



national
water safety
forum
Beach Advisory Group



Training Advice for Coasteering Guides

nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk



1.0 Background

The information contained within this document is based on a competence- based training framework, designed to assist coasteering operators and/or training providers to assess the key skills that guides should have while leading a coasteering group. This document does not constitute a formal training syllabus.

Training providers should ensure consistency between their course content and the competences and skills listed within this guidance.

2.0 Scope and Definition

Coasteering involves traversing along a stretch of intertidal zone, often as part of an organised group activity. Participants travel across rocks and through water, using a variety of techniques including climbing, swimming and jumping into water. Coasteering guides and participants wear appropriate clothing and equipment while undertaking coasteering activities.

The training information is based solely for providers offering coasteering activities. Further advice should be sought by operators providing additional activities to the public.

The following advice has been obtained from members of the National Water Safety Forum's Beach Advisory Group – Working Group for Coasteering Safety. Members include: RNLI, RoSPA, MCA, RLSS UK, SLSGB, AALS, AAIAC, coasteering providers, governing bodies and associations.

3.0 Training Requirements

3.1 Age requirements:

To lead a coasteering session, guides will have to demonstrate a high level of leadership skills, technical coasteering abilities, rescue skills and soft skills. It is unusual for candidates to have been able to gain the necessary experience to lead groups before the age of 18 but guides with exceptional experience and skills at a younger age may be considered. It is good practice for all aspirant guides to log all coasteering leadership experiences as evidence of experience prior to assessment.

3.2 Medical declaration requirements:

Meet organisational health requirements.

3.3 Pre-requisite fitness requirements:

All trainee guides must be competent swimmers when wearing appropriate equipment and be able to complete the following fitness requirements prior to the commencement of any other training:

- Guides should be competent and confident in and around the littoral coastal zone.
- Providers or course instructors should test trainee guides in an appropriate environment wearing personal protective clothing using task-based scenarios with relevant skills.

3.4 Training duration and stages:

In many cases, training competences will be completed over a long period while assisting trained and competent guides/instructors. Prior learning and qualifications will provide exemption from certain training requirements, such as existing first aid or lifesaving qualifications.

A 'complete' training course, taking the student from zero or very little knowledge/experience to a base level of competence, will take a minimum of 5 days (approximately 40 hours).

Once competences and skills training are all completed to a satisfactory level, further assessment observing, assisting and leading sessions should be undertaken before final assessment. The following training stages are the base level recommendations but other pathways may be used:

Stage one:

Observe – minimum of two logged coasteering sessions observing a competent guide (until deemed competent).

Stage two:

Assist – minimum of two logged coasteering sessions assisting a competent guide (until deemed competent).

Stage three:

Lead – minimum of two logged coasteering sessions overseen by a competent guide with participant feedback (until deemed competent).

Stage four:

Assessment – candidates should have their skills assessed and recorded by a suitably qualified technical expert.

Training sessions should be a minimum of 2 hours in length. The locations, conditions and groups' abilities should be varied during the sessions.

4.0 Core Training Elements

The following 11 elements are the key skills and competences that guides should complete before guiding a coasteering group (under supervision as detailed above):

1. **Personal skills (pre requisite)**
 2. **Plan a coasteering activity for participants**
 3. **Ensure appropriate equipment is selected and prepared for coasteering planned activity**
 4. **Briefing participants**
 5. **Lead activity safely**
 6. **Maintain physical welfare of group (initiate emergency response)**
 7. **Maintain physical welfare of group (lifesaving)**
 8. **Maintain physical welfare of group (first aid)**
 9. **Lead activity with good environmental awareness and with minimal impact on the environment and wildlife**
 10. **Conduct activity in a professional manner**
 11. **Complete post-activity responsibilities**
- 12. **Evidence of CPD.**

5.0 Skills and Competences Required for Coasteering Guides

This guide has been developed for the coasteering industry as a basis for identifying the minimum knowledge and skills required to guide participants in a coasteering activity.

It does not replace the requirement to develop and maintain sound operational practices including the use of individual risk assessments and the development of normal, standard and emergency operating procedures specific to the organisational needs. See *Best Practice Safety Guidance for Coasteering Providers* for further information.

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
1. Personal skills (pre requisite)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. swim 200m in 5 minutes (swimming pool or an appropriately controlled and risk assessed open water environment) 2. should be competent and confident in and around the littoral coastal zone 3. have sound judgement and attitude to act professionally and safely in the coasteering environment 4. meet organisational health requirements. 	1 hour
2. Plan a coasteering activity for participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. assess the skill level, experience and physical capability of each member of the group 2. establish attainable group objectives 3. select suitable level of activity and site(s) to suit abilities of the group 4. demonstrate knowledge about access and escape 5. obtain and interpret local weather, sea and tidal information relevant to the venue 6. ensure correct guide/client ratios are met, according to operational procedures 7. assess, minimise and eliminate any hazards where possible while forming a risk management plan 8. understand the process of risk assessments, including the difference between a formal and dynamic process. 	4 hours
3. Ensure appropriate equipment is selected and prepared for coasteering planned activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. supervise equipment selection to ensure it is safe and suitable for the planned activity 2. ensure all equipment is fitted and adjusted correctly 3. check safety and rescue equipment to ensure suitability for the planned activity 	2 hours
4. Briefing participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. communicate the aim of the guided activity to participants 2. communicate logistic details to participants 3. brief group on safety procedures 4. explain symptoms and prevention of hypothermia to assist in self-monitoring 5. outline procedure following an incident to a group member 6. 'I need assistance' signal and procedure 7. establish verbal and non-verbal communications system for use during the trip and ensure the participants understand the system 8. establish and demonstrate effective communication systems and SOPs for participants requiring assistance or needing additional support. 	2 hours

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
5. Lead activity safely	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. notify any relevant authorities with details of the activity 2. ensure all participants are properly equipped for the activity 3. identify and respond appropriately to potential hazards 4. decide on how each hazard can be negotiated/avoided 5. recognise situations where a hazard needs to be 'scouted' 6. provide guidance of how to negotiate/avoid the hazard clearly and concisely to the group 7. monitor individual participants performance and needs 8. monitor weather and sea conditions and evaluate implications on plans 9. implement appropriate modifications to the activity with regard to all variable factors being monitored. 	3 hours
6. Maintain physical welfare of group (initiate emergency response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage the activities of the group to maintain the safest situation 2. respond to any emergency or non-routine situation 3. apply the risk management plan 4. initiate and maintain communications with appropriate emergency services. 	2 hours
7. Maintain physical welfare of group (lifesaving)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. be able to implement a hierarchy of rescue (talk, reach, throw, wade, swim, other aid) 2. demonstrate deep-water and shallow-water entry techniques 3. demonstrate techniques for survival in the water including cold-water survival techniques (HELP position) 4. demonstrate casualty assessment, approach and releases 5. be able to perform a range of contact and non-contact tows over 50m 6. be able to use rescue equipment common in the industry (throw lines, PRE and rescue tubes). 	8 hours (or ILS-recognised lifesaving qualification) RLSS UK and SLSGB deliver bespoke lifesaving courses for coastering guides
8. Maintain physical welfare of group (first aid)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provide emergency care appropriate to the environment and potential risks including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ basic life support ✓ management of hypothermia/hyperthermia (including sunburn) ✓ management of severe bleeding ✓ management of fractures including suspected spinal injuries ✓ management of stings from marine creatures ✓ management of minor injuries (including sprains and twists) ✓ management of head injuries. 	8 hours (or an HSE-recognised qualification that includes the competences listed)
9. Lead activity with good environmental awareness and with minimal impact on the environment and wildlife	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. show knowledge of any access issues/ land ownership/conservation areas covering the coastering location especially any site-specific access agreements to protect the environment/ wildlife 2. minimise disturbance to wildlife/damage to environment during activity 3. lead activity with respect for other users of the coast 4. leave sites clean and tidy 5. brief group to maintain modesty when changing into and out of kit and ensure groups use appropriate toilet facilities. 	3 hours

Element	Performance Criteria	Nominal Duration
10. Conduct activity in a professional manner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. control the group to maintain a safe enjoyable atmosphere 2. provide clear and concise direction and advice to the group during the activity 3. provide encouragement and show empathy 4. use positive words throughout the activity to refer to participants and avoid using negative or disparaging words 5. avoid negative statements about own organisation, commercial competitors, public bodies and other individuals. 	4 hours
11. Complete post-activity responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. notify any relevant authority of activity completion 2. complete any post-activity administration as per procedures 3. retrieve, inspect, repair and store (or retire) equipment according to procedures 4. evaluate, including participant feedback, all aspects of the activity 5. suggest modifications if needed. 	3 hours
Total training duration = Approximately 40 hours		

8.0 Suggested Training Pathway – Overview


Trainee Guide



PART 1 PRE-REQUISITE/ENTRY SKILLS

1. Personal skills and evidence of prior learning and experience
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PART 2 GAINING QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

2. Plan a coasteering activity for participants
 3. Ensure appropriate equipment is selected and prepared for coasteering planned activity
 4. Briefing participants
 5. Lead activity safely
 6. Maintain physical welfare of group (initiate emergency response)
 7. Maintain physical welfare of group (lifesaving)
 8. Maintain physical welfare of group (first aid)
 9. Lead activity with good environmental awareness and with minimal impact on the environment and wildlife
 10. Conduct activity in a professional manner
 11. Complete post-activity responsibilities
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PART 3 POST COURSE/LEARNING


Stage one: Observe – minimum of two logged coasteering sessions observing a competent guide (until deemed competent).

Stage two: Assist – minimum of two logged coasteering sessions assisting a competent guide (until deemed competent).

Stage three: Lead – minimum of two logged coasteering sessions overseen by a competent guide with participant feedback (until deemed competent).

Stage four: Assessment – Candidates should have their skills assessed and recorded by a suitably qualified technical expert.

Retake stage 3 and relevant competencies if deemed to be not competent at assessment stage



Competent Guide



PART 4 RE-CERTIFICATION/TRAINING

Certified elements (as required by the certifying body such as RLSS UK) and repeat training for all elements if no guiding has taken place for 5 years or more. It is recommended that guides have a personal development plan.

Further Information

NWSF	C/o Beach Safety Manager www.rnli.org.uk
AALS	Adventure Activities Licensing Service www.aals.org.uk
AAIAC	www.ccpr.org.uk
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency www.mcga.gov.uk
RoPSA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents www.rospace.com
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution www.rnli.org.uk
RLSS UK	Royal Lifesaving Society UK www.lifesavers.org.uk
SLSGB	Surf Life Saving Great Britain www.slsgb.org.uk
SLSAW	Surf Life Saving Association Wales www.slsawales.org



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