



Safety Guidelines
Commercial white-water-
boarding operations
Revised April 2011



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About these guidelines

These guidelines set out the recommended minimum standards for commercial operations that use river sledges, river boards, body boards and river bugs on rivers. They do not apply to tubing or tube rafting on rivers, or to body boards used at sea or on lakes.

Training of white-water-boarding guides should result in the guides being assessed to the national white water boarding guides award. These guidelines anticipate training being consolidated into the national standard which is administered by Skills Active Aotearoa.

The national standard for senior guides and guides will cover the minimum entry requirements for all personnel involved in commercial white-water-boarding activities.

Skills Active Aotearoa has developed the standard, with input from commercial river-boarding and sledging operators, guides and Maritime New Zealand (MNZ).

These guidelines provide a reference for Qualmark audits of commercial river-boarding, river-sledging or river-bug operations.

MNZ has developed these guidelines in consultation with:

- Tourism Industry Association
- Qualmark
- Water Safety New Zealand
- New Zealand Whitewater Boarding Association (currently represented by the New Zealand Rafting Association)
- Skills Active Aotearoa
- Fogz Have More Fun
- Serious Fun River Surfing
- Mad Dog River Boarding
- Kaitiaki Adventures
- Sledgeabout
- Kiwi Xtreme
- Kaitiaki Adventures – Dam Dropping.

These guidelines remain the responsibility of MNZ and are issued under the terms of its statutory responsibility for promoting safe use of navigable craft. MNZ will accept feedback on these guidelines and intends to review and update them from time to time, as required.

Health and safety obligations

These guidelines reflect the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (HSE Act) and the Maritime Transport Act 1994 (MTA).

'White-water boards' are defined within these guidelines as including river boards, river sledges and river bugs. When these craft are used to navigate rivers for commercial operations, they can fall within the MTA's definition of ships. MNZ administers the MTA and is the designated agency for administering the HSE Act for workplace activities on board ships and for ships as places of work.

The HSE Act requires employers, employees and people responsible for controlling places of work to ensure that no direct or indirect harm arises in the place of work, or from workplace activities that may affect the safety of employees, contractors, volunteers or other people in the vicinity of the workplace. The Act also requires employers to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees while at work. It requires employers to take a systematic approach to the management of workplace hazards, including identifying and assessing the significance of hazards, as well as implementing management strategies and processes that either eliminate, isolate or minimise hazards.

In accordance with section 30 MNZ inspectors will liaise with and provide information and education to the white water boarding sector to help employers, employees, and other persons to improve safety at places of work and the safety of people at work

Commercial white-water-boarding operations – guidance notes

Qualifications for guides

Training and assessment requirements for senior guides and guides have been developed by Skills Active Aotearoa and are reflected in these guidelines.

River signals

Standard New Zealand Rafting Association (NZRA) hand and whistle signals should be used, to provide some consistency with the kayak and rafting sector. This will enable guides in each discipline to readily communicate rescue information to each other over a distance or above the noise of a river.

Commercial white-water-boarding operations

Definitions

In these guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

Act means the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

audited safety plan, referring to a commercial white-water-boarding operation, means the safety plan that:

- a) applies to the commercial white-water-boarding operation
- b) has been audited by a third-party auditor.

award-issuing organisation means an industry training organisation authorised to issue New Zealand white-water-boarding guide and senior guide awards.

commercial white water board means a white water board which is used by participants undertaking a river trip with a commercial white water boarding operation.

commercial white-water-boarding operation means any activity that:

- a) is undertaken on a river
- b) involves the carriage and guidance of fare-paying participants or trainee guides on a river sledge, river board, body board or river bug.

commercial white-water-boarding operator or **operator**:

- a) means the person who is, for the time being, responsible for managing a commercial white-water-boarding operation
- b) includes a person who intends to conduct a commercial white-water-boarding operation
- c) does *not* include a guide.

Director means the Director of Maritime New Zealand.

guide means a person, not including a trainee guide, who:

- a) has successfully completed training and assessment as a national white-water-boarding guide or national senior guide and holds a national white water boarding award, and/or
- b) organises or assists participants or trainee guides on a commercial white-water-boarding trip.

major modification, referring to a commercial white-water board, means an alteration or modification to the board that involves the replacement, removal or addition of:

- a) any part of the commercial board that is likely to significantly affect the structural integrity, participant-carrying capacity, water tightness, inherent buoyancy or stability
- b) any safety equipment of the commercial board, other than the direct replacement of equipment.

national white water boarding award means a national white water boarding award that has been issued by an award-issuing organisation; and includes a senior national white water boarding award

New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) means the qualifications authority established by Part 20 of the Education Act 1989.

participant, referring to commercial white-water boarding operation, means any person using a white-water board to assist with flotation while navigating a stretch of river, other than a person who has been assessed as a white-water-boarding guide or a trainee guide.

safety boat means a kayak, white-water board or raft used to support the safety management of a white-water-boarding trip.

safety plan means the documented policies and procedures that outline how the day-to-day operations are conducted safely.

sole-guided white-water-boarding trip means a trip led by a single guide without the support of another white-water-boarding guide or a safety craft, but includes the use of a back-up guide.

third-party auditor or **auditor** means the people or organisations who audit the operator's safety plan.¹

trainee guide means a person who is in the process of completing the training requirements specified for a white-water-boarding guide.²

trip leader means a senior guide who the operator has given the overall on-river responsibility for safe management of the white-water-boarding trip.

white-water board means:

- a) a plastic or foam river sledge or hydro-speed
- b) a foam, plastic or inflatable river board
- c) a foam ocean-wave-riding body board
- d) an inflatable river bug.

but does *not* include tubes or tube rafts.

white-water-boarding assessor or **assessor** means a senior guide who has sufficient experience and instructional ability to train and assess guides and senior guides. Assessors should be identified by the award-issuing organisation.

white-water-boarding guide means a guide who has been assessed by an assessor as competent to the national white water boarding guide award, including those who hold a **senior white-water-boarding guide award**.

1 It is noted that in December 2010, Cabinet agreed, following the adventure tourism review, that regulations be made under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 requiring operators to be registered, after obtaining a safety audit from an accredited provider. While the regulations are due to come into force in on 1 October 2011, external audits commenced before this date and completed before 31 March 2012 may be recognised for a transitional period, up to three years. In the meantime, under these guidelines, options for third-party auditors include MNZ, Qualmark, Outdoorsmark, and regional council harbourmasters.

2 On commercial white-water-boarding trips, visiting guides from other white-water-boarding operations or international guides accompanying a trip for observation purposes are to be considered trainee guides.

Application of these guidelines

These guidelines:

- apply to commercial white-water-boarding operations on rivers that involve participants being carried on a white-water board
- also apply to any vocational training of white-water-boarding guides
- do *not* apply to recreational or sporting events that involve white-water boarding on a river.

Prerequisites for conducting commercial white-water-boarding operations

Safety plan

1. Commercial white-water boarding operators should prepare a safety plan
 - a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should prepare a safety plan for each commercial white-water-boarding operation they manage.
 - b) The safety plan should:
 - i) be prepared in accordance with the requirements of these guidelines (see schedule A)
 - ii) include the safety practices (if any) that apply to the particular river(s) or river sections on which the white-water-boarding operation is to be carried out
 - iii) include evidence of consultative process being used to establish river-specific safety practices. To provide consistent safety practices for specific hazards, these safety practices should be reflected in the safety plans of all commercial boarding operators on the same river.
 - c) The safety practices referred to in guidelines 1(b)(ii) and (iii) should be determined by the operators and guides after consulting with MNZ, NZRA and other appropriate persons, to ensure commercial white-water-boarding operations can be safely carried out on that river and that safety practices for specific significant hazards are consistent.
 - d) Operators should review safety practices on a regular basis and the practices should be monitored during the audit process. Any developments and changes in safety practices should be notified to MNZ.
 - e) MNZ will manage the consultative process for determining river-specific practices for each river that has commercial boarding operations.
2. Requirements for approval of safety plans
 - a) Before approving a safety plan, the auditor should be satisfied that:
 - i) they have contacted MNZ to ensure they have the most current version of these guidelines and any river-specific safety practices established under 1(b)(ii) and (iii)
 - ii) the safety plan complies with these guidelines

- iii) the results of the audit of the commercial white-water-boarding operation that the safety plan relates to are satisfactory
 - iv) the results of the inspection of every commercial white-water board and equipment that the safety plan relates to are satisfactory.
- b) If the auditor considers that the safety plan should not be approved, they should:
- i) notify the commercial white-water-boarding operator in writing
 - ii) specify the amount of time the commercial white-water-boarding operator has to rectify the non-compliance to the auditor's satisfaction
 - iii) not approve the safety plan if the operator fails to rectify the non-compliance to the auditor's satisfaction within the time specified. The auditor should then inform the Director of the non-approval of the safety plan, and the Director may initiate a follow-up audit or inspection.
3. Review of audited safety plans
- a) To identify continuous improvement opportunities, a commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure the audited safety plan is reviewed:
 - i) at least once every 12 months
 - ii) as soon as practical after every accident, incident or mishap.
 - b) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that every review of their audited safety plan is recorded, including:
 - i) a summary of conclusions
 - ii) every action taken as a result of the review.
 - c) Commercial white-water-boarding operators should make their audited safety plans and audit reports available to the Director at all reasonable times.

Audit and inspection of commercial white-water-boarding operations and white-water boards

4. Initial audit of commercial white-water-boarding operations
- a) Before the auditor approves a safety plan, the commercial white-water-boarding operator should arrange for the auditor to audit the commercial white-water-boarding operation.
 - b) The purpose of the initial audit is to enable the auditor to determine whether the commercial white-water-boarding operation complies with these guidelines.
 - c) If, as a result of the initial audit, the auditor considers the safety plan should not be approved, the auditor should notify the commercial white-water-boarding operator, in accordance with clause 2(b).
 - d) If the commercial white-water-board operator fails to rectify the non-compliance to the satisfaction of the auditor within the time specified, the auditor should not approve the safety plan.
5. Subsequent audits of commercial white-water-boarding operations
- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should arrange for the auditor to carry out subsequent audits of the white-water-boarding operation at intervals of no longer than two

years, subject to the Director requiring, under Section 54 of the MTA, audits to be carried out more frequently.³

- b) The purpose of each subsequent audit is to enable the auditor to determine whether the commercial white-water-boarding operation continues to comply with the audited safety plan and the requirements of these guidelines.
- c) If, as a result of a subsequent audit, the auditor considers the commercial white-water-boarding operation does not comply with the audited safety plan, or these guidelines, the auditor should:
 - i) notify the operator in writing
 - ii) specify the amount of time the operator has to rectify the non-compliance to the auditor's satisfaction
 - iii) notify the Director if the commercial white-water-boarding operator fails to rectify the non-compliance to the auditor's satisfaction within the time specified. The Director may then initiate a follow-up health and safety in employment audit or inspection.

6. Initial inspection of commercial white-water boards

- a) Before the auditor approves the safety plan, the operator should arrange for the auditor to do an initial inspection of every commercial white-water board and the safety equipment involved in the commercial white-water-boarding operation.
- b) The purpose of the initial inspection is to enable the auditor to determine whether every commercial white-water board, its fittings and the equipment used with it comply with the provisions of these guidelines, and to approve the type of white-water board(s) as suitable for that white-water-boarding operation.
- c) If, as a result of the initial inspection, the auditor considers that the safety plan should not be audited, they should notify the commercial white-water-board operator, in accordance with clause 2(b).
- d) If the commercial white-water-board operator fails to rectify the non-compliance to the satisfaction of the auditor within the time specified, the auditor should not approve the safety plan.

7. Subsequent inspections of commercial white-water boards

- a) After an initial inspection, every commercial white-water-boarding operator should arrange for the auditor to do a subsequent inspection:
 - i) of every commercial white-water board at intervals of no longer than two years
 - ii) of a commercial white-water board following a major modification to that board.
- b) The purpose of a subsequent inspection is to enable the auditor to determine whether every commercial white-water board and its fittings and equipment comply with these guidelines, and are of a type audited for that commercial white-water-boarding operation.
- c) If, as a result of a subsequent inspection, the auditor considers that a commercial white-water board or its fittings or equipment do not comply with these guidelines, the auditor should notify the commercial white-water-board operator, in accordance with clause 2(b).
- d) If the commercial white-water-boarding operator fails to rectify the non-compliance to the satisfaction of the auditor within the time specified, the auditor should notify the Director. The Director may then initiate a follow-up health and safety in employment audit or inspection.

³ Audit frequency may change depending on the regulations to be made for safety audits as part of Cabinets decisions on the implementation of the adventure tourism review

Compliance audits and inspections

8. Commercial white-water-boarding operations should not be conducted without meeting the audit and/or inspection requirements of these guidelines
 - a) No person should conduct a commercial white-water-boarding operation unless that person has successfully completed an initial or subsequent audit and/or inspection for that commercial white-water-boarding operation, in accordance with these guidelines.
 - b) The Director may require a commercial white-water-boarding operator to undergo inspections and audits that the Director considers necessary in the interests of safety. The audits and inspections may be conducted under section 54 of the MTA or section 31 of the HSE Act, to determine that these guidelines and safety requirements are being followed.

White-water-boarding guides – responsibilities and requirements

9. Responsibilities of commercial white-water-boarding operators in relation to guides
 - a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should not use any guide in the operation of any commercial white-water boarding who does not meet the requirements of these guidelines.
10. Guides to comply with audited safety plans
 - a) A guide of a commercial white-water-boarding trip should ensure the white-water-boarding trip is operated in accordance with the audited safety plan and these guidelines.

Guide medical and physical fitness

11. Guides to be medically and physically fit
 - a) A guide of a commercial white-water-boarding trip should:
 - i) be physically fit to work as a guide
 - ii) disclose to their employer any medical conditions that may affect their ability to safely carry out required work functions.
 - b) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should not allow a white-water-boarding trip to proceed where, in the opinion of that operator, the guide for that white-water-boarding trip is impaired by the effects or after-effects of alcohol or other drug use.

Qualifications for guides

12. Guides to hold relevant qualifications
 - a) A person must not act as a guide of a commercial white-water-boarding trip unless that person:
 - i) holds the national white-water-boarding award, and
 - ii) meets the requirements specified in the operator's approved safe operational plan for staff selection, training and supervision.
 - b) Every senior white-water-boarding guide who carries out white-water-boarding guide duties should attend training to maintain currency in river-rescue skills at intervals of no longer than 36 months and:
 - i) such training should be to a level consistent with the river-rescue skills requirement detailed in the national senior white-water-boarding guide award
 - ii) evidence that the training requirements have been met should be confirmed either by a certificate of participation in a course of training in river-rescue skills, or by a white-

water-boarding assessor writing that the guide has successfully completed a course of training in river-rescue skills.

- c) The evidence required in clause 12(b) (ii) should either be kept with the safety plan, or its location referenced in the safety plan.

13. Guides to hold current first aid certificate

- a) Every white-water-boarding guide who carries out white-water-boarding guide duties should hold a current first aid certificate that certifies that the guide has received training and is competent to provide first aid in accordance with the following NZQA unit standards:
 - i) NZQA unit standards 6400 for a white-water-boarding guide
 - ii) NZQA unit standards 424 for a senior white-water-boarding guide.
- b) The auditor may accept an alternative first aid certificate as meeting the requirements of clause 13(a) if satisfied that the holder has received training to an equivalent or higher standard.

Participant safety information

14. Information about safety and risk

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that the following information, or information with substantially the same effect is communicated to each participant:

“White-water boarding is an adventure activity with a degree of risk. Participants should be aware that they will be controlling their own white-water board and the commercial white-water-boarding operator cannot guarantee your safety. In any white-water activity, there is an inherent risk of drowning.”
- b) Participants should sign a statement of risk and assumption of risk form prior to participating in commercial white-water-boarding operations, to ensure they understand the risks involved.

15. Additional information for participants on white-water-boarding trips

- a) Before setting off on a trip, the commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that every participant is informed that:
 - i) the trip is physically demanding and requires the participant to be comfortable and confident in the water. There is also the potential for the participant to be unexpectedly drawn underwater by the effects of river hydraulics, and holding onto the board is critical to the safety of the activity
 - ii) on trips using body boards with a wrist leash, there is potential for entanglement.

16. Instruction in river awareness and white-water-board handling procedures.

- a) Before each white-water-boarding trip, the guide should ensure participants are adequately instructed in river awareness and white-water-board handling procedures commensurate to the nature of the rapids encountered, including as appropriate:
 - i) familiarisation with and warning about the hazards of the waters to be white-water-boarded
 - ii) procedures for routine white-water-board handling and deep-water and/or shallow-water turning techniques
 - iii) procedures for emergencies – rock and wall avoidance, entrapment avoidance, shielding from shallow rocks, separation from the board, receiving a throw rope
 - iv) familiarity with holding the handle on the white-water board to maintain control and protect hands from rocks or other craft impact, if required

- v) general safety precautions.

17. Safety briefing information

- a) An operator of a commercial white-water board should ensure that a safety briefing card, photos or video are available to help participants understand the verbal briefing and demonstrations about entrapment avoidance and ferry angles for safe manoeuvring. The safety briefing card, photos, videos or demonstrations should be clear, simple and effective in communicating safety procedures to participants.

18. Unsafe persons should not participate in commercial white-water boarding

- a) A guide of a commercial white-water-boarding trip should not permit a person to participate in the white-water-boarding trip if the guide believes the person to be in such a state of impairment that he or she may be a hazard to themselves or to any person on the white-water-boarding trip, including the participant's safety potentially being compromised due to language barriers.

Commercial white-water boards and related equipment

19. Commercial white-water boards and equipment to be kept in good order

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that all commercial white-water boards used by that operator, and the fittings and equipment for them, are fit for purpose.
- b) In the case of a commercial white-water board on hire or loan from another commercial white-water-boarding operation, the commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure the board and its fittings and equipment are fit for purpose.
- c) All commercial white-water boards should be fitted with a grab or tow handle at the front of the board.
- d) Body boards used for white-water-boarding operations should not be used on shallow rivers where the participant may require protection from rocks. Use of appropriate white-water boards must be established under the consultative process and detailed in the safety practices required for specific rivers.
- e) Every commercial white-water-board operator should ensure the white-water boards it uses are of a type approved by the auditor for use by that operation.

20. Other safety requirements for commercial white-water boards

- a) Every commercial white-water-board operator should ensure that:
 - i) every commercial white-water board used by that operator maintains positive buoyancy
 - ii) if applicable, any inflatable commercial white-water board used by that operator will retain the pressure necessary for its safe operation throughout the duration of the trip
 - iii) The size of a body board for each participant should be consistent with the sizing ratios recommended for ocean wave riding
 - iv) every commercial white-water board that is **out of service** is separated from any serviceable white-water boards or is clearly and visibly marked with words indicating the white-water board is out of service.

21. Equipment carried on commercial white-water-boarding trips

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure the following equipment is carried on the river for every commercial white-water-boarding trip:

- i) a first aid kit consistent with the recommendations in the Department of Labour's *First Aid for Workplaces – A Good Practice Guide* (September 2009), as may be amended by the Department from time to time
- ii) at least one communication device capable of initiating an emergency response.

22. Equipment carried by guides on commercial white-water-boarding trips

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure the following equipment is carried on the river by all guides for every commercial white-water-boarding trip:⁴
 - i) a knife
 - ii) a whistle
 - iii) a length of webbing
 - iv) a rescue rope of a type and length to be effective on the river boarded on
 - v) two carabiners
 - vi) two prussic cords.

23. Participant personal flotation devices

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should provide every participant with a personal flotation device (PFD).
- b) The PFD should have a minimum buoyancy rating of 71 newtons⁵. The 71 newton PFD should always be used with a wetsuit that has long sleeves and full-length legs to provide additional buoyancy for the torso. Additional buoyancy provided by wetsuits is not required if participants are using a 100 newton PFD, but the use of a long-legged wetsuit is still recommended to protect participants' legs from any impacts.
- c) To allow a phase-in period, all operators must ensure that all white-water-boarding PFDs meet the 71 newton buoyancy rating by 1st April 2013. Before this date, any PFDs that are below 71 newton should have a minimum buoyancy of 50 newtons and be used with a minimum of 5 mm full length wetsuit.
- d) The PFD should have adjustable shoulder straps and a minimum of three securing straps with side-tensioning adjustment buckles. One securing strap should be positioned at the bottom of the PFD below the foam inserts, to prevent the PFD riding up. Bottom securing may be a tension or crotch strap if it is difficult to fit the participant into the PFD properly.
- e) There should be no buoyancy on the sides of the PFD, to enable it to be firmly fastened.
- f) Specialist river-boarding PFDs with reduced abdominal foam inserts should be clearly labelled as being only for river-boarding applications.
- g) The PFD should have the ability to be securely clipped by a carabiner during emergency situations. This attachment point may be provided by the shoulder strap. In any arrangement other than the shoulder strap, the attachment point should be part of a full integrated harness.
- h) The PFD should be periodically checked to ensure it is fit for purpose and has maintained its buoyancy and overall sound condition.

⁴ All white-water boards used by guides should be fitted with an attachment point to enable the white-water board to be lowered or supported at an entrapment site. Guides should have a releasable belt and buckle on their personal flotation device, or another arrangement to allow them to perform lowered or supported rescues.

⁵ PFDs for use by children must have a minimum buoyancy of 49newtons

- i) PFDs that are no longer fit for purpose or are no longer within the buoyancy range should not be used for commercial white-water-boarding operations.
- j) A guide of a commercial white-water board should ensure that every participant is correctly fitted with a PFD. The PFD should be firmly fastened before that participant enters the water, and its fit maintained throughout the trip.

24. Helmets

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that every participant on a commercial white-water-boarding trip is provided with a helmet suitable for white-water boarding.
- b) A guide of a commercial white-water board should check that every helmet is properly fitted to the participant before they enter the water, and its fit maintained throughout the trip.

25. Clothing and footwear

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that every participant wears a full-body wetsuit (long-legged and long-sleeved).⁶
- b) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that every participant is equipped and correctly fitted with an appropriate set of fins

White-water-boarding trip – operational requirements

26. No commercial white-water-boarding operations on grade 6 rapids

- a) Commercial white-water-boarding operations should not be carried out on grade 6 rapids.

27. Hours of operation

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding trip should only be carried out between sunrise and 30 minutes before sunset.

28. River and weather conditions

- a) The trip leader of the commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure the prevailing and forecast river and weather conditions for the relevant time and region are identified and considered before setting out on any white-water-boarding trip.

29. Other checks before trips

- a) Before any white-water board is operated on a river, a guide should:
 - i) inspect the white-water board for wear or damage, ensuring that all bungs on plastic sledges are functional
 - ii) ensure that any impact or entrapment hazards are minimised by properly stowing and securing all loose equipment and other objects, including loops and ends of rope.

30. Responsible person off-river

- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator and every guide of a commercial white-water-boarding trip should ensure that, throughout the trip, there is a responsible person off-river who is:
 - i) aware of the white-water-boarding trip details, including:
 - the guides involved

⁶ Where an operator requires a participant to use a PFD with a buoyancy of 100 newtons, only a long-legged wetsuit is required to be worn.

- the number and names of participants
 - the river and sections of river being run
 - the estimated time of return.
- ii) able to initiate any emergency action in accordance with the audited safety plan of that commercial white-water-boarding operator.
31. Sole guides should always have adequate back-up
- a) Sole-guided white-water-boarding trips should only be considered for rivers with grade 1 and 2 rapids, and only if the rapids are easily navigated. The guide should be able to access the entire river section along the banks, so that assistance can be provided if a participant becomes separated from the group.
 - b) In the case of sole-guided white-water-board trips, a commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that a suitably experienced white-water-boarding guide is provided as back-up, who is capable of taking over the guide duties for the trip where:
 - i) the guide has become incapacitated, or
 - ii) the guide becomes separated from the participants, or
 - iii) the guide is, for any other reason, unable to continue to guide the trip safely.
 - c) The support guide required under clause 31(b) may be provided on- or off-river, but should be available at all times during the white-water-board trip.
 - d) The participant-to-guide ratio for sole-guided trips should not exceed three participants to one guide.
32. No sole-guided white-water-boarding trips on rapids graded 3 and above
- a) The operator of a commercial white-water-boarding operation should ensure that no sole-guided commercial white-water-boarding trip is conducted on rapids graded 3 or above.
 - b) The guide of a sole-guided commercial white-water-board trip should ensure that the white-water-board trip is not conducted on rapids graded 3 or above.
33. Persons on commercial white-water-boarding trips not to be a risk to safety
- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that procedures are in place to prevent any person from taking part in any white-water-boarding trip where, in the opinion of the operator, that person is affected by injury, medical conditions or by the consumption of alcohol or other drugs to such a degree that they may be a risk to the safety of themselves or any other person on the white-water-boarding trip.
 - b) The guide of a commercial white-water-boarding trip should not permit any person to take part, or continue to take part, in a white-water-boarding trip where, in the opinion of the guide, that person is affected by injury, medical conditions or by the consumption of alcohol or other drugs to such a degree that they may be a risk to the safety of themselves or any other person on the white-water-boarding trip.
34. Record keeping
- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should keep a written record of:
 - i) every commercial white-water-boarding trip undertaken
 - ii) the names of the guides on every commercial white-water-boarding trip
 - iii) the names of the participants on every commercial white-water-boarding trip

- iv) every accident, incident or mishap involving a commercial white-water board of the commercial white-water-boarding operator
 - v) the first aid qualification held by each guide and the expiry date of the qualification
 - vi) the fulfilment of the requirements specified in the operator's audited safety plan for staff selection and training, and supervision of staff
 - vii) records of all guide qualifications held and rescue training completed, as required in clause 12.
- b) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should retain and, if requested, must make available to an MNZ inspector at all reasonable times the information specified in clause 34 for the following periods:
- i) 34(a) (i) – (iii) for 12 months after trips
 - ii) 34(a) (iv) permanently
 - iii) 34(a) (v) – (vii) for the period of the guide's employment with the operator.

Commercial white-water-boarding trips – participant numbers and guides

35. Commercial white-water-boarding operators should establish maximum participant numbers and participant-to-guide ratios and detail them as river-specific practices for each river where commercial white-water-boarding operations are conducted as required under clause 1. Participant numbers and ratios may vary between rivers of the same grade as well as at different river levels.

Unless approved otherwise under river-specific practises, participant number and guide ratios should satisfy the following criteria:

- a) participant numbers and participant-to-guide ratios should be audited by the auditor in the safety plan for each river
 - b) participant numbers not to exceed 12 persons on any trip
 - c) two guides per trip, with one a senior guide
 - d) one guide for every four participants.
36. If approved under river specific practices a white-water-boarding operator may run trips with higher participant numbers or lower ratios of guides to participants when additional safety measures are taken. Such measures may include increasing the number of senior guides, using safety craft, confining operations to specified river levels where hazards are minimised, and being satisfied that participants have relevant river experience
- a) In all cases, the operator should ensure that on every trip:
 - i) the applicable maximum number of participants and participant-to-guide ratios are not exceeded
 - ii) one of the senior guides fulfils the function of the trip leader guide, as required by these guidelines
 - iii) the guides are experienced at the grade of river and have the required level of familiarity with the river that is being boarded on.
37. Grade 5 rapids
- a) A commercial white-water-boarding operator should ensure that commercial white-water-board trips on grade 5 rapids:

- i) are led by a minimum of two senior white-water-boarding guides
- ii) have one of the senior white-water-boarding guides fulfil the function of the trip leader guide, as required by these guidelines
- iii) use guides who are experienced at the grade of river and have the required level of familiarity on the river being boarded on, as detailed in the operator's safety plan
- iv) have a guide-to-participant ratio of not less than one guide for every participant
- v) have a maximum participant number not exceeding four persons.

38. Position of guides

- a) Guides undertaking commercial white-water-boarding trips should maintain visual contact with all of the white-water-boarding participants and white-water-boarding guides undertaking the same trip.
- b) A guide on a white-water-boarding trip should be positioned so that they can address any safety matters and, where necessary, should be positioned as a precaution for rapids with difficult passage.

39. Rapids with difficult passage

- a) For rapids with passage that may be difficult to recognise from the water, or that require specific manoeuvring to negotiate or represent a significant hazard, a guide of a commercial white-water-board operation should ensure that:
 - i) every rapid is observed and analysed before running
 - ii) a route through the rapid is described to every participant before running the rapid
 - iii) any additional safety precautions are in place before running the rapid, including, as appropriate:
 - a running strategy
 - providing a guide in a position and with the means to recover a person from the river
 - instructing participants on self-rescue techniques
 - portage options.

Classification of rapids

40. Information about classification of rapids

- a) The allocation of a grade of rapids to particular rivers or sections of river may be limited by time, area, prevailing conditions (including the flow regime of the river) and any combination of these factors.
- b) After consulting with the auditor, MNZ, NZRA and other appropriate groups or individuals, operators and guides may allocate or reallocate a grade of rapids to a particular river or section of river, taking into account the classification of rapids as set out in Schedule B of these guidelines.

Vocational training for trainee guides

41. Supervision of trainee guides

- a) Every commercial white-water-boarding operator that provides vocational training for trainee guides should ensure a training rationale is detailed in the safety plan, including:

- i) procedures for permitting a trainee guide to control a white-water-boarding trip, or part of a white-water-board trip, while under supervision
- ii) procedures to be followed when trainee guides participate in simulated incidents and mishaps to test rescue, recovery and emergency response skills
- iii) procedures to ensure the necessary equipment is carried or worn by trainee guides, as specified in the safety plan
- iv) procedures for senior white-water-boarding guides to supervise trainee guides when they are instructing participants and/or giving demonstrations.

Schedule A – Information to be included in a safety plan

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Areas of commercial white-water-boarding operations

1. Areas of commercial white-water-boarding operations

Maps or plans detailing the areas of commercial white-water-boarding operations and their environs, showing at least the following information:

- trip start points
- trip finish points
- access/egress points to the river in emergencies, or to enable participants to exit the trip, such as roads, tracks and helicopter landing areas
- pick-up routes for shuttle drivers
- significant rapids
- significant hazards on the river
- notable features, such as bridges, power lines and gorges
- reception areas for mobile phones, radios, other communication devices and position-indicating systems
- grid references for important locations.

Commercial white-water boards

2. Design specifications and types of commercial white-water board

The safety plan should include:

- the design specifications and types of commercial white-water boards required to safely negotiate specific rivers.
- the policies for ensuring that only audited commercial white-water boards are used in the operation
- any limitations on the use of body boards for shallow river operations
- surf wax being applied to all body boards prior to use, to increase friction and enhance board control.

3. Procedure for ensuring no sub-standard commercial white-water board is in use

Details of how the operator ensures that no commercial white-water board is operated in a sub-standard condition (for example, a schedule of inspection, a maintenance schedule, a retirement policy for white-water boards, and procedures for white-water boards that are out of service).

Equipment

4. Design specifications and types of equipment and clothing

The design specifications and types of equipment and clothing required to ensure people are properly equipped to lead and participate in commercial white-water-boarding operations on a river (for example, personal flotation devices (PFDs), helmets, wetsuits, fins, and rescue and first aid kits).

5. Ensuring all equipment and clothing is up to standard

How the operator ensures that all equipment and clothing used for the commercial white-water-boarding operation:

- is kept in good condition
- is supplied in sufficient quantity and size
- has a size of body board consistent with surf-riding body weight-to-board size guidelines (available from manufacturers).

6. Equipment carried by guides

Procedures to ensure that guides carry or wear personal rescue equipment appropriate to the river being white-water-boarded.

Mandatory rescue equipment to be carried by all guides includes a knife, a whistle, two carabiners, two prussic cords, a length of webbing and a rescue rope.

7. Clothing

The type of clothing to be worn by guides and participants, to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Guides

8. Skills and experience required by guides

The skills and experience required by guides who are to participate in the commercial white-water-boarding operation. The policies for employing people who have the skills and experience required by these guidelines.

9. Ensuring guides can safely lead white-water-boarding trips

Details of how the commercial white-water-boarding operator ensures that every person they employ as a guide can safely lead white-water-boarding trips on the rivers it operates on.

How the commercial white-water boarding operator ensures its guides can safely lead white-water-boarding trips, including:

- training required
- assessments
- qualifications
- supervision
- limitations relating to the use of guides who hold certain awards
- reviews
- induction training
- skill development
- minimum trips.

10. Job descriptions of guides

The job descriptions of the guides employed by the commercial white-water-boarding operator, including the principal tasks and responsibilities of the guides in relation to safety.

11. Ensuring guides are medically and physically fit to work as guides

- a) Details of how the operator ensures that guides are medically and physically fit to work as guides. These measures should specify arrangements the operator has in place to ensure guides do not take part in any white-water-boarding trip where, in the opinion of the operator, a guide is impaired by the effects, including after-effects, of alcohol or other drug use.
- b) Procedures for guides to follow where, in the opinion of a guide, it is no longer safe to permit another guide to take part, or continue to take part, in a white-water-boarding trip because the person is impaired by injury, illness or the effects, including after-effects, of alcohol or other drug use.

12. Procedure for refusing to work as a guide on safety grounds

The procedure to be followed by the operator if a guide refuses to work on the grounds of compromised safety to themselves, other white-water-boarding guides or participants.

Participants

13. Enabling participants to book a suitable white-water-board trip

Details of how the commercial white-water-boarding operator provides all participants with enough information to enable them to book a white-water-boarding trip that is suitable for their needs and abilities.

14. Screening of participants for safety reasons

Details of how the commercial white-water-boarding operator screens individual participants for a white-water-boarding trip, to ensure the safety of the participant and other participants on the white-water-boarding trip will not be compromised.

15. Effective communication with participants

Details of how the operator ensures all participants receive and understand the information they need to participate safely in the white-water-boarding trip.

16. Participant safety when a sole guide becomes incapacitated or separated from participants

Details of how the commercial operator will ensure participant safety if a sole guide is incapacitated or becomes separated from the participants.

On-river management

17. Communication systems

The communication systems used, including those between on-river guides and off-river support personnel, for both operational and emergency support:

- a) at least one means of appropriate and effective emergency communication at all times
- b) back-up arrangements in case the primary means of emergency communication fails, including actions to be taken in the event of non-arrival of a white-water-boarding group at a pre-arranged time and place.

18. Ensuring white-water-boarding trips are safe in all operating conditions

Details of how the commercial white-water-board operator ensures that each white-water-boarding trip is carried out safely in all operating situations.

19. Mandatory information

The requirement referred to in Schedule A, clause 18 is to include the following information:

- participant-to-guide ratios
- number of guides on each trip
- types of white-water board in operation
- mix of white-water boards in operation
- weather
- participant screening
- safety briefings
- communications
- ages of participants
- departure times.

20. Additional information

Where safe river practices require specific procedures or certain equipment to be provided or carried, this information is to be included with the information required by Schedule A, clause 19, and where necessary should specify:

- the provision of safety craft
- ways of dealing with specific hazards
- inspection of sections of the river during a white-water-boarding trip
- responsibilities of any person driving a support motor vehicle
- procedures for communicating with other river users, including commercial jet-boat and rafting operations.

21. Changes to commercial white-water-boarding operations

Details of how the commercial white-water-boarding operation deals with changed or changing circumstances, such as:

- white-water boarding on infrequently operated rivers
- new participant groups, including those with language barriers
- increased river traffic
- alterations to riverbed topography.

Safe river flows and weather conditions

22. Safe river flows

- a) Information about the river flows that are safe for the commercial white-water-boarding operation.
- b) Information about requirements to operate within those safe river flows.
- c) River flows monitored on a regular and daily basis, to help staff establish safe river flow parameters.

23. Safe weather conditions

- a) Information about which weather conditions are safe for the commercial white-water-boarding operation.
- b) Information about requirements to operate within those safe weather conditions.
- c) Severe weather warnings and weather forecast updates, including heavy rain warnings being made readily available and updated, to help staff establish whether weather conditions are safe.

Health and safety responsibilities

24. Managing hazards

How the commercial white-water-boarding operator intends to comply with its health and safety responsibilities under these guidelines and the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

These include, but are not limited to:

- a) the process used by the commercial white-water-boarding operator to identify the operational hazards that may cause harm to a person
- b) how the operator will review operational hazards and how they are dealt with, including how guides are made aware of new hazards before guides and participants are exposed to them (for example, day-to-day changes in river conditions)

- c) the monitoring system the operator uses to ensure the safety plan is adhered to in day-to-day operations
- d) how the operator ensures guides are involved in the process of identification, control and review of operational hazards, including:
 - i) following the employer's instructions relating to health and safety
 - ii) providing and making accessible appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment, and instructions for their correct use by guides
 - iii) the misuse and damage of equipment
 - iv) the reporting of accidents and significant hazards and mishaps to the operator.

Emergencies

25. Emergency plans

An emergency plan that:

- a) identifies potential emergencies
- b) outlines procedures to minimise the adverse consequences of these events
- c) includes procedures for:
 - i) situation management
 - ii) call-out
 - iii) evacuation
 - iv) identification and allocation of resources
 - v) procedures for notifying police and rescue services (including responsibility for notification and using standardised terminology within the commercial white-water-boarding operator's organisation, and with police and rescue services).
- d) specifies training and exercises to ensure the plan is effective and to prepare employees before any emergency.

Accidents, incidents and mishaps

26. Recording and reporting procedures

The recording and reporting procedures for accidents, incidents and mishaps, which should comply with Sections 30 and 31 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994, and with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

27. Investigation procedures

The procedures for investigating accidents, incidents and mishaps.

28. Reviews

The procedures for reviewing accidents, incidents and mishaps, to determine causes and trends, and for informing staff of any learning gained.

Schedule B – Classification of rapids

Grade 1 rapids

Grade 1 rapids have:

- small, regular waves
- a clear passage that is easy to recognise and negotiate, although care may be needed with obstacles such as fallen trees and bridge piers.

Grade 2 rapids

Grade 2 rapids have:

- regular, medium-sized waves of less than 1 metre
- low ledges or drops, easy eddies and gradual bends
- a passage that is:
 - a) easy to recognise
 - b) generally unobstructed, although there may be rocks in the main current, overhanging branches or log jams.

Grade 3 rapids

Grade 3 rapids require manoeuvring to negotiate and:

- have fairly high waves of 1 to 2 metres
- have broken water, stoppers and strong eddies, exposed rocks and small falls
- have a passage that may be difficult to recognise from the river.

Grade 4 rapids

Grade 4 rapids are difficult rapids that:

- have high, powerful, irregular waves, broken water, often boiling eddies, strong stoppers, ledges, drops and dangerous exposed rocks
- have a passage that is often difficult to recognise from the river
- require precise and sequential manoeuvring to negotiate.

Grade 5 rapids

Grade 5 rapids are very powerful rapids that:

- have very confused and broken water, large drops, violent and fast currents, abrupt turns, difficult and powerful stoppers and fast boiling eddies
- have numerous obstacles in the main current
- require complex, precise, powerful and sequential manoeuvring to negotiate
- pose a definite risk to personal safety.

Grade 6 rapids

Grade 6 rapids are extremely powerful rapids that:

- are significantly life threatening if swum
- are unable to be negotiated by all except a few experts
- have unmanageable difficulties and obstacles
- have very confused and violent water, which make controlled navigation by white-water board virtually impossible.