

## Safety Management Issues

The identification of safety management issues is a crucial step in trip planning and is done through the RAMS on form. As I mentioned earlier it is vital that this form is thoroughly filled out so that the trip is as safe as possible. I will identify these different safety management issues and their relative importance, the factors that influence them, their wider implications and the relationship between them and strategies to minimize these issues.

### The risks:

There is a fine line between a risk that is accepted or not, especially when one is responsible for a group. It is summed up as “knowingly imposing a risk on oneself is right while imposing a risk on someone else is wrong”. The six risks that I have listed in this RAMS form are ranked from the highest to lowest in importance. On the following page there is a critical incident management form. This form is also very important to have as it explains what to do if each of the risks occur.

An important issue to consider that effects the following risks is the philosophical issue. This includes considering the importance and intentions of the trip. Philosophical thinking weighs up the benefits of what they will get out of it without putting too much pressure on them that could lead to one of the six risks. It looks at why we are doing outdoor education and presenting students with risks. Part of the outdoor education philosophy is to challenge students, but there must be consideration made by the teacher that also considers acceptable risks, to ensure that the trip is not getting to the point where anyone or anything is put into unacceptable danger. A lot of what we will be doing will be run by instructors and we will have nice accommodation. This is not truly embracing the outdoor philosophy of getting back to nature as we will be in a fairly controlled environment most of the time and when skiing will be able to control effects such as the weather by stopping if it turns bad. I think tramping would link more with the true philosophy of outdoor education as the risks that are inherent in tramping would be more ‘real’ risks rather than the ‘perceived risks’ that maybe associated with skiing in a controlled environment. However this is also a positive for us as well as it will provide us with experiences in the outdoors were we can value our own philosophies around outdoor education and give us an awareness of our own values and cultures.

### Stage 1: Initial planning and approval

Before the trip is planned initial planning should be gained from the person who has the responsibility for accepting the trip such as a senior staff member or an EOTC coordinator. This will be in line with school policy and would be required for all trips planned by the school. In the case of a year 13 skiing trip Ms ... is in charge of all the EOTC events at the school and because skiing is a high level risk activity a lot of decisions need to be made and go through her. Her knowledge and experience in planning the trip is critical as if something goes wrong it may be that her planning procedures were not in place and she may have made a mistake in the planning because of her experience. If something does go wrong and it is because of the teachers planning then they should be responsible. I think the school should also have policies in place to check planning and take responsibility if something does go wrong. However, this is not always the case with the teacher in the firing line if something does go wrong. In approving an EOTC event, the following will be considered: the school's curriculum, safety management including required staff competence and the budget. They need to be informed about the trip so they know exactly what is happening and why. This is important because they can then decide for themselves if they should agree or not to let their daughter attend and in case of an accident did occur the school would not take 100% of the blame. If a serious accident did occur then school or the teacher planning the trip would probably have to shoulder some of the blame as the parents may be looking for a scapegoat

This is a very important issue that forms and policies are filled out for a reason so that parents can be assured that the trip has the appropriate safety management procedures in place to prevent incidents occurring and that safety has been thought of to minimize the risk to the students. We live in an age of accountability and having these forms filled out will ensure this.

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Another issue is the information about the people involved in the trip. This includes the students, teachers, helpers/volunteers such as parent help and contracted providers. At ... (school) there is a generic EOTC form for students to fill out requiring all the information. It includes their health status and any problems they might have such as being allergic to a food type. This form is important because it will mean that the teacher will be able to plan around any safety issues the students or helpers have. For example, if a student was allergic to a food type the teacher or cook would know to have a substitute for the student to eat. In terms of importance of this issue it would not be of that much importance. At this age students should be aware of what they are allergic to and what food allergies that they have. The student may ask if the food has something that they can't eat in it or recognise if it is something they are allergic to. Students have to take responsibility as well. This would all be planned for beforehand and would only be of importance if the student involved was suffering from a life threatening allergy which they would be well aware of. It is important for information to also include their ability at the activity they are planning on doing so that the students are in their comfort zones but will still be able to push themselves.

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The programme must be carefully planned, with risks identified, assessed and managed and emergency procedures put in place. This can be done through a RAMS form.

### **Wider implications – why we use these safety management issues, and what would happen if we didn't**

The safety management issues are put in place to prevent disasters from occurring. For example the recent tragedy of 2 students and an instructor who drowned in the sea after being washed off a wave of New Plymouth's Paritutu Rock. All sorts of questions were raised as a result of the tragedy and most of them were aimed directly at Topec, the organization that was taking the 11 students on what is known as the Paritutu traverse course. Over the years Topec has taken thousands of young Taranaki students on the adventure which is reportedly an exciting experience. Part of the outdoor education ethic that says adventure, and challenge through risk, is an important part of learning. However safety management issues are put in place so that events like this do not occur. Over the years there have been several tragedies involving students dying as a result of experiences in the outdoors of New Zealand and after each tragedy the New Zealand EOTC organization, alongside of the government, schools and outdoor associations reflect their safety management procedures to prevent further tragedies occurring. I believe that the safety management planning has improved over the years that have made outdoor education safer for students. There is a definite need for RAMs forms. If we didn't have RAMs form, emergency procedures and student health and capability forms then tragedies such as the Taranaki one is a lot more likely to happen. This is due to several reasons, such as, the students may not understand the risks that are surrounding them, and some students maybe right out of their comfort zone.

Another reason for the safety management issues and why we learn about them is for the future. Individuals will get a lot out of learning about safety management issues and putting them in place. When they learn about the issues they will learn how to prevent them or what to do in an emergency if an issue occurs. Later in life these skills that students have gained through their experiences will not only be beneficial from that one activity but they will also be able to apply it to activities such as tramping. This is because the similar risks will occur and the similar ways of how to prevent them/what to do in an event of an emergency. They will also be able to teach others safety management issues and make New Zealanders more aware of the risks in the outdoor. Overall, it is important to have the safety management plans in place so that we can minimize the amount of tragedies that occur as a result of education in the outdoors, including death, missing people and injuries.