. Improve the long-term viability of the signatory fitness centres.
3. Set a standard of business practice that protects consumers' rights.
4. Set a standard of service that protects the health and well-being of the consumer.
5. Establish procedures to resolve complaints and to establish a disciplinary process for defaulting signatories.

This code applies to Recreation South Australia - Fitness Industry Organisational Members (as defined in accordance with the constitution of Recreation South Australia) who are signatories to the South Australian Fitness Industry Code of Practice.

**Note:** *At the time of publishing this guideline, a National Fitness Industry Code of Practice has been drafted and has been lodged with the ACCC for endorsement and approval.*

*In the meantime, code legislation still exists in a number of states and territories and fitness businesses must meet these requirements.*

