

**Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
Management Board Meeting
7 October 2014**

General Update for Members

Gavin Howat, AALAMG
(Cleared by: Alistair McNab)

Adventure Activities Network

The community web site continues to be well used. There are now 44 members registered. Registration means they can get email notification of updates but there is no need to register to read the community. All of the information material that was marked for transfer to the community was successfully moved over. The community is kept up to date with new material being added from time to time. It is used to promote items and topics of general interest and as a way of promoting important issues from accidents or incidents.

The visitor statistics for the community for the last 6 months are;

Month	Visitors	Visits	Page Requests
Apr 14	544	637	3884
May 14	630	721	4513
Jun 14	609	685	4179
Jul 14	620	716	3796
Aug 14	589	517	3647
Sep 14	Not yet available		

These figures are genuine visits as they exclude visits from HSE staff and the site manager.

We have been unable to progress moving the register of licence holders to the HSE community servers due to the continuing delays in the roll out of the up to date Office suite to HSE.

The HSE web site template has been updated to ensure continued compliance with web accessibility standards and this has been applied to the licence database pages that are hosted by TQS' web hosts. These pages now have the same look and feel as the rest of the HSE web site.

Enforcement Action

A number of incidents remain under investigation with AALS assistance to the investigators where needed. None of these currently involve licensable activities.

One incident involves a licence holder but not a licensable activity. This investigation was stalled for a considerable period of time but has now restarted by the EHO and is close to conclusion.

One incident where a party from a school (not licensable) became stuck on Snowdon with a leader was investigated by HSE and an Improvement Notice was served on the school. The investigating inspector decided not to take prosecution action and the leader was sanctioned by their professional association. A weakness in the safety system was a lack of monitoring of the leader by their employer. The incident has been the basis of an article by Marcus for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors magazine. The relevant information on the community site has been updated.

Other items of interest

Zip wires – the draft on the next edition of the UK Ropes Course Guide is progressing well and is very close to a final text. This now includes zip wires as these are covered by the new EN standard. The new EN is to be published in February 2015 and the UK Guide will be available at the same time. It is intended to continue HSE endorsement of this key piece of industry written guidance.

The recent accidents have not been as a result of equipment failure but are rooted in human factors and or systems issues (the “software”). Some systems may be too complex, not be properly understood by users (including operators, owners etc) or they may be the wrong sort of equipment. These issues were addressed in a document lead authored by Marcus Bailie drawing significantly on material already prepared for AALS use. Although it had been hoped that this might ultimately become an annex to the EN standard, CEN declined to go this route. The material will be incorporated into the Ropes Course Guide instead.

Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC) – at its meeting in September 2014 the AAIAC continued to consider its future as they now have no funding in place and no administrative support. The committee is essentially operating on the goodwill of members and their employers at present. Although it would be unfortunate if AAIAC did cease to operate, there are other sector bodies that we already work with so the loss of AAIAC would not present a situation we could not cope with.

HSE has responded to a consultation on Fatal Accident Inquiries, which inter alia is considering FAI for deaths on foreign soil at the Lord Advocate’s discretion and this could apply to activity deaths. There are proposals though that the extent of investigation etc in the host country would be taken into account.

Royal Yachting Association

The RYA had written to the AALA regarding the inspection arrangements for sailing centres and clubs. We met with them over the summer and can report some positive developments.

A pilot programme is now running to induct some appropriate RYA centre inspectors as AALS freelance inspectors (FLI). These individuals would operate in the same way as any other current FLI with their reports submitted to the relevant AALS senior inspector for review before onward transmission to Cardiff for the final approval and licence issue as appropriate. We are satisfied that the RYA teaching centre inspection process is of a comparable standard to the inspections carried out by AALS. These FLIs will only inspect providers that offer only sailing/windsurfing. If the provider offers other licensable activities such as kayaking then they will continue to be inspected by AALS as now.

Should the pilot be successful, this will eliminate dual inspection of sailing centres by AALS and RYA. This is a significant reduction in inspection for the centre.

Increased vigilance around the Onboard sailing club inspections has revealed a very few providers, that despite presenting themselves as a club were in fact, operating as a business. They are no longer having their fees waived.

Contract Monitoring Visits

Three contract monitoring visits with AALS inspectors have been carried out so far this year. There are no issues to report from these visits.