

# SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY (SMS)

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



# CONTENTS

1. <a href="#">General Statement of Policy</a>	2
2. <a href="#">Organisation of Staff</a>	3
3. <a href="#">Monitoring</a>	4
4. <a href="#">Accommodation</a>	4-5
5. <a href="#">Transport</a>	6-7
6. <a href="#">Concert Venues</a>	7
7. <a href="#">Ski Tours</a>	7-8
8. <a href="#">Sport Tours</a>	8
9. <a href="#">Excursions and Adventurous Activities</a>	9
10. <a href="#">Inspection Visits</a>	10
11. <a href="#">Safety Information Before Travel</a>	10
12. <a href="#">Tour Managers</a>	10
13. <a href="#">Emergency &amp; Incident Procedures</a>	10
14. <a href="#">Crisis Management Plan</a>	11
15. <a href="#">Training</a>	11
16. <a href="#">Contact Details</a>	12
17. <a href="#">OEAP National Guidance</a>	12

# 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 endeavour to promote a positive health & safety culture throughout our own and our supplier's organisations world-wide.
- 1.2 We will endeavour to set standards that meet the needs of our clients that are measurable, achievable and realistic.
- 1.3 We will endeavour to 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 visit leaders with information that will increase their ability to manage safety on their trips.
- 1.5 We will endeavour to measure and review our performance and compliance with our own system, and have our work audited annually by a suitably qualified external expert annually.
- 1.6 We will endeavour to 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 at least annually. We will endeavour to 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 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:



Kelly Wigley  
Operations and Customer Relations Director

## 2. ORGANISATION OF STAFF

### 2.1 Policy

The Joint Managing Directors have overall responsibility for the direction of the SMS ensuring, where reasonably practicable, 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 Where reasonably practicable, the Operations and Customer Relations Director 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 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 5](#) and the emergency & incident procedures as detailed in [section 10](#).

2.2.2 Where reasonably practicable, the Transport Manager is 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. incident investigation) monitoring, of coach companies in line with the Transport policy in [section 5](#) and the emergency and incident procedures as detailed in [section 10](#).

2.2.3 Where reasonably practicable, the Head of Product, Product Managers and Operations Managers 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 Operations and Customer Relations Director 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 Operations and Customer Relations Director, Operations Support Manager and Head of Product 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 Operations and Customer Relations Director and Head of Product 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) Code of Practice (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 on our website/printed material)

- 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 checklist will be attained if the accommodation is used as a 'one off' or if it is used for less than 5 groups/250 people within a calendar year. A standard accommodation checklist is completed by the hotelier or agent on our behalf, and assessed by a member of Rayburn Tours staff who has undergone appropriate training and competency assessment.
- If the property is used by more than 5 groups/250 people 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 staff who has undergone appropriate training and competency assessment.

## 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

- In the UK, we will endeavour to select coach operators who belong to recognised industry bodies such as, 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 visit leader has specifically requested otherwise or no reasonable alternative is available and the visit leader has been informed and agrees, the following points will be considered where teams are supplied as opposition:

- Visit 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 Product or a Product Manager 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 Product or a Product Manager 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) or itinerary.
- 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 Product or a Product Manager 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 Adventurous Activities Safety Consultant (AASC) 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 Operations and Customer Relations Director to review and investigate where appropriate.

## 12. TOUR MANAGERS

### 12.1 UK Citizens

We endeavour to police check (enhanced DBS) any Tour Managers with UK citizenship to assess their 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 to gain confirmation that Tour Managers are suitable for working with children by liaising with relevant foreign agencies, where possible and monitoring group feedback.

## 13. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Emergency Phones

- On a rota basis, one fully-trained member of Rayburn Tours staff are appointed as 24 hour emergency Duty Officers for visit leaders to contact when on tour. All visit 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.
- During peak departure periods, we will endeavour to maintain a skeleton office team during weekend daytime hours.
- A file outlining details of current groups on tour and emergency contact numbers for suppliers will be available to to the 24-hour emergency Duty Officers and Managers in soft copy format.
- Our Duty Officer team is supported by an external call centre, critical response consultancy firm, and Operations Management team.

## 14. CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

The Critical Incident 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. It is intended for internal use only.

## 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. 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)

## 17. OEAP NATIONAL GUIDANCE: Safety on Educational Visits

Schools and providers are expected to follow the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance, which is the recognised framework for the planning and management of educational visits in the UK.

The OEAP National Guidance places responsibility on schools and their employers to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out when selecting external providers, including tour operators. This includes obtaining and reviewing a provider's Safety Management System (SMS) and understanding how safety is managed across all elements of the visit.

A tour operator's Safety Management System should clearly demonstrate:

- How safety is planned, managed, and monitored across all aspects of the visit
- The processes used to assess and manage risks associated with accommodation, transport, and activities
- Evidence of due diligence in the selection and ongoing review of suppliers (including accommodation and transport providers)
- Details of any independent inspection or verification of safety systems

OEAP guidance also emphasises that:

- Head Teachers and Educational Visit Coordinators (EVCs) must be satisfied that appropriate checks on providers have been completed
- Teachers and visit leaders have a duty of care to follow their employer's policies and national guidance when planning and delivering visits
- The use of externally verified providers can support schools in meeting these responsibilities

The School Travel Forum (STF) Safety Management Standard provides an established framework aligned with OEAP expectations. STF Assured Members are required to:

- Operate a Safety Management System covering all elements of a visit
- Demonstrate due diligence in the assessment of accommodation, transport, and excursions
- Undergo independent annual inspection by a qualified external body

Rayburn Tours is proud to hold School Travel Forum Assured Member status, confirming that its Safety Management System meets these requirements. The STF Code of Practice has been developed in consultation with teaching unions and the OEAP.

Further information is available at: [www.schooltravelforum.com](http://www.schooltravelforum.com)

In addition, Rayburn Tours holds the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge, which recognises organisations that have demonstrated high-quality educational provision and effective risk management.

Further details are available at: [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk)