# Horse Trail Riding

# Australian

# Adventure Activity

# Good Practice Guide

**Guidance for routine and advance horse trail riding.**

## Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

The Outdoor Council of Australia and the Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee would respectfully like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners, their Elders past, present and emerging, for the important role Indigenous people continue to play in Australia and most especially on the land and waters used for outdoor activities and recreation.

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# Contents Overview

# Version details

| Version | Date | Details |
|---------|------|---------|
| 1.0 | 23 Sept 2019 | Version one release. |

# Foreword

**"Adventure is worthwhile" – Aristotle**

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practice Guides are designed to ensure effective, responsible, sustainable and safe delivery of adventure activities to dependent participants. They can help people across the outdoor sector to develop appropriately managed adventure activities which enhance individuals and our communities, while protecting the environment and culturally significant places. In doing this, these documents can help ensure that people will continue to enjoy the benefits of adventure activities well into the future.

Best wishes for all your adventures.

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee.

# Preface

## About these documents

The **Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS)** and related **Good Practice Guides (GPGs)** are a voluntary good-practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of outdoor adventure activities with *dependent participants*.

The AAAS and related GPGs provide guidance on safety and other aspects of responsible activity delivery, such as respect for the environment, cultural heritage and other users. They are not a full legal compliance guide, nor are they a "how to" guide or field manual for outdoor activities. They do not provide guidance on providing a high-quality experience over and above safe and responsible delivery.

Activity *providers* are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice in relation to their obligations and duties in delivering adventure activities and should reference the relevant laws to the area in which they intend to undertake the adventure activity.

## Does the Standard and Good Practice Guides apply to me?

The AAAS and related GPGs are specifically designed to help activity *providers* who are conducting activities involving *dependent participants*, to provide a safe and responsible experience. It is for each *provider* to determine based on their own individual circumstances, if they are working with *dependent participants* or not.

A *dependent participant* is a person owed a duty of care by the activity *provider* who is reliant upon the *activity leaders* for supervision, guidance or instruction to support the person's participation in an activity. For example, this often includes participants under the age of 18, participants lacking the ability to safely undertake the activity, or participants reasonably relying on the activity *provider* for their safety. The degree of dependence may vary during an activity.

Considerations for determining if a person is a *dependent participant* may include, but is not limited to:

- the foreseeable level of *competence* of the participant in the activity and the associated level of reliance this creates on the *activity leaders*
- the level of foreseeable self-reliance of the participant to reasonably manage their own safety
- the possible variation throughout the activity of the level of reliance
- the variation of the degree of dependence throughout the activity
- the individual context, nature and circumstances of the activity
- the relevant circumstances and particular facts relating to the responsibilities assumed by the *provider*.

An activity *provider* can be any organisation – business, community group, government agency, school or any other groups – that organises and leads adventure activities. Individuals can also be an activity *provider*, if they have the ultimate legal duty of care to participants. In general, 'the Standard' and GPGs relate to a provider as a 'whole organisation', rather than to 'specific roles' within the provider 'organisation'.

Some providers may have their own standards or guidelines appropriate to their duty of care. It is recommended that these be reviewed periodically to ensure current duty of care expectations are met. 'The Standard' and GPGs may aid such reviews.

## Are they legally binding?

The AAAS and GPGs are voluntary, not legal requirements. However, they may refer to specific laws and regulations which may be legally binding on activity *providers*.

While the AAAS and GPGs are voluntary, some *land manager*s and other organisations may require compliance. This may be as a condition of obtaining a licence, permit or other permission, or some other condition (e.g. a contract).

Under Australian common law and relevant legislation, *providers* have a legal duty of care towards *dependent participants* in some circumstances. In broad terms, the legal duty requires *providers* to take reasonable care that their actions and omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury to *dependent participants*.

The AAAS and GPGs are not legal advice, and they cannot answer whether a legal duty exists in specific circumstances. All adventure activity *providers* should check what legal requirements apply in their own situation and seek legal advice if at all in doubt.

Even in cases where participants are not dependent, other legal duties and obligations may arise. The AAAS and GPGs have not been developed for those contexts.

## Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The AAAS (i.e. the Standard) has a related Core Good Practice Guide (Core GPG). They both include guidance that applies to all adventure activities. They set out recommendations for a common approach to risk management that can generally apply regardless of the specific activity being undertaken.

Individual activity Good Practice Guides include guidance on specific adventure activities.

| The Standard | **Key requirements** for preparing & delivering adventure activities |
| --- | --- |
| Core Good Practice Guide | Recommended **common practices** & supporting information regardless of the adventure activity being undertaken |
| Activity Specific Good Practice Guides | Detailed **information on risk management & good practice** for specific adventure activities |

For any given activity, (i) the AAAS (the Standard), (ii) the Core GPG and (iii) the activity Good Practice Guide that applies to that specific activity, should be consulted.

The AAAS and Core GPG cover only those activities specifically listed. While the AAAS and Core GPG may be useful in managing *risk* generally for other activities, they may not reflect good practice for such other activities.

## Interpretation of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The following words and phrases are used in all documents and have specific meanings:

- Must: used where a provision is mandatory, if the *provider* is to operate fully in accordance with AAAS or GPGs. (This is equivalent to the keyword "shall" used in other voluntary standards e.g. Standards Australia, other International Standards Organisations (ISO's) etc.)
- Should: used where a provision is recommended, not mandatory. It indicates that the *provider* needs to consider their specific situation and decide for themselves whether it applies or is relevant.

- Can/cannot: indicates a possibility and capability.
- May/need not: indicates a permission or existence of an option.
- But are/is not limited to: used to indicate that a list is not definitive and additional items may need to be considered depending on the context.

The following formatting is used throughout:

- Defined words are in *italics*. They are defined in the Glossary.
- Examples are in smaller italic 9-point font.
- In document references are in <u>underlined</u>. References are to section heading titles.
- External web or Australian AAS & GPG document links are in *dotted underline italic*.

## Creation

The AAAS and GPGs were developed with the input from a wide range of outdoors and adventure activity experts with extensive field experience. They draw on state and territory-specific standards previously in place across Australia. The development process included work by a range of technical expert working groups, as well as open consultation throughout the community of activity providers and other experts.

The Steering Committee wishes to thank all the Technical Working Group (TWG) members for their work and contributions.

The Steering Committee acknowledges all the State and Territory Governments for funding the creation of the first national adventure activity standard and set of good practice guides for the sector.

Further details of the creation of the AAAS and GPGs can be found at *www.australianaas.org.au*

It is intended that the AAAS and GPGs will be regularly updated to reflect changing practice and better understanding over time. Updates will be noted on the website *www.australianaas.org.au*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Horse trail riding overview

A horse trail ride involves organised recreational horseback riding where dependent participants are led as a group, outside of small enclosed areas and through varying environments.

Horse trail rides include:

- short *routine rides* in tracked areas
- longer rides in untracked or remote areas including multi day rides
- rides where riders provide their own mounts.

This Good Practice Guide (GPG) identifies specific section headings that separate requirements for:

- *Routine rides* (see Glossary)
- *Advanced rides* (see Glossary).

Where a section heading does not mention either Routine or Advanced rides, it applies to both types of rides.

## 1.2 Exclusions

This GPG does not cover riding lessons and competitive events.

## 1.3 Related activities

Where camping is involved refer to the separate activity GPG for Camping.

# 2 Management of risk

## 2.1 Management of risk

Also refer to *Core GPG – Risk management section*.

### 2.1.2 Risk management plan

The risk management plan must address but is not limited to:

- individual horse behaviours
- interactions between people and horses
- interactions between the environment and horses
- interactions between horses.

Further detail is provided in the following sections of this document.

The risk management plan should also address any other relevant items identified in the Core GPG and this activity GPG.

# 3 Planning

## 3.1 Activity plans

Also refer *Core GPG*.

### 3.1.1 Routine Horse Trail Riding activity plans

Planning considerations should include but are not limited to:

- safety of riders at all times
- safety of horse and rider combination
- an appropriate contingency plan for a horse and rider who prove to pose an unduly high risk to themselves, others and/or horses
- how to maintain the welfare of the horses at all times
- providing progressive and sequential skill development
- the expected trail conditions
- route and terrain specific hazards and risks
- environmental impact and biosecurity (e.g. spread of weeds and invasive species).

The activity plan should address but is not limited to:

- if a horse becomes lame
- if a horse becomes loose
- if a horse becomes loose and is disrupting other horses
- if a loose horse heads home
- management of the group (e.g. dismounting) when it needs to wait while an incident is addressed
- if weather conditions impact horse behaviour
- if a rider wants to return home immediately and not continue the ride
- if the location/weather impacts the ability to continue the ride
- if an uninjured rider does not want to get back on the horse after a fall
- if a rider cannot physically get back on the horse without a mounting block
- if a foreseeable emergency occurs (also see section 3.2 Emergency management planning)
- general activity logistics.

### 3.1.2 Advanced Horse Trail Riding activity plans

The advanced horse trail riding activity plan should address but is not limited to items listed for routine trail rides above.

Additional advance horse trail riding planning considerations should include but are not limited to:

- the need for a support vehicle(s) or pack horses
- the required navigation skills & equipment
- the suitability of maps for navigation
- the access available to the start and finish locations and throughout the activity
- how to manage horse interactions when horses owned by participants are added to the group.

## 3.2 Emergency management planning

Also refer Core GPG.

### 3.2.1 Horse Trail Riding emergency management planning

A non-participating contact must be used as part of the emergency management plan for all horse trail riding activities.

The emergency management plan must address but is not limited to:

- access by emergency services
- the rider is injured and cannot continue
- a rider falls
- an appropriate wait time after a person has fallen before being assessed as "uninjured" and allowed to remount
- a horse is injured

- a horse dislodges rider
- a horse is out of control of its rider
- a loose horse heads home and other horses follow
- a horse behaves dangerously and/or exhibits vices
- a horse tries to roll
- a horse has a fall or is stuck
- any other relevant items identified in the *Core GPG – Emergency Management Plan*.

# 4 Participants

All persons *interacting* with *horses* must initially be considered *inexperienced* until a full assessment of their abilities has been conducted.

## 4.1 Pre-activity communication

Also refer *Core GPG*.

### 4.1.1 Information provided pre-activity

Providers need to determine if they can suitably manage the risks involved when catering for specific participant needs (e.g. providing activities for participants living with a disability).

Pre-activity information provided to participants should include but is not limited to:

- appropriate clothing and footwear required
- what information participants need to advise the provider prior to the activity including any relevant health conditions or if living with a disability.

## 4.2 Participant restrictions

Also refer *Core GPG*.

### 4.2.1 Routine Horse Trail Riding participant restrictions

A risk-based assessment that includes the rider and horse combination must be completed for relevant health, medical or personal condition(s).

A participant may not be able to participate in an activity, for the safety of themselves, the provider, other participants or others.

Reasons may include but are not limited to, the participant:

- is unable to control their horse
- weighs greater than the weight that can safely be carried by the available suitable horses
- has a personal condition where the risks associated in undertaking the activity cannot be suitably managed (also refer: *Core GPG – sections Participant Restrictions and Health & Wellbeing* and below section 4.3.1 Participants living with a disability.)

### 4.2.2 Advanced Horse Trail Riding participant restrictions

Reasons may include but are not limited to, the participant:

- has a restriction listed in the above section 4.2.1 Routine ride participant restriction
- is riding their own horse which is unsuitable (refer section 6.1 Horse suitability).

## 4.3 Vulnerable participants

Also refer *Core GPG*.

### 4.3.1 Horse Trail Riding with participants living with a disability

People living with a disability may require Trail Guides with additional recognised qualifications, knowledge and skills. Specialist training is available specifically for those responsible for overseeing riding undertaken by people with a disability.

Only trail guides who hold the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) qualification should provide trail rides for people who are living with a type of disability that might impact on their ability to effectively control a horse.

Reasons a participant living with a disability may not be able to participate in an activity may include but are not limited to, the participant:

- is unable to use their hands or legs
- cannot maintain their balance
- has a condition that makes the length of ride unsuitable due but not limited to:
  - the attention span required by the participant
  - physical conditions where pain is a factor
  - intellectual or sensory disability.

A risk based assessment that includes the rider and horse combination must be completed for relevant health, medical or personal condition(s).

Health, medical or personal conditions where the risks cannot be suitably managed include but are not limited to:

- severe osteoporosis
- uncontrolled seizures
- open pressure sores
- open wounds
- unstable spine, including subluxation of cervical spine
- Atlanto-Axial dislocation or significant subluxation in Down Syndrome
- advanced multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy
- acute herniated disc.

Considerations for providing trail rides for participants living with a disability include but are not limited to:

- the horses are suitable (also refer section 6.1 Horse suitability)
- the activity leaders have the appropriate competencies for managing the risks involved (also refer Leadership sections 7.2 Competencies & 7.3 Recognition of competence)
- there is an appropriate number of activity leaders to provide direct supervision where required for individual participants
- possible restrictions as per above section 4.2 Participant restrictions.

Possible additional risk management strategies may include but are not limited to:

- trail guides leading the participant's horse
- having a 'side-walker' assigned to individual participants if the terrain makes this possible.

Where the risks of a trail ride are unacceptable or are unable to be appropriately managed, consideration of a modified version of the activity - such as riding in an enclosed area - may assist in addressing the concerns.

# 5 Environment

## 5.1 Environment related planning

Also refer *Core GPG*.

### 5.1.1 Environment considerations

Specific environment considerations must include:

- track or trail features (e.g. water crossings, bridges etc.)
- other users (e.g. mountain bikers, walkers, horse riders, vehicles)
- climate or weather (refer sections below 5.1.4 Severe weather and 5.2 Bushfire, prescribed fire and fire danger)
- the type of flora expected (e.g. impeding progress, ability to cut or scratch etc.)
- the type of fauna expected (refer section 5.4 wildlife safety below).

Track or trail features that must be considered are:

- the condition of the track or trail (e.g. after wet weather)
- the gradient
- the surface
- the width
- the obstacles to be negotiated
- the expected level of competence needed to negotiate the trail's features
- the expected level of fitness of horse and rider needed to negotiate the trail's features.

### 5.1.2 Traveling on roads & paths

Any applicable road legislation or regulation must be complied with.

Appropriate risk management procedures must be implemented when using roads or vehicle tracks.

When riding on roads, procedures must be in place to:

- make riders aware that horses are considered vehicles
- keep to the left and obey all traffic rules and regulations.
- have a more experienced rider on the road side if riders are in pairs
- crossing of road is suitably controlled by the activity leaders
- ride horses abreast no more than 1.5 m apart.
- ride in single file or two abreast at most
- pair horses that are not aggressive to each other together.

Also refer section 7.7 Activity management.

### 5.1.3 Weather Information

Refer Appendix 3 Weather information.

### 5.1.4 Severe weather triggers

Also refer *Core GPG*.

Trigger points must be based on the relevant Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and actual weather conditions.

The risk management plan and emergency management plan should include guidance on relevant trigger points and associated actions for:

- severe weather warnings

- thunderstorm warnings
- coastal waters wind warnings
- tropical cyclone advice: watch and warning
- extreme cold temperature
- extreme hot temperatures.

Actions for relevant weather may include but are not limited to:

- cancellation
- modification and/or evacuation to a safe location
- avoiding locations affected by tides or surf
- avoiding areas and river crossings that have the potential for flash flooding
- preparations to avoid the risks associated with blizzards
- moving to areas that are protected from strong winds
- managing risks of flying or falling items during strong winds
- moving to areas that are protected from hail
- preparations to avoid the risks associated with lightning.

## 5.2 Bushfire, prescribed fire and fire danger

Refer *Core GPG - Bush fire, prescribed fire and fire danger*.

## 5.3 Water and river crossings

The safety of bridge crossings must be reviewed prior to use as a crossing point.

Considerations for the safety of bridge crossings include but are not limited to:

- has appropriate guard rails if deemed necessary
- provides safe footing including having no missing pieces or significant holes in the crossing surface
- the design is appropriate for a horse to cross.

When assessing the suitability of a potential creek/river crossing, considerations should include but are not limited to:

- if there is debris floating or flowing in the current, as this can indicate the risk of being hit and/or swept away by debris
- how clear the water is and if the base of the crossing can be seen, as this can help determine the depth of crossing and its base
- the depth of the crossing, as this can indicate the amount of water and force needed to be overcome to avoid being washed away
- the speed of the water, as this can indicate the volume of water and force needed to be overcome to avoid being washed away
- where the water flows, as the flow may wash people into dangerous or deadly situations (e.g. into trees in the water that act as strainers, into narrow rock crevices)
- the base of the crossing (e.g. pebbles, sand, small rocks or large rocks), as moving water can move the base increasing the danger of foot entrapment and/or reducing the likelihood of maintaining stable footing during the crossing
- crossing downstream of unusable bridges and causeways.

### 5.3.1 Flooding

The crossing of swollen creeks, rivers, flooded bridges or fords, or the entry of floodwaters should be avoided.

Areas likely to experience flash flooding should be avoided during severe weather or thunderstorms.

The suitability of water for drinking for human consumption during and after flooding should be assessed.

## 5.4 Wildlife safety

Procedures should be in place to minimise the risks associated with wildlife that may be encountered.

The types of wildlife that may need to be considered include but are not limited to:

- birds
- crocodiles
- kangaroos
- pigs
- rabbits
- snakes
- ticks
- wild dogs
- wombats.

## 5.5 Environmental sustainability procedures

Also refer *Core GPG*.

### 5.5.1 Routine Horse Trail Rides - Environmental sustainability procedures

**Horse Trail Ride - Travel on durable surfaces**

The *procedures* may include but are not limited to:

- identify and avoid disturbing unstable, erosion prone or excessively rain effected terrain
- using appropriate and safe bridges wherever possible to avoid impact on water quality, ecosystems and erosion
- using firm, stony water crossings where no bridges are available, to minimise the impact on water quality, ecosystems and erosion
- using existing tracks, pathways or roads to avoid damage to vegetation.

**Horse Trail Ride - Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors**

The *procedures* may include but are not limited to:

- only allowing horses to eat weed-free feed at least 48 hrs prior to entering bushland areas (e.g. eating clean chaff, pellets and cracked, rolled or steamed grains and avoiding meadow hay)
- cleaning horse hoofs prior to entry to avoid transporting weeds or invasive species
- advising land managers or owners where weeds and invasive species have been identified
- planned actions for trail activity leaders and participants to appropriately manage interactions between horses and the general public.

### 5.5.2 Advanced Horse Trail Rides - Environmental sustainability procedures

The procedures may include but are not limited to those listed in section 5.5.1 Routine horse trail ride sustainability procedures above and:

**Advance Horse Trail Ride - Travel and camp on durable surfaces**

The *procedures* may include but are not limited to:

- always camp horses a suitable distance away from watercourses
- avoid allowing horses to denude vegetation
- check with land managers regarding the use of nightlines and ensure that portable yards, if used, are relocated each night
- use tree protectors on nightlines to prevent trees from being damaged
- incorporate stops in each nightline to prevent horses from becoming entangled around trees

- place nightlines and arrange camps so that it is not possible for horses to walk on people or equipment
- where possible, make nightlines 15 metres or more in length to reduce concentrated impacts.

**Advanced Horse Trail Ride – Dispose of waste properly**

*Procedures* may include but are not limited to:

- using collapsible buckets, and/or a pump and hose, to water and wash horses
- wash horses a suitable distance away from watercourses
- dispose of, or widely disperse manure from overnight campsites.

# 6 Equipment, horses and logistics

## 6.1 Horse suitability

Procedures must be in place to assess horses for their suitability before being used for trail rides.

Procedures must be in place to assess horses for their suitability for trail rides on an ongoing basis.

When assessing their suitability, horses must be categorised as being suitable for different levels of riders and for routine trail rides and/or advanced trail rides.

Procedures must be in place to ensure any relevant horse behaviour and/or idiosyncrasies are made known to the relevant people interacting with or riding the horse.

### 6.1.1 Routine trail rides horse suitability

Where a horse is supplied by the provider, considerations as to its suitability for the rider should include but are not limited to:

- its size
- being desensitized to the environment
- being socialized with other horses
- suitably tested for behaviour and responses to different types of rider behaviour
- behaviour does not present an unacceptable risk
- fitness and ability to work effectively on the trail ride
- relevant horse behaviour and/or idiosyncrasies are known.

Horses must not be used for routine trail rides where their behaviour includes bucking, kicking, stumbling, shying, aggression to other horses, bolting, over reaction or over responsiveness.

### 6.1.2 Advanced trail rides horse suitability

Where a horse is supplied by the provider for an advanced trail ride, considerations as to its suitability for the rider should include but are not limited to:

- the level of competence of the rider to safely handle the horse's behaviour
- those 'considerations as to their suitability' listed in section 6.1.1 Routine trail rides horse suitability.

Where a horse is supplied by the participant for an advanced trail ride, considerations as to their suitability must include but are not limited to:

- that the participant is able to appropriately control the horse
- the horse's behaviour is not aggressive towards people or other horses
- its fitness & health
- its hoof condition is suitable for the terrain and length of ride

- tack is well fitted, suitable and safe
- relevant horse behaviour and/or idiosyncrasies are known
- it is appropriately vaccinated where deemed necessary.

Yarding horses not already familiar with each other must be avoided to prevent conflicts and injuries.

## 6.2 Equipment requirements

### 6.2.1 Safety equipment

Helmets used must be approved horse riding helmets compliant with the relevant Australian Standard or equivalent.

It is recommended that a compliant helmet should be worn while horse riding.

Additional personal protective equipment that may be considered includes:

- gloves
- eye protection.

Additional equipment that should be considered includes:

- high visibility vests or helmet covers to enable easy identification of trail guides.

### 6.2.2 Clothing

Procedures must be in place to ensure appropriate clothing for the expected and foreseeable weather conditions is available.

The minimum clothing requirements must be:

- short sleeves shirt with a collar
- full length trousers.

Considerations for determining appropriate clothing include but are not limited to offering protection from:

- physical injuries
- weather
- distress to the rider (e.g. grazes, sunburn, rubbing etc.).

### 6.2.3 Footwear

Footwear must fully enclose the foot and be suitable for the activity.

Procedures must be in place to ensure appropriate footwear is worn at all times while riding and interacting with horses.

Considerations for determining appropriate footwear include but are not limited to:

- having heels which deter the foot from slipping through the stirrup, and allows for uninhibited removal of the foot from the stirrup iron
- providing appropriate protection to the top of the foot in the event of a horse stepping on the foot
- for advanced trail rides having a sole that prevents slipping in the event of a dismount on steep slippery ground.

Where it is uncertain that dependent participants will have appropriate footwear, stirrups used must be of a design that prevents footwear jamming and/or will dismantle if a fall occurs during which the footwear becomes jammed.

### 6.2.4 Personal items

Personal items (e.g. bags, cameras, loose jewellery) must be carried in a way that will minimise the likelihood of them being dropped, becoming entangled or causing injury.

## 6.3 Use of safety equipment

### 6.3.1 Routine horse trail ride participants equipment

A compliant helmet must be used by all participants.

### 6.3.2 Advanced horse trail ride participants equipment

A compliant helmet must be used by all participants' who are minors and/or inexperienced riders.

## 6.4 Tack requirements

Saddlery must be a good fit for the horse.

Saddlery must consist of:

- saddles securely attached to the horse in a manner that keeps the saddle properly and securely in place and this may require the use of cruppers and breastplates
- saddles secured by at least two points of attachment (e.g. double-buckle girth, girth and surcingle) or by a double-wrapped latigo made with appropriate material that provides sufficient friction to prevent slippage
- where a stock saddle with a girth and a surcingle is used and the surcingle is attached in such a manner that it blocks the release of a stirrup leather in an emergency, then additional equipment must be fitted to the stirrup to ensure a rider will not be trapped by their foot in a fall.

Considerations regarding the saddlery used include but are not limited to:

- the lack of support bareback pads provides when used by new riders
- use of straps to hold saddle cloths in place
- use of bitless bridles where there is evidence that the horse has been educated with this equipment and is totally in control using this system.

All horses should have halters and ropes either fitted or available, to enable them to be tied up at rest stops or in an emergency.

Considerations for equipment requirements are listed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 Equipment lists.

## 6.5 Use of tack

A pre-activity equipment safety inspection must be completed.

All tack must be:

- in good repair
- correctly fitted.

The type of saddle used by inexperience riders must be either a stock, western or hybrid saddle.

The safety inspection must include but is not limited to:

- fit and condition of tack,
- tack is appropriate for the rider.

Participants must be instructed on the use of tack. (Refer section 7.6.1 Leadership – Routine horse trail ride instruction for further details.)

Girths/cinches must be checked before commencement of ride.

Girths/cinches should be checked again after the horse(s) have warmed up and then periodically as required thereafter.

The location of the saddle cloths should be periodically checked by visual inspection throughout the ride.

## 6.6 Support vehicles

The use of a support vehicle to aid and assist a group during the activity may be useful or necessary and the hazards and risks associated with vehicle operations need to be managed.

Support vehicles must comply with the laws, regulations or requirements for the relevant jurisdiction(s).

Operators of support vehicles must:

- hold a current and appropriate licence to operate the vehicle
- be competent to operate the vehicle in the foreseeable conditions
- understand and have immediate access to the emergency management plan.

# 7 Leadership

## 7.1 Naming conventions

Trail Guide – Routine rides or Trail Guide – Advanced rides is equivalent to Leader in *Core GPG*.

The use of Trail Guide refers to Trail Guide – Routine rides and Trail Guide – Advanced rides.

*Assistant trail guide*: An assistant trail guide is a person competent to interact with horses including handling and riding.

All Trail Guide and Assistant Trail Guide competencies needed for a particular role must be clearly defined.

### 7.1.1 Assistant trail guide role

This role is limited as an assistant trail guide does not have the competence, skills or training to take responsibility for the safety of participants. This role is not an "assistant leader" as described in *Core GPG*.

Assistant trail guides must be:

- under direct supervision of a trail guide
- understand the emergency response procedures for the activity.

Assistant trail guides may take the responsibility for:

- handling horses
- taking the front position on a ride
- other appropriate tasks as directed by the Trail Guide(s)
- assisting with emergency response procedures.

The assistant trail guides role should not include:

- responsibility for the safety of participants.

## 7.2 Competencies

This section outlines the *competencies* that activity leaders should have.

### 7.2.1 Competencies overview

The AAAS and Good Practice Guides refers to units from the Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package for descriptive statements of the knowledge and skills required of *activity leaders*.

The Training Package units are used for the sole purpose of providing descriptions for the knowledge and skills required. It is not intended to imply or require that specific formal training, assessment or qualification is the only means of gaining or recognising knowledge and skills.

Activity *providers* can recognise *activity leaders* as having the 'ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve expected results' (i.e. *competencies*) in a number of different ways as per _Recognition of competence in Core GPG_.

The Training Package units listed can be found by searching for the units on the _training.gov.au/Home/Tga_ website. The code provided with the unit name assists in this search.

### 7.2.2 Routine Horse Trail Ride competencies
Refer Appendix 4 Trail Guide competencies – Routine horse trail rides.

### 7.2.3 Advanced Horse Trail Ride competencies
Refer Appendix 5 Trail Guide competencies – Advanced horse trail rides.

## 7.3 Recognition of competence
### 7.3.1 Horse Trail Ride recognition pathways
The recognition pathways used for Trail Guides must be a recognised Trail Guide training qualification.

The recognition pathways used for Assistant Trail Guides may be all recognition pathways listed in the _Core GPG – Recognition pathways_.

## 7.4 Group size
Also, refer to considerations for determining group size in _Core GPG sections: Leadership – Group size and Environment – Land owner and/or manager requirements_.

The recommend maximum group size should not exceed 20 horses i.e. total horses carrying participants, guides and pack horses not to exceed 20.

## 7.5 Recommended supervision ratios
In determining the supervision ratio, consideration must be given to the:

- experience, ability, needs and age of the participants
- considerations listed in section 4.3 Participants living with a disability – and any known special needs
- experience, ability, history, behaviour and/or idiosyncrasies of the horses
- nature of the activities and weather conditions
- terrain
- the considerations for determining supervision requirements in _Core GPG – Activity Leader to participant ratios_.

Supervision provided must allow adequate supervision of all participants and the ability to rapidly, and adequately, respond to emergency situations.

On any trail ride there should be 2 trail guide(s) and/or assistant trial guide(s) with current first aid qualifications.

There must not be more that 6 participants per trail guide.

The recommended supervision requirements that should be used on routine and advanced rides are:

| Participants | Supervision |
|---|---|
| 1-6 | 1 trail guide & 1 assistant trail guide |
| 7-12 | 2 trail guides & 1 assistant trail guide |
| 13-17 | 3 trail guides |
| participants under age of 10 | refer text below |

It is recommended good practice that the assistant trail guide should be used in a role which allows trail guides maximum flexibility in supervision of participants. For example, the assistant trail guide rides the front horse to set the pace and route advised by the trail guides, allowing all the trail guides freedom to move throughout the group to provide supervision as needed.

Participants younger than 10 years of age, unless competent horse riders and in control of a suitable horse, must be on a lead rope controlled by a trail guide. This trail guide must not be counted in the ratios for the purposes of the whole group's supervision.

Where participants involved in advanced horse trail rides are inexperienced in *interacting* with horses, the minimum supervision must be 2 trail guides.

## 7.6 Activity instruction

### 7.6.1 Routine Horse Trail Ride activity instruction

Information provided to participants should include but is not limited to:

- how to correctly fit and adjust approved helmets
- the requirement to wear helmets at all times while riding
- appropriate methods for securing hair and jewellery for personal safety
- usage of saddle bags provided to carry personal equipment and medications
- risks related to the behaviour of horses, including but not limited to:
    - they are independent, decision-making animals
    - their flight instinct
    - the possible behaviour and/or idiosyncrasies of individual horses
- behaviour requirements for riders, including but not limited to:
    - individual and group responsibilities
    - no shouting, running or throwing things
    - no walking up behind or standing behind horses
    - no standing immediately in front of horses
    - when on foot, to stand near the horse's shoulder
    - unless participant skill level has been assessed previously as experienced, no mounting without assistance
    - not to chew gum when riding
- agreed methods of communication within the group (e.g. signals and calls)
- requirements regarding the order of the ride including:
    - no passing the front guide
    - staying in front of the back guide
    - the distance between horses
    - keeping in a line
    - the speed is to be determined by the trail guide
- requirements when crossing roads
- requirements when encountering vehicles
- requirements when encountering pedestrians
- following instructions from trail guides and assistant trail guides.

### 7.6.2 Advanced Horse Trail Ride activity instruction

In addition to the information in the routine ride section, extra information provided may include but is not limited to:

- any relevant requirements to reduce environmental impact and/or stop the spread of weeds or invasive species
- recommendations on the type of food, the amount of food and water required
- use of a buddy system, if appropriate
- expected terrain, hazards and emergency procedures.

## 7.7 Activity management

A trail guide should be familiar with the activity location and/or trail network.

Participants should be able to easily identify trail guides.

The rider and horse combination should be allocated based on the assessed ability of the rider and suitability of the horse.

All trail ride activities should be provided at a level suitable for the abilities of the least experienced rider involved.

### 7.7.1 Routine Horse Trail Ride activity management

Horses should be in a secure, hazard-free area, and held for inexperienced riders when they mount.

Prior to commencing the ride, a check must occur to ensure:

- each participant has a helmet that is correctly fitted
- the stirrup length and stirrup fit to shoe size is appropriate

A practical assessment of all participant's riding skills must be undertake prior to the departure of the ride.

All riders must demonstrate they can:

- hold and use the reins to control their horse including to stop and turn it
- demonstrate correct positioning of their feet in their stirrup and an ability to apply pressure for forward motion
- understand and comply with instructions.

Riding on roads or other traffic areas should be avoided where possible.

Where a routine trail ride does ride on roads, this should be in single file where possible.

Also refer section 5.1.2 Traveling on roads or paths.

### 7.7.2 Advanced Horse Trail Ride activity management

Procedures should be used to reduce the potential of participants becoming separated or lost.

An assessment of all participants' riding skills must be undertaken prior to departure.

Assessment of participants' riding skills may include but is not limited to:

- the ability of the rider to control their horse when moving away from and towards the group at walk, trot and canter.

Where participants on advanced trail rides are assessed as inexperienced or beginner riders:

- the suitability of allowing the participant to undertake the activity should be considered
- the management of the activity should reflect their needs
- consideration should be given to increasing the number of trail guides to ensure participants are appropriately supervised.

Where a participant uses a horse that they have supplied, additional procedures should be used to reduce the possibility of any unacceptable risks from:

- dangerous horse behaviours between unsocialized horses
- the participants horse's behaviour and/or idiosyncrasies.

Additional procedures to consider may include but are not limited to:

- not allowing horses that show aggression to other horses to participate or
- keeping horses that show aggression to other horses separate at all times.

All riders should be made aware of the particular horses that show aggression to other horses.

A reliable means of identifying horses that are inclined to kick out should be used (e.g. ribbon in the horse's tail).

Inexperienced riders and their horses must be kept separated from horses that show aggression to other horses at all times.

Also refer section 5.1.2 Traveling on roads or paths.

# 7.8 Horse management

## 7.8.1 Routine Horse Trail Ride horse management

Appropriate management of the health and safety of horses must include but is not limited to:

- the horses are fed and watered prior to use
- the horses are groomed properly including hoof care
- their equipment fits horse and rider and is suitable for the activity
- horses are not used if lame or sick
- each horse's fitness and condition is appropriate for ride
- the rider's size is appropriate for their horse and the expectations of the ride
- horses are not stressed by rider behaviour
- horses are not stressed by other horses (e.g. being bullied)
- horses are washed down at the end of the ride if they have sweated profusely
- horses' water intake is appropriate to avoid colic.

## 7.8.2 Advanced Horse Trail Ride horse management

Appropriate management of the health and safety of horses for advanced rides must include but is not limited to:

- as listed in section 7.8.1 Routine horse trail ride horse management above
- monitoring for signs of rubbing equipment and muscular problems
- the preparations made for any changes in diet to be used before or on the ride to avoid colic and the spread of weeds
- provided with adequate food and water, rest stops and shelter.

# Glossary

*AAAS*: Australian Adventure Activity Standard – See Preface for details.

*Advanced rides*: trail rides which are of longer duration including overnight or multi-day, operate at a greater distance away from an established base of operation, may travel in untracked or remote areas, may include horses provided by participants and may use pack horses or support vehicles to carry equipment and supplies. Participants generally have greater knowledge and skills in interacting with horses than an inexperienced rider.

*Camping*: the use of a temporary site for overnight camping.

*Equine*: refers to horses and any activities involving interacting with horses when riding, handling or caring for them.

*Flash flooding*: is flooding in a localised area with a rapid onset, usually as the result of relatively short intense bursts of rainfall.

*GPGs*: Good Practice Guide(s) – See Preface for details.

*Handling*: any activity involving *interacting* with a horse where the participant is not riding. Includes such things as catching, leading, holding, grooming, tacking up, un-tacking and providing health care.

*Horse*: refers to horse, mule, donkey and other equines.

*Horse trail ride*: organised recreational horseback riding where *dependent participants* are led as a group, outside of small enclosed areas and through varying environments.

*Interact/interacting*: is when a person is near a *horse* and can include being in close proximity, such as when *handling*, loading, riding or entering a paddock or place where horses are kept.

*Inexperienced*: where a rider or handler has no, or minimal knowledge or skill gained from *interacting* with horses. (All persons interacting with horses must initially be considered inexperienced until a full assessment of their abilities has been conducted.)

*Routine rides*: Horse trail rides which are of short duration (1-2 hours), following set tracks that are close to an established base of operation and use horses provided by the operators. Participants are generally *inexperienced* riders.

*Suitable horse*: a *horse* that matches the task expected of it and the *competence* of the person required to *interact* with it.

*Tack*: a piece of equipment or accessory used on a *horse* and includes such items as saddles, stirrups, bridles, halters, reins, lead ropes, bits and harnesses.

Also refer terms and definitions from *Core GPG*.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Routine Horse Trail Ride equipment

The equipment required, and the appropriate "type" of equipment used is dependent on the specific context of the activity.

Equipment used for routine horse trail riding may include but is not limited to:

### A1.1 Spare horse equipment

Spare equipment may include but is not limited to:

- reins
- stirrup leather
- lead rope
- halter
- baling twine/hay string.

### A1.2 Horse first aid

A horse first aid kit should include but is not limited to:

- hoof pick
- suitable bandages
- head collar and rope.

### A1.3 Emergency and rescue

Emergency equipment includes but is not limited to:

- an appropriate communication device (*see Core GPG - Equipment/communication equipment*)
- first aid kit (*see Core GPG - Equipment/first aid equipment and medication*) in waterproof storage
- documentation (see *Core GPG - Emergency management planning/activity leader required documentation*)
- a waterproof method of storing and carrying documentation and communications equipment.

### A1.4 Trail guides

Trail guides equipment may include but is not limited to that listed for participants.

### A1.5 Participants

Trail guides equipment may include but is not limited to:

- appropriate clothing
- appropriate footwear
- appropriate personal protective equipment
- personal medications
- sunglasses
- prescription glasses.

# Appendix 2 Advanced Horse Trail Ride equipment

The equipment required, and the appropriate "type" of equipment used is dependent on the specific context of the activity.

Equipment used for advanced horse trail riding may include but is not limited to equipment listed for Appendix 1 Routine horse trail rides and:

## A2.1 Spare horse equipment

Advanced trail rides spare additional equipment may include but is not limited to:

- spare girth
- spare breastplate(s)
- zip ties (various sizes).

## A2.2 Horse first aid

An advanced trail ride horse first aid kit should also include but is not limited to:

- antiseptic
- petroleum jelly.

## A2.3 Emergency and rescue

Advanced trail rides additional emergency equipment includes but is not limited to:

- emergency shelter where appropriate for the context
- emergency equipment to keep a patient warm (e.g. space blanket).

## A2.4 Trail guides

Advanced trail rides additional trail guides equipment may include but is not limited to:

- relevant maps and navigation information
- a waterproof method of storing and carrying maps and navigation information
- compass and/or other navigation aids (e.g. GPS)
- head torch and spare batteries
- plus items listed for participants.

## A2.5 Participant

Advanced trail rides additional participant equipment may include but is not limited to:

- sunscreen
- water container
- food or snacks.

## A2.6 Group

Advanced trail rides additional group equipment may include but is not limited to:

- trowel for toileting
- toilet paper
- hand sanitiser
- water purification system
- food for duration plus spare
- rubbish bags
- sunscreen
- insect repellent.

## A2.7 Other equipment

Advanced trail rides other additional equipment may include but is not limited to:

- saddle bags for personal items
- equipment to clean footwear and other equipment that may carry soil borne pathogens (e.g. phytophthora)
- horse feed for overnight trail rides
- buckets for watering horses
- nightlines
- nosebags for feed
- grooming equipment
- collapsible rake
- sharp knife
- euthanasia kit for overnight rides which do not have access to a quick response from veterinary assistance
- hole punch
- basic farrier kit.

Additional equipment used for overnight or extended duration horse trail riding refer *camping Good Practice Guide*.


# Appendix 3 Weather information

The Bureau of Meteorology provides a range of services. For details refer to:

*http://www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/WeatherGuideLand.pdf*

The following table details the:

- current Australian weather warnings
- associated weather for each warning
- mainland warning trigger points for issuing warnings for strong winds and hail.

Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and associated weather Table:

| Severe Weather warning | Severe Thunderstorm warning | Marine Wind Warning | Tropical Cyclone Advice: Watch or warning |
|---|---|---|---|
| High tides | | | |
| Large surf | | | |
| Heavy rain/flash flooding | Heavy rain/flash flooding | | |
| Blizzards | | | |
| Strong winds Wind >63 km/h Gusts >90 km/h | Strong winds Gusts >90 km/h | Strong winds Wind >48 km/h or >26 knots | Strong winds Wind >62 km/h or >=34 knots |
| | Tornadoes | | |
| | Hail Hail >=2cm | | |
| | Lightning | | |

# Appendix 4 Trail Guide competencies – Routine horse trail rides

Also refer to *Core GPG - Competencies* where appropriate.

The following table outlines the recommended competencies or the equivalent, that a Trail Guide and Assistant Trail Guide should have when leading routine horse trail rides.

| | Assistant Trail Guide | | Trail Guide (Leader) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Unit** | **Code (or the equivalent)** | **Unit** | **Code (or the equivalent)** |
| **Common units** | | | *All Core Good Practice Guide units plus* | |
| | Operate communications systems and equipment | PUAOPE013A | Operate communications systems and equipment | PUAOPE013A |
| | | | Plan for minimal environmental impact | SISOOPS304A |
| **Routine rides** | *All above units plus* | | *All above units plus* | |
| | Check and treat horses | ACMHBR201 | Check and treat horses | ACMHBR201 |
| | Provide daily care for horses | ACMHBR203 | Provide daily care for horses | ACMHBR203 |
| | Handle horses | SISOEQU001 | Handle horses | SISOEQU001 |
| | Ride horse using fundamental skills | SISOEQU002 | Ride horse using fundamental skills | SISOEQU002 |
| | Ride horses on tracked trail rides | SISOEQU003 | Ride horses on tracked trail rides | SISOEQU003 |
| | | | Load and unload livestock | AHCLSK207 |
| | | | Administer medication to livestock | AHCLSK301 |
| | | | Identify hazards, assess and control safety risks for horse handling and riding activities | SISOEQU010 |
| | | | Implement animal health control programs | AHCLSK309 |
| | | | Apply first aid for horses | SISOEQO304A |
| | | | Guide day horse trail rides in tracked areas | SISOEQU005 |
| | | | Instruct horse handling skills | SISOEQU007 |

Trail guides must have an appropriate first aid qualification. *Core GPG – First aid competencies* for details of appropriate qualifications.

Assistant trail guides may require in some situations a first aid qualification. For example:

- to meet any legislated requirements (such as Education Dept policy or workplace safety laws)

to meet the supervision ratios section recommendation of having 2 guides with first aid qualifications.

# Appendix 5 Trail Guide competencies – Advanced horse trail rides

Also refer to _Core GPG - Competencies_ where appropriate.

The following table outlines the recommended additional competencies or the equivalent, a Trail Guide and Assistant Trail Guide should have when leading advanced horse trail rides.

|  | Assistant Trail Guide | | Trail Guide (Leader) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Unit | Code (or the equivalent) | Unit | Code (or the equivalent) |
| **Advanced rides** | _All units listed for routine horse trail rides plus_ | | _All units listed for routine horse trail rides plus_ | |
|  | Ride horses on untracked trail rides | SISOEQU004 | Ride horses on untracked trail rides | SISOEQU004 |
|  |  |  | Use and maintain a temporary or overnight site | SISOOPS202A |
|  |  |  | Carry out basic hoof care procedures | ACMHBR302 |
|  |  |  | Coordinate and monitor livestock transport | AHCLSK320 |
|  |  |  | Apply navigation skills in an intermediate environment | SISONAV302A |
|  |  |  | Guide horse trail rides in untracked areas | SISOEQU006 |
|  |  |  | Manage horse illness and injury in remote areas | SISOEQU011 |

# Appendix 6 Related information

The following provides a list of addition related information:

- Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC): _Code of Practice for horse activities 'HorseSafe' (revised) 2009_ - www.horsecouncil.org.au
- Safe Work Australia: _Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses (Workcover document) June 2014_ - www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au
- Safe Work NSW: _Code of practice: managing risks when new or inexperienced riders or handlers interact with horses in the workplace Feb 2017_ - www.safework.nsw.gov.au
- Workplace, Health and Safety Queensland: _Horse Riding Schools, Trail Riding Establishments and Horse Hiring Establishments Code of Practice 2002_ -www.worksafe.qld.gov.au
- Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA): _RDA Guidelines_ (guidelines available through RDA training) - www.rda.org.au
- Horse Safety Australia Inc: _Horse Safety Australia Inc recommendations and procedures for beginner trail rides_ - www.horsesafetyaustralia.com.au

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