

## **Guidelines for Safety and Contingency Planning for Non-Government Operators**

The Antarctic Treaty Parties have agreed an instrument (Measure 4, 2004) that, once in force, will require non-government operators to have sufficient insurance and adequate contingency plans in place before commencing activities in the Antarctic Treaty area.

The Antarctic Treaty Parties also adopted a non-binding resolution (Resolution 4, 2004) to act as an interim arrangement until such time as the Measure comes into force. The development of contingency plans and obtaining adequate insurance or other arrangements to cover costs associated with search and rescue and medical care and evacuation as outlined in the Resolution are not mandatory but are considered by the Australian Government to be good practice.

A copy of Measure 4 and Resolution 4 are provided at the end of this document for your reference.

In accordance with Resolution 4 (2004), the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment encourages all operators to have the following in place prior to conducting or engaging in tourist or other non-government activities in the Antarctic Treaty area (i.e. south of 60 degrees):

1. **appropriate and adequate contingency plans and arrangements for emergency support in Antarctica, including for search and rescue, and medical care and evacuation.** Contingency plans for all activities should be developed according to the principle of self-rescue – according to which under normal circumstances, those intending to undertake activities have sufficient resources to perform a rescue operation if required. These plans and arrangements should not be reliant on receiving support from other operators or national programs without their express written agreement; and
2. **sufficient insurance cover that covers any costs associated with search and rescue and medical care and evacuation.** Such cover should explicitly cover all of the activities proposed to be undertaken in Antarctica and be sufficient to fund any potential medical evacuation from Antarctica. The insurance document should cover all participants and explicitly mention Antarctica.

As set out in Annex 1 of Resolution 4 (2004), the AAD also encourages the observation of the following guidelines:

1. Participants should have sufficient and demonstrable experience appropriate for the proposed activity operating in polar, or equivalent, environments. Such experience may include survival training in cold or remote areas, flying, sailing or operating vehicles in conditions and over distances similar to those being proposed in the activity;
2. All equipment, including clothing, communication, navigational, emergency and logistic equipment should be in sound working order, with sufficient backups and suitable for effective operation in Antarctic conditions. All participants should be proficient in using this equipment;
3. All participants should be medically, physically and psychologically fit to undertake the activity in Antarctica;
4. Adequate first-aid equipment should be available during the activity, and at least one participant should be proficient in remote area / wilderness first aid;
5. All activities should comply with the activity-specific guidelines set out in the IAATO Field Operations Manual.

The AAD's website may provide some useful tools to assist in the preparation of activities. For example, the AAD pre-departure medical checklist available at <https://jobs.antarctica.gov.au/jobs->

[in-australia/applying-for-a-position/medical-checklist/](#) may provide guidance on the medical conditions expeditioners should meet to be deemed medically, physically and psychologically fit to undertake the activity in Antarctica.

When seeking an Environmental Authorisation or Permit from the AAD to conduct or engage in tourism or other non-government activities in the Antarctic Treaty area, applicants are encouraged to complete Section E of the Environmental Approvals Application form. This Section seeks information regarding contingency plans for the proposed activity, as well as details on insurance, consistent with these guidelines. The Section also asks applicants to complete a safety risk assessment, covering all proposed activities while in Antarctica, and attach relevant documentation, including:

- Insurance documentation that covers all participants and explicitly mentions Antarctica; and
- Contractual agreements relating to contingency plans and any other arrangements for search and rescue procedures and medical evacuation.

## **Measure 4 (2004)**

### **The Representatives**

Concerned at the potential impacts, including the imposition of additional costs, that tourists or other non-governmental activities may have on national programmes, and the risks to the safety of those involved in search and rescue operations;

Desiring to ensure that tourists or other non-governmental activities undertaken in Antarctica are carried out in a safe and self-sufficient manner;

Desiring further to ensure that the risks associated with tourism or other non-governmental activities are fully identified in advance, and minimised;

Noting that the "Procedures to be followed by Organisers and Operators ", as set out in the attachment to Recommendation XVIII-1, contain some elements relating to self sufficiency and insurance;

Recommend to their Governments the following Measure for approval in accordance with paragraph 4 of Article IX of the Antarctic Treaty;

That Parties shall require those under their jurisdiction organising or conducting tourist or other non-governmental activities in the Antarctic Treaty Area, for which advance notification is required in accordance with Article VII (5) of the Antarctic Treaty, to demonstrate compliance with the following requirements;

- that appropriate contingency plans and sufficient arrangements for health and safety, search and rescue (SAR), and medical care and evacuation have been drawn up and are in place prior to the start of the activity. Such plans and arrangements shall not be reliant on support from other operators or national programmes without their express written agreement; and
- that adequate insurance or other arrangements are in place to cover any costs associated with search and rescue and medical care and evacuation.

## **Resolution 4 (2004)**

### **The Representatives**

Concerned at the potential impacts, including the imposition of additional costs, that tourist or other non-governmental activities may have on national programmes, and the risks to the safety of those involved in search and rescue operations;

Desiring to ensure that tourist to other non-governmental activities undertaken in Antarctica are carried out in a safe and self sufficient manner;

Desiring further to ensure that the risks associated with tourist or other non-governmental activities are fully identified in advance, and minimised;

Recalling the "Procedures to be followed by Organisers and Operators", as set out in the Attachment to Recommendation XVIII-1;

Noting Measure 4 (2004) on "Insurance and Contingency Planning for Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic Treaty Area", and desiring to take certain steps before it enters into effect to promote its objectives in addition to recommending further guidelines to be followed by those organising or conducting activities without the supervision or support in the field of another operator or a national programme;

Recommend:

- That Parties should require those under their jurisdiction organising or conducting tourist or other non-governmental activities in the Antarctic Treaty Area, for which advance notification is required in accordance with Article VII (5) of the Antarctic Treaty, to follow the Guidelines annexed (see below) to this Resolution.

## Annex 1

Those organising or conducting tourist or other non-governmental activities in the Antarctic Treaty area should ensure:

1. that appropriate contingency plans and sufficient arrangements for health and safety, search and rescue (SAR), and medical care and evacuation have been drawn-up and are in place prior to the start of the activity. Such plans and arrangements should not be reliant on support from other operators or national programmes without their express written agreement; and
2. that adequate insurance or other arrangements are in place to cover any costs associated with search and rescue and medical care and evacuation.

And the following guidelines should also be observed in particular by those organising conducting activities without the supervision or support in the field of another operator or a national programme:

- that participants have sufficient and demonstrable experience appropriate for the proposed activity operating in polar, or equivalent, environments. Such experience may include survival training in cold or remote areas, flying, sailing or operating other vehicles in conditions and over distances similar to these being proposed in the activity;
- that all equipment, including clothing, communication, navigational, emergency and logistic equipment is in sound working order, with sufficient backup spares and suitable for effective operation under Antarctic conditions;
- that all participants are proficient in the use of such equipment;
- that all participants are medically, physically and psychologically fit to undertake the activity in Antarctica;
- that adequate first-aid equipment is available during the activity and that at least one participant is proficient in advanced first-aid.