

# NZOIA Code of Ethical Practice for Outdoor Professionals

## Section 1: Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Code is to promote standards of professional behaviour for those practicing as outdoor professionals in New Zealand and portraying themselves as such to the public by using their NZOIA qualifications.

1.2 The Board of NZOIA wishes to promote good practice and requires its members to discharge their responsibilities in a manner that represents high standards of conduct professionally, ethically and morally. Members should show commitment to NZOIA's vision of:

*"Creating positive change through excellence in outdoor leadership"*

1.3 The compilation, revision, updating and policing of the Code shall be the responsibility of the NZOIA Board. The Code will be reviewed annually.

1.4 The Code is set out as principles under the following sections:

- Professional Integrity
- Professional Relationships and Responsibilities
- Professional Standards
- Relationship with Clients and Public
- Commitment to Positive Values in Environmental Issues
- Interpretation and Enforcement

### Appendices

- Supervision and Ratios
- Working in Scope

## **Section 2: Professional Integrity**

### **2.1 Personal Integrity**

Members are expected to demonstrate high standards of personal integrity through all of their interactions with the public and other members. This will be demonstrated through the qualities of fairness, honesty, consistency, truthfulness and discretion.

### **2.2 Personal Gain**

Members should not accept favours, gifts or hospitality in situations that could bring the member or the profession into disrepute.

### **2.3 Advertising**

The NZOIA logo may be used by full NZOIA members for advertising purposes subject to conditions as per the NZOIA website. Where membership is quoted to clients or potential clients, such mention should be clear, honest and contain no misrepresentations.

## **Section 3: Professional Relationships and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Professional Demeanour**

Members should conduct themselves in a manner befitting professionals. When dealing with other members, agencies, or the general public, members should present themselves as responsible persons and in a manner that inspires confidence and trust.

### **3.2 Working Relationships**

1. Members should respect the needs, traditions, practices, special competencies and responsibilities of other institutions, associations, professions and agencies that share a common working environment.
2. Members must manage the operations for which they are responsible with due regard to staff welfare, complying with all legal requirements, Health and Safety requirements, safeguards for Child Protection Requirements and with due regard for Equal Opportunity and Ethnic Minority issues.

## **Section 4: Professional Standards**

### **4.1 Working Competence**

1. Members must work within the limits of their competence, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the services they provide or manage are based on justifiable working practices that place proper emphasis on training, qualifications and experience.
2. Where a member delegates responsibilities, then such a member must be satisfied that the person to whom these are delegated is competent to carry them out, and in the knowledge that the ultimate responsibility for the delegate's decisions remain with the member as if those decisions were their own.

### **4.2 Professional Development**

1. Members acknowledge their responsibility to remain active in maintaining and developing their personal professional competence.
2. Members are expected to strive to improve and update their own knowledge and skills. Members should also endeavour to share their professional expertise with other members in order to upskill the whole profession.

## **Section 5: Relationships with Clients and Public**

### **5.1 Respecting the Rights and Needs of Clients and Public**

1. Members accept their responsibility to promote and protect the dignity, privacy and safety of all those using their services.
2. Members should manage the operations for which they are responsible with due regard for customer care, Health & Safety issues, Child Protection requirements, Equal Opportunities issues and participants' welfare.
3. Members must manage their operations in compliance with all legal requirements.
4. Members must run any services in accordance the requirements of any Codes of Practice (COPs) or Safety Guidelines (SGs) of the representative Association, Governing Body or Peak Body of the particular activity where these are applicable and appropriate. Any variation to these COPs or SGs must be able to be justified in terms of safety.
5. Members should be aware of and avoid situations and behaviours that may compromise their ethical integrity and safety.

## **5.2 Maintenance of Service to Clients and Public**

Members have a duty of care to Clients whom they accept on and are engaged in any programme of activity, and members of the public who they may interact with. Where staff shortages, financial restriction or other factors might inhibit the delivery of the services/programmes, then members must take all reasonable steps to establish priorities and balance the needs of the users with the competence, knowledge, training and experience of the staff available. On no account may the safety of Clients or the Public or Self be compromised.

## **5.3 Personal Relationships**

Members should both define and respect the boundaries between personal and working environments.

## **5.4 Confidentiality**

Members are under a duty to safeguard confidential information relating to Clients. This requirement is without prejudice to the need to share essential information with professional colleagues.

## **5.5 Client and Own Safety**

Members must take all practicable steps to safeguard themselves, their clients and the public. This includes both physical and mental well-being.

# **Section 6: Commitment to Positive Values in Environmental Issues**

## **6.1 Minimum Impact/Sustainable Use**

Members should actively promote positive values concerning conservation and enhancement of the environment, endorsing the principle of “sustainable use” and “minimum impact”.

## **6.2 Community Sensitivity**

Members should be sensitive to the impact of their operation on the local community in which they work; taking all reasonable steps to minimise any adverse impact.

## **6.3 Shared Use Sensitivity**

Members should ensure that the operations for which they are responsible give reasonable consideration to the needs of other operational users who may wish to share the same working venues.

## **Section 7: Interpretation and Enforcement**

### **7.1 Complaints Process**

Where there is uncertainty or dispute as to the interpretation or application of the Code, such matters shall be referred to the NZOIA Board. The complaints process is detailed on the NZOIA website.

- The member will be given details of the complaint and be asked to respond.
- The NZOIA Board will form a subcommittee to investigate the complaint and response and will forward a recommendation to the NZOIA Board.

The outcomes of the above meetings may include:

- No action required
- Written guidance or advice
- Written warning
- Temporary suspension of membership
- Withdrawal of membership

There is a right of appeal to the next quorate meeting of the NZOIA Board whose decision will be final.

### **7.2 Incident Investigation**

Where a member has been involved in an incident, members must co-operate fully with any investigation process NZOIA deems appropriate with a view to enhancing learning for the sector.

## Appendices:

### Supervision and ratios

NZOIA has ratios in place in its SMS for NZOIA training and assessment activities. It does not set or recommend ratios for other organisation's activities. In line with WorkSafe and Adventure Activity Regulations, these are expected to be set by the provider (instructor/guide or organisation).

As an instructor/guide, you should ask yourself the question "Are my clients adequately supervised?" Legally, you must ensure that your clients (and employees) are adequately trained or supervised.

NZOIA's expectation regarding supervision is that members set maximum ratios (based on industry good practice\*) for ideal conditions and adjust them down on a trip by trip basis according to consideration of the below factors:

- Instructor/Guide competence and experience in the activity
- The age, ability, experience and maturity of the clients
- The degree of real risk inherent in the activity, and the frequency of exposure to real risks
- Any medical needs of the clients
- The standard and level of the equipment available
- The contingency options and access to emergency services
- Environmental factors such as weather forecasts, river flows, snow conditions

Guideline ratios can also be based on "standard (or typically expected) conditions" and adjusted up or down for atypical conditions. A maximum ratio should still be set.

Where a member is working for another body that sets the ratios, the member would be expected to ensure that organisation is aware of current pertinent factors that should reduce the ratios.

Organisations or employers that are members of NZOIA are expected to ensure instructors/guides are comfortable with supervision levels under current conditions.

*\* "industry good practice" is defined as the range of actions currently accepted within the adventure and outdoor sector to manage the risk of harm to staff, participants and visitors.*

## **Working in Scope**

NZOIA recognises that for guides and instructors to progress to the next level of qualification they need to gain skills and experience beyond their currently qualified scope. Steps to achieve this may include:

- Gaining the experience outlined in the higher level NZOIA pre-requisites.
- Attending a higher level NZOIA training course.
- Working under the supervision of an instructor/guide qualified to provide the higher level activity.

The level of supervision should be justified based on a documented appraisal of that instructor or guide's current experience level, matched against that of their clients', and the environmental conditions at the time, so that client safety is not compromised.