

Key Findings: Adventure Activity Regulations Survey 2015

The NZOIA Adventure Activity Regulations Survey received 111 responses from people in the outdoor recreation sector. This included 89 responses from NZOIA members, and 22 responses from non-members.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said the benefits of the regulations outweighed the costs, while just over half (53%) said the benefits did not outweigh the costs. A quarter (24%) were unsure.

Just under half of survey respondents (46%) said they had been through the Adventure Activity Regulations process. Of those that had not, most said this was because they were exempt or were not required to undertake an audit. Some said they had not undertaken an audit due to the cost.

Nearly half (47%) of all survey respondents said they valued the Adventure Activity Regulations audit process. A quarter (27%) of respondents said they did not value the process, and a quarter (27%) were unsure.

More than half (57%) of all survey respondents said they felt there was a better way to run the audit process, and two thirds (65%) said they had specific issues they wanted NZOIA to raise with WorkSafe.

These issues included:

Time and cost requirements

- Reduce the time requirements and costs of audit for operators.
- Keep the audit simple and focused, to reduce costs.

Recognition of industry qualifications

- Provide more recognition of industry qualifications when undertaking audits (eg, NZOIA, Skills Active MSC and NZMGA qualifications).
- Those with recognised industry qualifications should face shorter, less time-intensive audits. This could involve a paperwork-only audit for qualification holders, for example, without a field visit.

Consistency of how audits are conducted and improved responsiveness

- More consistency across audit providers. Moderation of auditors needs to be introduced.
- More responsive auditors. Perhaps limit the number of audits each can do in a time period so they don't become overburdened.
- Technical experts should be nationally qualified, and not just attested to be.

Exemptions, where appropriate

- Exemptions should be introduced for contract instructors who are working under a teacher who is running a secondary school outdoor education programme. Specifically where the teacher is in overall charge of the program and the contract instructor is assisting to allow acceptable instructor to student ratios.

Communication

- Better communication from WorkSafe and improved understanding of the standards by auditors.

Key findings by question

Are you an NZOIA member?

N=111

There were 111 responses received. This included 89 responses from NZOIA members, and 22 responses from non-members.

Have the Adventure Activity Regulations affected you?

N=95

The vast majority of respondents (83%) said that the Adventure Activity Regulations had affected them. Common impacts including increased costs of operation and significant time requirements to ensure compliance. Some operators – particularly those working part time – responded that they now only hired equipment, rather than providing guided experiences. Others said they were no longer able to provide experiences that were less frequently purchased as they had become uneconomic due to the costs of compliance with the regulations.

Positively, some operators said the regulations had helped to ensure a consistent approach to safety and made them more aware of safety requirements. Some respondents said they had gained work through advising other operators on getting their paper work and safety management strategies in order for upcoming audits.

Have you recently been through the Adventure Activity Regulations audit process?

N= 94

Just under half of survey respondents (46%) said they has been through the Adventure Activity Regulations process.

If you have not yet been through an Adventure Activity Regulations audit, why not?

N=46

Most of those that had not been through an audit said this was because it was not required for their business (eg, because it was exempt, or due its low risk), or because the cost of undertaking an audit was too high.

A smaller proportions said they had not gone through an audit because they had stopped offering regulated activities as a result of the cost and time requirements of compliance.

If you have been through an Adventure Activity Regulations audit, which provider did you use?

N=88

The most used audit provider was Skills Active. The next most used were Bureau Veritas, Quality Solutions International and Telarc, in that order. None of the respondents had used SGS, and over one in 10 (13%) selected 'Other'.

Of those that selected 'Other', Outdoorsmark via Outdoors New Zealand was the most commonly referenced provider. Horizons Unlimited was also mentioned.

What led to you to choose this audit provider?

N=44

Cost, proximity and availability were the most common reasons why people chose a particular audit provider. Some respondents said they selected Outdoorsmark (either via Skills Active or ONZ) because of its reputation or because the auditors it provided were recognised industry professionals.

How satisfied were you with the service provided?

N=80

Of those that said this question applied to them (40), half (50%) said they were either highly satisfied or satisfied with the service provided, 12% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 38% said they were either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Half (50%) of the 80 respondents to this question said the question did not apply to them.

Positive comments included: Auditors very friendly and professional, clear and concise process, auditor was a technical expert.

Negative comments included: Poor customer service, disorganised and time consuming, cost, inconsistency in auditing

What was the cost of this exercise?

N=40

A wide range of costs were provided by respondents. These ranged from “very little” to \$15,000.

The majority of respondents said the cost of the audit to their business was in the range of \$1,500 - \$8,000.

Do you feel you got value for money?

N=80

Of the 33 respondents who provided feedback on this question, 18% said they felt they had received value for money. The majority (82%) said felt they had not received value for money from the audit process.

More than half (59%) of respondents said the question did not apply to them.

Did you learn more about safety through undertaking the process?

N=80

More than half (61%) of the 41 respondents who responded to this question said they had learnt more about safety through the audit process. More than a third (39%) said they had not learnt more about safety through the audit process.

Half (49%) of respondents said the question did not apply to them.

Do you value the Adventure Activity audit process?

N=79

Nearly half (47%) of all survey respondents said they valued the Adventure Activity Regulations audit process. A quarter (27%) of respondents said they did not value the process, and a quarter (27%) were unsure.

Do you feel there is a better way?

N=79

More than half (57%) of all survey respondents said they felt there was a better way. A small proportion (4%) said they felt there was no better way, and 39% were unsure.

Areas for improvement identified by respondents included: lower cost for audits, acknowledgement of NZOIA, Skills Active, NZMGA and MSC qualifications as evidence of a person's ability to run an activity safely, better access to instructors in rural communities, collaborative process between industry organisations to share operating procedures, safety strategies etc, different processes for smaller-scale operators, audits of systems only rather than field audits, greater consistency of audits, auditing of schools and clubs that are exempt to ensure they are treated equally, more focus on quality of experience for clients rather than solely on safety, more informed auditors, develop draft contracts for employing contractors and ensure long timeframe for re-auditing to keep time requirements and costs down.

Are there any specific issues with the Adventure Activity Regulation audit process that you would like NZOIA to raise with WorkSafe NZ?

N=78

Two thirds (65%) of respondents said they had specific issues they wanted NZOIA to raise with WorkSafe.

These included:

- Reduce the time requirements and costs of audit for operators.
- More consistency is needed across audit providers. Moderation needs to be introduced.
- Exemption for contract instructors who are working under a teacher who is running a secondary school outdoor education program. Specifically where the teacher is in overall charge of the program and the contract instructor is assisting to allow acceptable instructor to student ratios.
- Keep the audit simple and focused, to prevent it from being so costly.
- More recognition needs to be given to qualifications.
- Technical Experts should be nationally qualified not attested to be.
- If the operation employs nationally recognised qualification holders then they should not require a field visit.
- More timely response from auditors. Perhaps limit the number of audits each can do in a time period so they don't become overburdened.
- Better communication from WorkSafe, including provision of more plain English advice, and improved understanding of the standards by auditors.

Has the introduction of the Adventure Activity Regulations improved the safety of your clients?

N=78

One in six (17%) respondents said the regulations had improved the safety of their clients. More than half (58%) said the regulations had not improved the safety of their clients. A quarter (26%) said the question did not apply to them.

What ongoing costs are you expecting as a result of the regulations?

N=47

Ongoing costs identified by respondents included annual surveillance costs plus three-yearly audits. Additional staff requirements to update and maintain safety management strategies, and to purchase additional safety-related items were also identified as additional costs.

Should NZOIA qualifications be mandatory for activity leaders/instructors?

N= 78

More than a quarter (29%) of respondents said NZOIA qualifications should be mandatory for activity leaders/instructors. Nearly half (47%) said they should not be mandatory, and 23% were unsure.

Do you feel that the benefits of the regulations to the outdoor industry outweigh the costs of compliance?

N= 78

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said the benefits of the regulations outweighed the costs. Just over half (53%) said the benefits did not outweigh the costs, and a quarter (24%) were unsure.