

# SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY (SMS)

A working policy document detailing the safety considerations and measures put into place for all tours

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# 1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The safety of group members on visits is of primary concern to Rayburn Tours, and it is our policy to operate tours with the highest standards of health and safety that are reasonably practicable. By any reasonable definition of the term, group travel is safe but accidents can and do happen occasionally.

Our commitments to our clients are as follows:

- 1.1 We will promote a positive health & safety culture throughout our own and our supplier's organisations world-wide.
- 1.2 We will set standards that meet the needs of our clients that are measurable, achievable and realistic.
- 1.3 We will ensure the provision of adequate resources, both financial and human, to achieve a high level of safety and continuous improvement.
- 1.4 We will endeavour to provide party leaders with information that will increase their ability to manage safety on their trips.
- 1.5 We will measure and review our performance and compliance with our own system, and have our work audited annually by a suitably qualified external expert.
- 1.6 We will ensure our staff are trained to respond quickly and efficiently in case of an emergency.
- 1.7 We will review, maintain and update the SMS annually. We will review all procedures throughout the year when issues are notified to us. We will ensure that we investigate and make amendments if necessary. Additionally we will apply any recommendations which come from our external annual audit.

The Joint Managing Directors have overall responsibility for the direction of the SMS. All senior staff are responsible for monitoring safety standards. Our policy has been devised to comply with the minimum standards for best practice in the school travel sector to ensure that reasonable precautions have been taken and due diligence exercised.

Signed:



Katie Boyden, Joint Managing Director

## 2. ORGANISATION OF STAFF

### 2.1 Policy

The Joint Managing Directors have overall responsibility for the direction of the SMS ensuring that:

- Competent staff are appointed to implement the requirements of the SMS;
- Systems are developed for implementation of the SMS.
- Adequate human and financial resources are available to ensure policies are carried out.

### 2.2 Planning

2.2.1 The Head of Operations and Customer Relations is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring participation of appropriately trained and competent personnel.
- Monitoring performance of the SMS and their departmental staff in its implementation, providing feedback to the Board of Directors on success and on areas for improvement.
- Ensuring an annual examination to identify trends.
- The selection, as well as the active (e.g. inspections) and reactive (e.g. incident investigation) monitoring, of coach companies in line with the Transport policy in [section 6](#) and the emergency & incident procedures as detailed in [section 14](#).

2.2.2 The Managers of our operational departments are responsible for the following:

- Keeping up to date with safety requirements and practices applicable to the provision of tours and the SMS.
- The selection, as well as the active (e.g. inspections) and reactive (e.g. accident and emergency phone procedure, as per [section 14](#)) monitoring of accommodation centres, excursions and concert venues, jointly with the other managers, and in line with the relevant policies in [sections 4-10](#).

### 2.3 Implementers

2.3.1 The responsibilities of all management and staff are as follows:

- Being diligent in complying with the responsibilities of the SMS.
- Carrying out responsibilities in accordance with training provided.
- Bringing to the attention of their manager, the Head of Operations and Customer Relations or the Board of Directors any noted weakness with the SMS or any situation that has the potential for serious and imminent danger to clients.

## 3. MONITORING

### 3.1 Monitoring by Rayburn Tours

- Trained staff will audit suppliers of accommodation and coach transport.
- The Head of Operations and Customer Relations and Administration and Operations Supervisor will monitor departmental standards by spot-checking the quality of audits and centrally assessing and grading them.
- Accidents involving clients relating to coach transportation, accommodation or activities arranged by Rayburn Tours will be encouraged to be reported through the incident report forms (for use in resort) and questionnaires (for use upon return to the UK).
- The Head of Operations and Customer Relations will investigate incidents, accidents and 'near misses'. These will be reviewed as they arise as well as on an annual basis.
- A formal internal review will be held at the highest level each year. This will be used to identify trends and confirm that remedial actions have been implemented. Changes in procedure will be included in our policy document.

### 3.2 External Auditing

Rayburn Tours has appointed a qualified independent external auditor. Their role is as follows:

- To verify the content and implementation of Rayburn Tours SMS to HSG65 standards on an annual basis.
- To assess the paperwork and processes of the SMS to verify they meet School Travel Forum (STF) minimum standards (as a minimum).
- To perform spot-checks in the field in order to check audits undertaken by Rayburn Tours' staff.

## 4. ACCOMMODATION

All accommodation used by Rayburn Tours is either requested directly, or through an agent. An agent is an organisation that has access to a variety of accommodation types to find suitable and available options. Often they also organise other parts of a package, such as transport, concerts, fixtures and excursions. If any component of a tour is booked through an agent, their details will be included on the final itinerary.

### 4.1 All Accommodation (including that featured in brochures)

- A contract is signed confirming (as a minimum) that the accommodation conforms to local & national fire, safety & hygiene standards and additionally a set of specific safety standards.
- We will ensure that children and adults are accommodated separately and according to gender breakdowns.
- Each accommodation centre will be subject to an assessment prior to using it for the first time, which covers fire safety, security, insurance and hygiene.
- It will thereafter be inspected every three years using STF core questions as a minimum.

- As a minimum, a standard audit will be attained if the accommodation is used as a 'one off' or if it is used for less than 5 groups within a calendar year. A standard accommodation checklist is completed by the hotelier or agent on our behalf.
- If the property is used by more than 5 groups within a calendar year, an on-site audit of the accommodation will be undertaken. An on-site audit is completed by a member of Rayburn Tours/Venture Abroad staff who has undergone appropriate training and competency assessment.
- Additionally, all accommodation will complete a Covid-19 Recovery Business Continuity Checklist. Information obtained as part of this process will be assessed against the Safety Management System before use.

## **4.2 Accommodation supplied via Agents**

- All of 4.1.
- We shall ensure the agent signs an agent contract confirming that each accommodation they offer has a current fire certificate, the appropriate insurance cover, and hygiene certificate or local equivalent.
- A record of agent/ ground handler audits will be maintained, and accommodation audited in this manner will be treated in the same way as if the accommodation had been contracted directly. In addition the agent will be informed of the audit standard achieved.
- If any audited establishment falls into the unacceptable category, we will advise the agent and request alternative accommodation. Agents are made aware of the criteria and minimum standards we adhere to.

## **4.3 Accommodation Ratings**

Following the above audit procedures relevant to the particular accommodation centre, the ratings below will be applied by Rayburn Tours:

- 4.3.1 High Conformity Conforms  
No areas of improvement can be identified. The management will be commended and encouraged to maintain their standards.
- 4.3.2 Acceptable Conformity  
Room for improvement has been identified, but the defects do not render the building unsafe. The defects will be brought to the immediate attention of the management at the time of an on-site audit. The deficiencies will be risk assessed by a Senior Manager and a schedule of recommendations will be issued to the accommodation in writing following the audit.
- 4.3.3 Unacceptable  
We will remove this accommodation from our programme and will not consider its reinstatement until the defects have been rectified and the establishment has been re-audited to a standard of either High Conformity Conforms or Acceptable Conformity.

## 5. TRANSPORT

All Coach Operators used by Rayburn Tours are either requested directly, or through an agent. An agent is an organisation that has access to a variety of coach operators to find suitable and available options. Often they also organise other parts of a package, such as accommodation, concerts, fixtures and excursions. If any component of a tour is booked through an agent, their details will be included on the final itinerary.

### 5.1 All Coach Operators

- We will endeavour to select coach operators who belong to recognised industry bodies such as, in the UK, the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), Guild of British Coach Operators or Coach Marque.
- We will ensure all coach companies used sign a contract in which they confirm that they comply with all national, local, trade & other laws, regulations, rules and codes of practice. This contract also stipulates a set of safety standards regarding drivers' hours, driver vetting, insurance cover and vehicle age.
- Each coach operator will be required to complete a Coach Supplier Checklist Form prior to first use, which covers insurance, breakdown/emergency procedures, staff selection and maintenance.
- It will thereafter be inspected every three years using STF core questions as a minimum or if there is a significant change to the business operations.
- Coach Supplier Checklist Forms are completed by either a nominated person at the Coach Operator, or a member of Rayburn Tours staff who has undergone appropriate training and competency assessment.

### 5.2 Coach Operator Ratings

Following the above audit procedures relevant to the particular coach operator, the ratings below will be applied by Rayburn Tours:

#### 5.2.1 High Conformity Conforms

No areas of improvement can be identified. The management will be commended and encouraged to maintain their standards.

#### 5.2.2 Acceptable Conformity

Room for improvement has been identified, but the defects do not render the operator unsafe. The defects will be brought to the immediate attention of the management at the time of an on-site audit. The deficiencies will be risk assessed by a Senior Manager and a schedule of recommendations will be issued to the operator in writing following the audit.

#### 5.2.3 Unacceptable

We will remove this operator from our programme and will not consider its reinstatement until the defects have been rectified and the establishment has been re-audited to a standard of either High Conformity Conforms or Acceptable Conformity.

### **5.3 Public Transport**

- Appropriate means of public transport will be arranged whenever this is the best means of getting the group to its destination.
- Public transport regulations are determined by the appropriate authorities in each country. As this is outside our control, it is not felt that any additional measures can be taken by Rayburn Tours and care must be taken by clients to ensure that it is appropriate.

### **5.4 Air**

- All transport by air from the UK is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and adheres to strict safety measures. The CAA has granted Rayburn Tours an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL No 3475). No additional measures need be undertaken by Rayburn Tours.
- All transport by air outside the UK is governed by foreign national regulating bodies. Again, no additional measures need be undertaken by Rayburn Tours.

### **5.5 Ferries/Eurotunnel**

All ferries and Eurotunnel are regulated nationally. For major British ferry companies used, we will check on an annual basis that levels of on board safety are being maintained, and pass on any safety information provided to our groups in final documents.

### **5.6 Rail Transport and Eurostar**

All rail transport is regulated by the countries through which trains travel. No additional measures need be undertaken by Rayburn.

## **6. CONCERT VENUES**

We will use reasonable endeavours to obtain evidence that health and safety has been evaluated from the providers of concert venues.

## **7. SKI TOURS**

### **7.1 Ski Lessons**

- All ski instructors will be qualified according to local and national regulations and approved by the director of the local snow sport school.
- We will clarify in advance arrangements for snow sport classes, including class sizes and any class sharing arrangements.

### **7.2 Equipment Hire**

- A written contract will be in place between Rayburn Tours and the hire shop.
- Only members of the hire shop who are deemed competent will undertake the fitting of the equipment.
- We will request, in advance, information in relation to age, weight, height etc. which will be required to ensure that due consideration is given when fitting bindings.



### **7.3 Standards of up-lifts and runs**

- All ski lift systems will comply with and be licensed according to local regulation.

### **7.4 Transport**

- In addition to the provision for transport in [section 5](#), we will request that all coaches undertaking ski trips will carry appropriate equipment for the weather, e.g. snow chains and anti-freezing systems and that drivers will be competent in using them.

## **8. SPORTS TOURS**

### **8.1 Facilities**

Facilities offered will be fit for purpose and assessments of the following will be made:

- First aid facilities
- Emergency medical process
- Changing and welfare facilities
- Transport access
- Age suitability of pitch/court playing areas
- Suitability of the local area

### **8.2 Staffing/Coaching**

- The quality of coaching and support staff will be fit for purpose.
- Where third party providers are used, we will ask about the suitability and competence of staff and monitor feedback.
- All staff employed by Rayburn Tours and accompanying groups will be subject to the checks detailed in section 12 Tour Managers and performance will be monitored.

### **8.3 Equipment supplied**

- Any equipment provided will be fit for purpose considering the age, ability and physical size of the group.
- Where appropriate, equipment will be subject to regular checks and maintenance records will be kept.

### **8.4 Opposition Teams and Events**

Unless the group leader has specifically requested otherwise or no reasonable alternative is available and the group leader has been informed and agrees, the following points will be considered where teams are supplied as opposition:

- Group leader's objectives
- Age and skill level of participants and potential opposition
- Specific equipment/clothing requirements
- Suitability and duration of coaching, games, fixtures and/or tournaments to allow sufficient rest/recovery periods
- Special needs
- The agent or organiser of the supply of opposition will be made aware of the age and skill level of the touring group

## 9. EXCURSIONS AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

### 9.1 Excursions

We will internally assess excursions and categorise them by risk as follows:

#### 9.1.1 Risk Category 1

- Low risk excursions such as museum visits. 'Look and See'.
- These excursions will be assessed by the Head of Operations and Customer Relations or the Administration and Operations Supervisor prior to being used for the first time and thereafter every five years, or in line with any major changes.
- Group feedback and accidents, incidents and near misses will be monitored.

#### 9.1.2 Risk Category 2

- Excursions which have a 'doing' element to them, and/or which have potential risks inherent in the environment, process or activity, and/or which may be unfamiliar to participating groups.
- These excursions will be asked to complete an excursion questionnaire, which covers licencing, insurance and safety.
- The excursion questionnaire will be assessed by the Head of Operations and Customer Relations or the Administration and Operations Supervisor prior to being used for the first time and thereafter every three years, or in line with any major changes. In some cases, a supplier assessment form will be completed internally and any safety information that needs to be brought to participating groups' attention will be included in our Tour Management Handbook (Activities).
- Group feedback and accidents, incidents and near misses will be monitored.

#### 9.1.3 Risk Category 3

- Water Immersion based excursions such as swimming.
- These providers will be asked to complete pool safety questionnaire covering licencing, insurance and safety.
- The pool safety questionnaire will be assessed by the Head of Operations and Customer Relations or the Administration and Operations Supervisor prior to being used for the first time and thereafter every three years, or in line with any major changes.
- Group feedback and accidents, incidents and near misses will be monitored.

#### 9.1.4 Risk Category 4

- Adventurous Activities are defined by the Adventure Activities Licencing Authority (AALA) or which have a considerable risk to participating groups.
- Activity providers will be asked to complete a detailed adventurous activity audit covering licencing, insurance and safety.
- The adventurous activity audit will be assessed by an expert Technical Advisor prior to being used for the first time, which will be fully audited again every three years, or in line with any major changes.
- Group feedback and accidents, incidents and near misses will be monitored.

## 10. INSPECTION VISITS

Rayburn Tours will provide means for clients to inspect a destination in advance of travelling with their group. This may be at an additional cost.

## 11. SAFETY INFORMATION BEFORE TRAVEL

Rayburn Tours shall provide written practical safety information to clients prior to their tour to include a code of conduct and fire safety precautions. A form is included for the reporting of accidents, incidents and near misses, which is used by the Head of Operations and Customer Relations to review and investigate where appropriate.

## 12. TOUR MANAGERS

### 12.1 UK Citizens

Any Tour Managers with UK citizenship are police checked (enhanced DBS) for suitability for working with children; this could be a member of the Rayburn Tours' staff or an externally contracted Tour Manager.

### 12.2 Non-UK Citizens

Any Tour Managers who do not have UK citizenship cannot be police checked under the DBS scheme, however Rayburn Tours will seek confirmation that Tour Managers are suitable for working with children by liaising with relevant foreign agents and monitoring group feedback.

## 13. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Emergency Phones

- On a rota basis, one fully-trained senior member of Rayburn Tours staff per operational department are appointed as 24 hour emergency contacts for group leaders to contact when on tour. All group leaders, coach operators, accommodation centres and agents will be given these contact details and guidelines on the circumstances under which the emergency phone should be used.
- We have produced and maintain a documented emergency procedure that is available to all clients and is operational when any clients are on tour.
- A file outlining details of current groups on tour and emergency contact numbers for suppliers will be distributed to the 24 hour emergency contacts both in hard and soft copy format.

## 14. CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Crisis Management Plan is a document defining procedures and the roles that staff would assume in case of a serious incident involving Rayburn Tours' groups on tour.

## 15. TRAINING

### 15.1 General Training

- There will be a formal training session given to all relevant staff during their induction period, following which renewals will be offered periodically or upon request. Employees will be trained in those areas of the SMS for which they may be required to exercise responsibility.
- All staff will undergo SMS awareness training and will be kept aware of the latest developments with the SMS.

### 15.2 Audit Training

- External, STF approved training is available to all staff who undertake accommodation audits and coach checklists.
- In-house competency assessments are conducted prior to audits being completed unaccompanied.

## 16. SAFEGUARDING

Rayburn Tours has a duty of care to the young people travelling to report any safeguarding concerns that may arise, regardless of how small or insignificant a concern may be. In the event of a member of Rayburn Tours staff having any concerns about the wellbeing of a child either in the planning, execution or follow up of a tour, they are required to report this to the Head of Operations and Customer Relations or the Operations and Administration Supervisor.

Once a concern or allegation has been reported, this will be referred to the relevant Local Authority Designated Office (LADO). The LADO will be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a LADO who is responsible for coordinating an investigation into and/or response to any concerns that an adult working with children may have caused or could cause them harm. LADO works within Children's Services across multiple organisations/agencies including schools, social/youth clubs, scouts/guides, religious groups, swimming clubs etc. One concern in itself may not be enough to launch a full investigation, however if there are a number of concerns being raised, they will be reviewed across all areas.

## 17. CONTACT DETAILS

For further information please contact:

Rayburn Tours, Rayburn House, 37 Brunel Parkway, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8HR

**Tel:** 01332 347828

**Fax:** 01332 340940

**Email:** [info@rayburntours.com](mailto:info@rayburntours.com)

## 18. DfE\* GUIDELINES: Safety on school visits

As you may be aware, the DfE guidelines relating to Health and Safety on Educational Visits state that the LEA or governing body should advise schools to ask tour operators for a copy of their Safety Management System.

A Safety Management System should explain how a tour operator manages safety for the component parts of the visit they will be providing. In particular, tour operators should also be able to show how they are duly diligent in checking the safety of accommodation and transport. The tour operator should also provide details of independent checks made by appropriate external organisations on their safety management system.

The guidelines also explain that teachers have a Common Law duty of care to follow the advice of their LEA or governing body and that Head Teachers should ensure that the accreditation or verification of providers (i.e. tour operators) has been checked.

The School Travel Forum, a group of leading school tour operators who promote good practice and safety in school travel, have developed a Safety Management Standard which:

- Covers all of the elements of a residential visit.
- Shows how they are duly diligent in checking the safety of accommodation, excursions and transport.
- Is annually inspected by a suitably qualified independent body.

School Travel Forum Assured Membership is dependent upon having a Safety Management System, which complies with this standard; Rayburn Tours are proud to meet these conditions and boast Assured Membership status. The School Travel Forum's Code of Practice has been developed in consultation with all the major Teachers' Associations and Unions, including NAHT, SHA, ATL, NASUWT, NUT, PAT and by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel.

Details of the School Travel Forum Code of Practice are available from Rayburn Tours upon request. Alternatively, visit the School Travel Forum website: [www.schooltravelforum.com](http://www.schooltravelforum.com).

In addition Rayburn Tours is a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge holder, further details of this accreditation are available at [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk).

*\*Whilst these guidelines cover state schools in England, the advice they contain and the information regarding the School Travel Forum Safety Management Standard will undoubtedly be of interest to any school undertaking educational visits, in the interests of establishing best practice.*