

Safety Audit Framework for Outdoor Education Programs

Safety Audits are a valuable and constructive tool for outdoor programs to review their practices. When used proactively, they provide valuable insight into the strengths and opportunities for improvement of a program and/or organization. Below is an outline of a typical audit framework and timeline for a large organization such as a school or facilities based program. Smaller organizations can either schedule less frequent audits, or better, conduct spot audits on specific facets of their organization, administration, and programming each year.

Before scheduling an audit, consider the following points and questions.

1. Goals

- a. What are the goals/scope of the audit?
 - i. Are there specific concerns?
 1. Incident?
 - ii. General program review
 1. What areas do you want the auditor to examine?
 - a. Program
 - i. Objectives
 - ii. Funding
 - b. Facilities
 - i. Ropes Courses
 - ii. Waterfront
 - iii. Food Preparation
 - iv. Security
 - v. Fire
 - c. Equipment
 - i. Vehicles
 - ii. Activity Specific Equipment
 - d. Staff
 - i. Ethics
 - ii. Performance
 - iii. Training
 - e. Administration
 - i. Risk Management Plan
 - ii. Emergency Response Plan
 - iii. Policies and Procedures
 - iv. Staff certification
 - v. Record Keeping

2. Responsibilities

- a. Who is responsible for what during the review
 - i. Who provides what documentation?

- ii. To whom does the auditor report?
 - iii. Who is responsible for responding to the audit?
- 3. Reporting
 - a. Is there a formal reporting mechanism for the auditor's report?
 - i. Typically, it goes to the Safety Committee, which is responsible for reviewing the report, requesting clarification etc.... from the Auditor, and ultimately providing a written response to the Auditor's report. The Auditor's report and the written response are usually then shared with the senior management of the organization.
 - ii. The committee can accept or reject any of the auditor's recommendations, and should do so in writing.
- 4. Follow Up
 - a. Is there a follow up procedure to ensure the recommendations are implemented?
 - i. Timeline
 - ii. Cost
 - iii. Responsibility
 - b. Review report and response during the seasonal Safety Committee Meetings.

Now it is time to schedule an Audit. Below is an outline for planning and scheduling an Audit.

- 1. Audit Schedule
 - a. How often should an Audit be conducted
 - i. Every 1-3 years
 - 1. Internal audits alternating with external audits
 - ii. After all Type 3 and 4 incidents
- 2. Finding an Auditor
 - a. Level of expertise with skill areas being reviewed
 - b. Experience with audits
 - c. Costs
 - i. Audits vary in cost. Some auditors do the work for free, others charge up to \$500/day plus expenses. Many Auditors will work for a reasonable honorarium.
 - d. Availability
- 3. Scheduling the audit
 - a. Typically, an audit takes between 3 and 6 days. An audit is commonly divided into 3 phases.
 - i. Phase 1 – Document Review
 - 1. Depending on the goals of the audit, the auditor will ask to see
 - a. Previous Audit Reports
 - b. Program literature including brochures and program handouts
 - c. Website
 - d. Program goals and objectives
 - e. Risk Management Plan

- f. Emergency Response Plan
 - g. Staff Manuals
 - h. Job Descriptions
 - i. Waiver and Meds
 - j. Policy and Procedure Manuals
- ii. Phase 2 – Program and Facilities Visit
1. Usually an auditor will also want to visit offices, check on record keeping for
 - a. Staff
 - i. Certification
 - ii. Licenses and Permits
 1. Drivers Abstract
 2. Criminal Record
 - iii. Logs
 - iv. Training Records
 - b. Equipment
 - i. Repair and Maintenance Records
 - ii. Physical inspections
 - c. Vehicles
 - i. Repair and Maintenance Records
 - ii. Physical inspection
 - iii. NSA Certification
 - iv. Driver Logs
 - d. Facilities
 - i. Repair and Maintenance Records
 - ii. Fire
 - iii. High and Low Ropes
 - iv. Waterfront
 - v. Food Preparation and Packing
 - e. Security Measures for staff, clients, equipment, and records
 2. Program Visit
 - a. Observe staff and participants in action
 - i. Field Practice
 - ii. Equipment use, storage, and care
 - iii. Food Management
 - iv. Ethics
 - v.
 - b. Ratio's/Supervision
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Special Needs
 1. Ie Therapeutic
 - iii. Behaviour Management

- c. Programming
 - i. Appropriate to outcomes?
- iii. Phase 3 – Reporting
 - 1. Draft a report
 - a. Review initial findings with Safety Committee
 - b. Update/clarify any errors
 - 2. Submit written report to Safety Committee
 - a. Safety Committee prepares a written response to Auditors report
 - i. Include implementation timeline and strategies
 - ii. If some recommendations are not followed, then clarify why
 - b. Auditors Report and Safety Committee response submitted to administration/board
 - c. Report and response filed
 - 3. Share findings with program staff

Schedule of Tasks

	Administration	Program Staff	Safety Committee
1-3 Years	Update Staff Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification • Logs • Contact Info • Drivers Abstract • Criminal Record Checks Review Program Objectives Renew Insurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program • Vehicle • Trailer Renew Permit Replace/Purchase Equipment Vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA Certification 	Update Certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR • First Aid • Drivers Abstract • Criminal Record Staff Training	Annual Program Review
Seasonally	Vehicle Maintenance Staff Medical Form	Equipment Inspection Test ERP	Test ERP Review Incidents
Monthly		Staff Check In	
Weekly		Ongoing Maintenance	