

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION AS AN APPROVED
ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATOR
[With effect from 27.08.2007]**

1. **Aims and objectives:** The aims & objectives of the scheme for recognition of Adventure Tour Operator are to encourage quality standard and service in this category so as to promote tourism in India. This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide Adventure Tour Operators to bring them in organized sector.
2. **Definition:** An Adventure Tour Operator is one who is engaged in activities related to Adventure Tourism in India namely, water sports, aero sports, mountaineering and trekking and safaries of various kinds etc. In addition to that he may also make arrangements for transport, accommodation, etc.
3. The applications for **recognition** shall be addressed to the Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Transport Bhawan, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110 001.
4. The **recognition** as an approved Adventure Tour Operator shall be granted by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, New Delhi initially, **for five years**, based on the **Inspection Report / Recommendations** of a Committee comprising of **concerned Regional Director and a member of ATOA**.
5. The applications for **renewal/extension** shall be addressed to the Regional Director of the concerned region as per the following addresses:-
 - a) The Regional Director (East), India Tourism, "Embassy", 4, Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata – 700 071, West Bengal.
 - b) The Regional Director (West), India Tourism, 123, M. Karve Road, Opp. Church Gate, Mumbai – 400 020, Maharashtra.
 - c) The Regional Director (North), India Tourism, 88 – Janpath, New Delhi 110 001.
 - d) The Regional Director (South), India Tourism, 154, Anna Salai, Chennai – 600 002, Tamil Nadu.
 - e) The Regional Director (North – East), India Tourism, Amarawati Path, (Opposite Dispur Post Office), Christian Basti, G. S. Road, Guwahati – 781 006, Assam.
6. The **renewal / extension** thereafter shall be granted **for five years** after **Inspection conducted by a Committee comprising of concerned Regional Director and a member of ATOAI**, on an application made by the Adventure Tour Operator along with the requisite fee / documents.

7. The documents received from applicants after scrutiny in all respects will be acknowledged by the Regional Director concerned. The inspection for renewal shall be conducted by the Inspection team within a period of two months from the receipt of complete application, failing which it will be deemed as renewed.
8. The following conditions must be fulfilled by the Adventure Tour Operator for grant of recognition by the Ministry of Tourism:-

- i) The application for grant of recognition shall be in the prescribed proforma and submitted in duplicate.
- ii) The Adventure Tour Operator should have a minimum paid up capital (capital employed) of **Rs. 3.00 lakhs** duly supported by the latest audited balance sheet/chartered Accountant's certificate.
- iii) The turnover in term of foreign exchange or Indian rupees by the firm from Adventure Tourism related activities only should be a minimum of **Rs. 10.00 lakhs** duly supported by a certificate issued by Chartered Accountant.
- iv) The Adventure Tour Operator should have a proper Office with a minimum area of **250 sq. ft.** The office should be located in neat and clean surroundings and equipped with telephone, fax and computer/computer reservation system etc. There should be sufficient space for reception and easy access to toilets.

The Adventure Tour operator should have a minimum of two experienced and well qualified executive staff under its direct employment. Either owner/Director himself or their operations-chief employed should be well qualified in the activity the adventure operator wants to pursue, which is determined by certification by any national or international institute in the activity or minimum of eight years of practical experience.

- v) The Agency must clearly indicate its specialization of activities or activity it wishes to pursue as business like trekking, water sports, aero sports, scuba diving, Safaris etc.
- vi) The operator must have his own Adventure equipment as well as specialized trained staff.
- vii) The field staff members of the party must be qualified for the activity or must have minimum of five years of practical experience. The staff member must obtain an Adventure certificate from the specialized organizations like IMF (for Mountaineering/trekking) & NIWS Goa (for Water Sports/Aero sports etc.).

- viii) Field members of the company must be qualified in First-aid/C.P.R by Red Cross or equivalent body or certificate course conducted by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India.
 - ix) The party must sign an undertaking for adherence to sustainable ecological practice and protection of environment in keeping with guidelines for eco-tourism and safety and security guidelines of Ministry of Tourism/Adventure Tour Operator Association of India.
 - x) It will be recommended to distribute a copy of the eco-tourism guidelines to each client.
 - xi) The agency must maintain in its office premises all the maps and reference material concerning the particular activities it desires to pursue as business.
 - xii) The party must have printed brochure or website clearly describing its i) present activities. (ii) Its area of operation (iii) its commitment to follow eco-tourism guidelines.
 - xiii) The firm should clearly indicate the area of specialization in all their promotional and display material.
 - xiv) Principles of Eco Tourism as being espoused by ATOAL Membership of PATA Green Leaf are optional.
 - xv) The Adventure Tour Operator should have filed Income Tax Return for the current assessment year.
 - xvi) The Adventure Tour Operator should have been in operation for a minimum period of one year before the date of application.
9. Although a large number of activities come under Adventure Tourism, the Ministry of Tourism has decided to grant recognition primarily to the following four categories of Adventure Tour Operators at this point of time:-
- I. Operators dealing with water sports.
 - II. Operators dealing with aero-sports.
 - III. Operators dealing with safaris of various types.
 - IV. Operators dealing with mountaineering and trekking.
10. **Safety guidelines:** (i) Safety guidelines for water sports, Aero-sports, safaris, mountaineering and trekking which have to be followed by Adventure Tour Operators have been appended for reference at Annexure I. It may be noted that in a number of adventure activities, a risk is involved and, therefore, it must be ensured by the adventure tour operator that safety guidelines are strictly followed. In case the Tour Operator is making arrangements through sub-agents, it will be the responsibility of the

Principal Tour Operator to ensure that sub-agents provide proper equipment to clients and all safety measures are followed to.

- (ii) The Adventure Tour Operator may also ensure that their counterpart abroad must obtain an undertaking from the foreign tourists that in case of any loss, damage/accident etc., the travel agency will not be responsible and the client must be covered by the medical, insurance and should include the cost of repatriation fee if he/she is to continue the tour.
 - (iii) Insurance: The adventure tour operator has qualified staff to handle the operations. Since adventure has an in-built risk factor, the Clients/Adventure Tour Operators should be covered by insurance. This insurance is termed as "Special Contingency Policy". It is specific to cover the risk factor of the Client/Adventure Tour Operator, i.e. it covers accidental deaths, loss of limbs and/or eyes and permanent/partial disability.
 - (iv) **Disclaimer:** The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India would not be responsible for any claims by clients of the approved Adventure Tour Operator.
11. The Adventure Tour Operator will be required to Pay a non-refundable fee of **Rs.3, 000/-** (Rupees three thousand only) while applying for the recognition and renewal of the Head Office as well as each Branch Office. ***The fee will be made payable to the Pay & Accounts Officer, Ministry of Tourism in the form of a Bank Draft.***
 12. The recognition will be granted to the Head Office of Adventure Tour Operators. Branch Offices will be approved along with head office or subsequently provided particulars of Branch Offices are submitted to the Ministry of Tourism and accepted by it.
 13. The decision of the Government of India in the matter of recognition shall be final. However, the Government of India may in their discretion refuse to recognize any firm or withdraw/withhold recognition already granted with the approval of the Competent Authority at any time. Before such a decision is taken, necessary show cause notice would be issued and the reply considered on merit. Termination will be done only after careful consideration and generally as a last resort. Reasons for withdrawal would be mentioned in the show cause notice and final order. In special circumstances such as threat to the security of the state detailed reasons may be withheld.
 14. For recognition of adventure tour operator, representatives from the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India specializing in such activities will be included as inspection team members.
 15. The Adventure Tour Operators granted recognition shall be entitled to such incentives and concessions as may be granted by Government of India

from time to time and shall abide by the terms and conditions of recognition as prescribed from time to time by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

16. While submitting the application, the Adventure Tour Operator must indicate the arrangements for emergency lift and evacuation of clients in case of mishap.

APPLICATION FORM FOR RECOGNITION / RENEWAL AS AN APPROVED ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATOR



1. Name of the Organization
Address of Head office
Telephone Numbers.....
Fax Numbers.....
Email Address.....
Website Name.....
Address of the Branch offices (if any)
(Please fill up separate application form, in duplicate, for Branch Office(s), if any).....

2. Nature of the Organization (Proprietary concern, Partnership or Incorporation).....
(Also please indicate the Specialization of activities)
Year of registration/commencement of business (with documentary proof)

3. Name of Proprietor/Directors/Partners etc.....
Details of their interests, if any
In other business may also be indicated.
.....

4. Particulars of staff employed

Name	Designation	Qualifications	Experience	Salary	Length of Service with the firm
1.
2.
3.
4.

5. Details of office premises (Documentary proof/Rent Agreement/Ownership Deed to be made available) - Space in sq.ft.....
Location area (please tick mark the right box) commercial residential
..........
Reception area..... accessibility to toilets

6. Name of Bankers (please attach a reference letter on original letterhead from your Bankers).....

7. Name of Auditors
- A balance-sheet and profit and loss statement pertaining to the tour operation business, as prescribed under Company Law, must be submitted by each applicant. These audited statements should be in respect of your establishment for the last completed financial year or for the calendar year immediately preceding the date of submission of your application. Also furnish details of your turnover in the following statement:-

Particulars of the Adventure Tour Operator concerned

- a) Paid up capital (capital employed)
- b) Loans:
- i) Secured
- ii) Unsecured
- c) Reserves
- d) Current liabilities and provisions
- e) Total **(a to d)**:
- f) Fixed assets **(excluding intangible assets)**
- g) Investment
- h) Current assets
- i) Intangible Assets
- j) Total **(f to i)**

Notes:

- i) Reserves should include balance of profit and loss Account and exclude taxation reserve.
- ii) Current liabilities and provisions should include taxation reserve.
- iii) Current assets should include sundry debts, loans advances, cash and bank balance
- iv) Intangible assets should include goodwill preliminary expenses, tenancy and business rights, deferred revenue expenditure, accumulated loss etc.
8. Copy of acknowledgement in respect of Income tax return for the current assessment year should be enclosed
9. Certificate of Chartered Accountant in original regarding turn over from Adventure tourism/ adventure sports related activities only for the preceding or latest year.
10. Whether any other activities are undertaken by the firm besides tour operations.
11. Please indicate membership of International Travel Organizations, if any
12. a) Give details of volume of tourist traffic handled upto the date of application showing foreign and internal tourist traffic separately. Please

submit a certificate from Chartered Accountant. This certificate should show the receipts from Tour operation only during the financial year or the calendar year immediately preceding the date of submission of your application.

- b) Clientele: special tourist groups handled, if any, their size, frequency, etc.
 - c) Steps taken to promote domestic tourist traffic and details of the groups handled, if any.
 - d) Special programmes if any, arranged for foreign tourists
13. Please indicate details of trained manpower available to operate such tours. (Please give details of the persons employed in your organization who are trained and also attach copies of their certificates of training they have undertaken).
 14. Whether the agency has its own equipments or to be hired from another handling agency. Give details of the equipment available.
 15. The handling agency if located outside or at operational area is that also approved by the Department of Tourism.
 16. Give details of the facilities available with them (handling agency located outside) including trained manpower, equipment, etc.
 17. In case of emergency, please indicate the equipments available for emergency lift up/ evacuation of the persons. In respect of emergencies, the following undertaking has to be signed by the Adventure Tour Operator:-

UNDERTAKING:

I, Shri/Smt.undertake the responsibility for operation of this adventure tour (specify details) for efficient handling of the operation and bear the damages (to life or property or dislocation of environment) being the principal agent. I also promise that guidelines for operation of.....(Adventure Sports) as circulated by Ministry of Tourism will be followed in letter and spirit.

18. In case of any change in the scope of activities the same may be brought to the notice of the Department within one month.
19. Indicate the type of insurance facilities available with the company whether group or personal.
20. Whether porters used for adventure purposes are also experienced and insured.
21. Any additional information the organization would like to give with the reference to the adventure tourism activities undertaken by the firm.

22. Please enclose Demand Draft of Rs. 3,000/- for Head Office and Rs.3, 000/- for each Branch Office as fee **for recognition/renewal.**

For Head Office, please mention the D.D. No.....Date
Amount

For Branch office(s) please mention the D.D. No.....Date
Amount

Signature of Proprietor/Partner/Managing Director

Rubber Stamp

Place:

Date:

- NB. I This application should be submitted in duplicate along with supporting documents.
- II Please quote the reference number of Ministry of Tourism if the application is for renewal / extension.
- III Separate application form to be filled in duplicate, when applying for Branch Office(s).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY AND RESCUE IN ADVENTURE SPORTS**INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 An Adventure Tour Operator is one who is engaged in activities related to Adventure Tourism in India, namely, water sports, aero sports, mountaineering and trekking and safaris of various natures etc. In addition to that he may also make arrangements for transport, accommodation etc.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL ADVENTURE SPORTS

- 2.1 Every group of persons taking part in adventure sports must be accompanied by a person designated as a "leader".
- 2.2 "Leaders" must possess appropriate qualification and skills as indicated in relevant chapters of this document.
- 2.3 Every person joining a group engaged in adventure sports must receive an introductory training and leaders should be satisfied that they have acquired the skills necessary to participate.
- 2.4 Leaders should have a first aid certification and must be competent to impart first aid training in the use of stretchers.
- 2.5 Leaders should be familiar with search procedures and should brief all group members in these procedures.
- 2.6 All group members must be familiar with the use of radios where these are being used.
- 2.7 Leaders should be familiar with helicopter operations, know how to approach a helicopter and procedures for being winched up and down.
- 2.8 Leaders should be proficient in the use of maps and compasses in any weather by day or night.
- 2.9 Leaders should be satisfied that all members are medically fit to take part in the adventure sports.
- 2.10 Leaders should satisfy themselves that equipment to be used meets all the safety norms for each adventure sport; all inspections have been carried out as recommended by the manufacturer and is fit for use.
- 2.11 Under no circumstances should the capacity rated by the manufacturer of adventure sports equipment be exceeded, any unauthorized

modifications except as additional safety measures be carried out or sub standard material used.

- 2.12 Information regarding nature of activity, area of operation, period of activity, possible hazards, persons to be contacted in an emergency and list of members should be given to the concerned safety and rescue committees.
- 2.13 Suitable hand held devices with graded distress signal capabilities should be made available to adventure tourist groups at suitable prices when available in India.
- 2.14 A qualified Doctor should be available on call
- 2.15 Communication facilities such as Mobile Telephone/Walkie Talkie etc. should be available.

GUIDELINES FOR WATER SPORTS

- 3.1 All leaders or guides must possess a valid certificate or license from a recognized institution or association. They should have an adequate experience in the concerned sport.
- 3.2 All leaders and guides must be good swimmers and should be well trained in water rescue techniques, first-aid & CPR (Cardio pulmonary resuscitation).
- 3.3 A rescue craft should always be in sight or in radio contact of the persons or group engaged in water sports. The rescue craft could be powered or unpowered according to requirements of the sport but it must have a first aid kit, spare life jackets and throw lines/rescue bags. For river sports, a minimum of two crafts (i.e. two rafts or a raft and one/two safety/rescue kayaks is a must.
- 3.4 All participants should wear suitable buoyancy aids and where necessary protective headgear. Helmets are a must for river sports.
- 3.5 In water sports, where there is a possibility of being thrown in the water, all participants should be swimmers.
- 3.6 All equipment should be inspected by a competent person or the manufacturer once every season or six months, whichever is less.
- 3.7 A log book should be maintained for each craft, which should be a record of usage, inspection, repairs and modifications. A river logbook must be maintained for river rafting operations.

- 3.8 All craft which are away from the base of operations should carry a first-aid kit, emergency equipment and repair kit. They should, where appropriate, carry navigational equipment.
- 3.9 All craft should display of the list of minimum equipment and accessories as recommended by the manufacturer.
- 3.10 The capacity rating of the craft should be prominently displayed so as to be visible to the users along with a warning of potential hazards.
- 3.11 No person should be allowed to participate under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol.
- 3.12 Incidents and accidents should be immediately reported to the concerned safety committee.
- 3.13 Medical concerns: Those suffering from any serious medical conditions such as a weak heart, epilepsy, back/spinal problems (such as slip disc) & expecting mothers should not be allowed to participate in river sports/adventure sports such as scuba diving etc.
- 3.14 Age limit: The age limit for water sports should be prominently displayed in all literature and also base of operations. For river sports, the age limit is:
14 years & above for all sections
10 years and above on float trips (grade II)
Based on the river section/conditions, this can be relaxed by 1 or 2 years by the trip leader.
- 3.15 A liability waiver should be signed by the client prior to the river trip. This should clearly mention the inherent risks involved in the sport.
- 3.16 For river sports, life jackets must be on at all times while on the river. The life-jackets must be fastened properly and have a minimum buoyancy of 8-9 kgs. Appropriate life-jackets should be used. Inflatable life-jackets should not be used on the river.

GUIDELINES FOR AERO SPORTS

- 4.1 All aero sports must be carried out under an instructor or guide holding a valid license or certificate from a recognized institution, club or association.
- 4.2 All pilots and parachutists must be medically examined and certified fit to participate in aero sports.
- 4.3 Passengers should be medically fit and briefed on emergency procedures.
- 4.4 All aero sports should be undertaken only in day light hours.

- 4.5 Clearance in powered flying, such as micro light and powered hang gliders should be obtained from the concerned air traffic control while flying in controlled airspace. In uncontrolled areas, a responsible person should be available on ground to give take-off and landing clearances.
- 4.6 For unpowered flying, such as hang gliding and paragliding a launch master should be present at the take off site and a landing area safety officer at the landing zone.
- 4.7 First aid equipment along with suitable trained person should be available at all times.
- 4.8 All pilots, passengers and parachutists must wear protective helmets.
- 4.9 All aero sports activity must be undertaken when sky is clear of clouds; the surface is in sight and with visibility at least one nautical mile.
- 4.10 No person should be allowed to participate in aero sports under the influence of drugs and alcohol.
- 4.11 Rules for avoiding collision:
(For these rules micro light, powered hang gliders etc. may be read as aircraft)
1. No aircraft shall be flown in such a way as to create a danger of collision.
 2. Formation flying is not recommended.
 3. All aircraft must avoid passing under, over or in front of another aircraft unless well clear of it.
 4. The lower aircraft always have right of way, except for aircraft in any emergency.
 5. When two aircraft approach each other head on, they should turn on their right.
 6. Overtaking is not allowed under any circumstances.
- 4.12 All aircraft, parachutes and airborne equipment must be inspected and certified fit by a competent person on a daily basis.
- 4.13 Log books should be maintained for all aircraft, parachutes and airborne equipment which would record its usage, inspections, modifications and repairs.
- 4.14 Repairs and modifications of airborne aero sports equipment must be carried out with the approval of the manufacturer.
- 4.15 All clubs, associations, government and other bodies offering aero sports facilities must maintain a manual of operation which should be available at the site of the aero sports activity and a copy should be sent to the concerned safety committee for review. This manual should contain

standard operating procedures, list of mandatory checks of equipment, details and specifications of equipment and emergency procedures.

GUIDELINES FOR MOUNTAINEERING AND TREKKING

- 5.1 All members of mountaineering expeditions should be adequately qualified for taking part in the sport. Basic course certificate issued by National Mountaineering Institutes should be considered adequate for this purpose.
- 5.2 Leaders of mountaineering expeditions should possess adequate qualifications approved by Indian Mountaineering Foundation.
- 5.3 Members of mountaineering expeditions and trekking groups should be physically fit.
- 5.4 Equipment used for mountaineering and trekking should be UAAI certified or approved by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation.
- 5.5 Rescue equipment, such as ropes, harnesses, pulley systems and portable stretchers must be maintained as a separate kit in a suitable package marked boldly with the words "Rescue equipment".

FORMATION OF SAFETY AND RESCUE COMMITTEE

- 6.1 In addition to having an element of risk, adventure sports are usually undertaken in remote areas, often inaccessible by road. In order to minimize the risks it must be ensured that adequate safety measures are adopted by all agencies conducting adventure sports especially where tourists are involved. Rescue arrangements also have to be speedily put into operation to minimize loss of life and limb in the event of mishaps.
- 6.2 The formation, therefore, of state level committees for safety and rescue of tourists, is essential. The committees should be able to oversee implementation of safety measures and co-ordinate rescue efforts.
- 6.3 The safety and rescue committee should function as a nodal agency for all adventure activities in the state. It should draw its members from the various executive departments such as departments of Tourism, Sports, Police and military authorities and representatives from ATOAL.
- 6.4 Similar committee should be formed at the District level under the district administration.

URGENT SAFETY NOTICES

These notices will be issued subsequently, as and when required, to update these guidelines, based on suggestions and reports received.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL AS AN APPROVED ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATOR

1. Application form duly filled in.
2. Two attested photographs pasted on both the copies of application form.
3. Documentary proof (preferably registration certificates from govt.) in support of beginning of operations of your firm.
4. Copy of ***Complete Audited Balance Sheet*** for the ***latest financial year***.
5. ***Income Tax Acknowledgement for the latest assessment year.***
6. ***Service Tax Registration certificate from the concerned authority.***
7. ***Certificate of Chartered Accountant stating your paid-up capital not less than Rs. 3.00 lakhs.***
8. Reference letter from Bank on its letterhead (***Original***) regarding your firm's bank account.
9. Details of staff employed giving names, educational qualification & experience if any in tourism field (***copies of certificates to be enclosed***), and length of service in your organization.
 - a) *As per the guidelines, any agency applying to Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for recognition as an approved Adventure Tour Operator should have at least two employees as staff, out of which one should have Degree/Diploma in Travel & Tourism Management from a recognized University / Institution.*
 - b) *Similarly, for the agencies located at North - East, religious, remote and rural areas, there should be a minimum of one qualified staff.*
10. List of Directors/Partners or name of the Proprietor.
11. Details of office premises (***whether located in commercial or residential area, office space in sq. ft. and accessibility to toilet and reception area***)
12. Certificate of Chartered Accountant on original letter head in support of your ***turnover in foreign exchange from adventure tourism related activities only*** which should not be less than ***Rs. 10.00 Lakhs during the last financial/calendar year.***
13. Documents duly attested by competent officer.
14. ***DD for Rs. 3,000/-*** towards processing fees payable to ***Pay and Accounts Officer, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.***

- NOTE: I. The above - mentioned documents may be submitted in duplicate.
- II. Please fill up separate application form, in duplicate for Branch Office(s), if any.
- II. The guidelines including application form may be downloaded from website www.tourism.gov.in
