



M.E.C. Corporation Pty Ltd  
trading as **Women's Own Adventure**  
abn: 48 101 827 052  
AFTA Member: 10151 / ATAS Acc: A10569  
po box 51 mona vale, nsw 1660 australia  
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## Safety Procedures

### Objective

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Operating adventurous tours to many destinations around the world carries with it inherent risks for the guides / tour leaders and the travellers. Some reasons for these risks are:

- Lax laws and regulations in some countries governing transport, accommodation, infrastructure and the travel industry in general, when compared to what we would accept in our home country
- potential volatile political environment of some of the countries we visit
- the itineraries, which are adventurous in nature and sometimes in remote locations

With these factors in mind, Women's Own Adventure has a responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide trips that are safe.

The aim of this document is to give our travellers an insight into the safety standards that we endeavour to achieve when on a Women's Own Adventure trip.

No set of guidelines can anticipate all possible conditions that may arise. We ask our guides, tour leaders and local Partners to put sound judgement ahead of hard and fast rules and to judge each situation as it arises which extends to the application of safe travel practices.

### Safety Guidelines

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#### **Transport**

We do not permit riding on the roof of any form of transport we use, such as trains, boats or buses.

We accept that seat belts are not readily available on all of the transport we take, on either charter or public vehicles. Where available, we expect our travellers to use them.

#### **Public Buses, Trains and Taxis**

We rely on public transport providers to maintain the vehicles we use in a roadworthy condition, but we do not perform independent tests on public vehicles. If in the tour guide's opinion, the vehicle is unsafe then alternative transport arrangements will be made.

Travelling on a local bus in some countries can be a different experience to home. If your guide believes a bus driver is driving dangerously, they will ask the driver to slow down and,



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if required, arrange for the group to get off the bus at the next opportunity. An alternative means of transport will then be arranged.

### **Charter Buses and Vehicles**

Privately chartered bus operators/drivers are required to comply with local licence and vehicle servicing standards.

### **Boats and Ferries**

We endeavour to provide, or ensure availability of, lifejackets for all boat and ferry journeys included on our itineraries. We rely on the boat operators to judge local conditions and determine whether the conditions are safe for travel. You may encounter public ferries that are crowded, and where the tour guide deems any risk unacceptable, they may arrange alternative transport. On smaller craft, where the risk of capsizing is higher, you may be asked to wear lifejackets rather than just having them available to put on.

### **Bicycles**

In many countries bicycle helmets are not a legal requirement. However, where local regulations mandate that all cyclists must wear a helmet and if cycling only makes up a small portion of the itinerary, helmets will be provided or, alternatively, you may be advised to bring your own.

We do not provide helmets on cycling-specific trips and clients are expected to either bring their own or purchase them locally.

All cycling participants must also wear footwear with closed/covered toes while cycling.

### **Accommodation**

Government regulations on safety standards in the hotels and guesthouses we use in many regions are less stringent than those that our travellers may be used to in their home countries.

Most of our accommodation is of a high standard and we do endeavour to select accommodation that is accessible via two entry points.

Please be aware that not all accommodation we currently stay in comply with this standard. On your itinerary you may be staying in simple accommodation such as a village tea house or hill tribe hut. Such accommodation is a highlight experience, and naturally subject to a different safety environment. Your tour guide will outline any potential safety concerns for you to be aware of, but if such experiences concern you, please take this into consideration when choosing your trip.



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## **Activities**

We ask that you inform your travel agent of any pre-existing medical conditions before travelling.

If your tour guide / leader is of the opinion that a group member is unsuitable for an activity on the trip, he/she has the discretion and authority to refuse that person from participating in the activity - for the safety of themselves, the rest of the group and the tour guide / leader.

Prior to an activity commencing, the tour guide / leader will conduct a short safety briefing.

We strongly recommend ensuring your travel insurance covers all activities (included or optional) on your trip.

## **Hiking / Walking**

Some of our trips include a hiking or walking component, whether it is over 1 day or multi days. Hiking or walking is a highlight of such trips, but naturally you may be in remote areas so it is important that you have carefully considered your capability to join such a trip before booking.

All travellers should have the correct footwear and equipment for the hike or walk. Footwear with ankle support and good grip on the sole is recommended.

When walking, the group must always stay between the designated leader and tailender. The leader and tailender will either be two guides, a guide and an assistant, or a guide and a passenger. Group members should leave their packs on the trail if going into the bushes for a toilet stop so they are not unknowingly passed by the tailender.

The group can walk in pairs or small groups, but should meet up together in its entirety a minimum of every couple of hours to ensure that all members are accounted for. The group should meet up at all major trail intersections to make sure everyone takes the correct path. Travellers can walk at their own pace in between group meets.

If local conditions such as weather or landslides etc. become an issue, your guide will seek the opinion of local authorities on the safety of the conditions and risks involved in continuing. The guide will discuss options with the travellers and will then make a decision on whether to continue or not. Safety of the clients is always the top priority in this decision.

## **Animals**

When riding animals (e.g. donkeys or camels) during our trips, helmets are not available to travellers. In conjunction with the local supplier, we endeavour to ensure that only calm and well-behaved animals are provided by the operator.



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## **Flat water Canoeing / Kayaking**

When canoeing or kayaking is part of a scheduled itinerary, the group will be given basic instruction as to paddling techniques and what to do in the case of a capsized by the local guides operating the trip.

Lifejackets must be worn by all group members when participating in an organised canoeing, kayaking or rafting experience as part of the group. Helmets are not considered essential for flat-water paddling. Group members should wear trainers or sandals to protect their feet from rocks, but not to interfere with their ability to swim.

Group members should not participate in canoeing, kayaking or rafting if they cannot swim confidently when in water above head height.

## **Snorkelling**

For any included snorkelling activity, your guide will brief you on safety procedures prior to departure. Travellers should, however, carefully consider their experience and capability in snorkelling and swimming before joining such an activity.

## **First Aid Kits**

Each guide has a medical kit and will carry it with him/her during all activities such as a walk, hike, cycle, canoe trip etc. This medical kit contains basic first aid supplies and a small amount of common medication (e.g. aspirin, paracetamol) for exceptional circumstances. Travellers will be asked to use their own medication or purchase medication locally if at all possible.

## **In Case of Emergency**

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In the case of an emergency, either due to a medical emergency or an emergency due to a natural disaster, the following steps will be undertaken:

### *Medical Emergency:*

If a medical emergency arises for a client on tour, our guide or tour leader will contact the in country emergency hotline and seek medical assistance.

If required, our guide or tour leader will make necessary arrangements to take the client in need of medical care to the nearest medical facility or doctor.

### *Medical Evacuation:*

Both the office in Australia and the local guide has details of each client's Travel Insurance (mandatory for all bookings with Women's Own Adventure).

The Travel Insurer will be contacted on behalf of the client to ascertain the best evacuation procedure for the circumstances of the client. All assistance will be given to the client.



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*Emergency in the case of a Natural Disaster:*

Should a natural disaster arise while on tour, our guide or tour leader will take instruction from local emergency services. They will attempt to keep the group together in a safe location until emergency services arrive or evacuation can be made.

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Please contact [info@womensownadventure.com.au](mailto:info@womensownadventure.com.au) if you have any comments about this document, or the application of it in the field.