



news from the CENTRE STANDARDS BOARD

Issue No. 1. January 2000. Published by AFAS Centre Standards Board.

Consultation Steering Group

STEPHEN HANNON — CHAIRMAN

On the 4th of June 1999 the Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Safety Regulation of Activity Providers was published. The report recommended that statutory regulation be introduced for the commercial provision of adventure sports in Ireland.

The Association of Adventure Sports has been tasked with providing a consultation process to make recommendations to the Department of Marine and Natural Resources. As a first step a consultation steering group was formed which I chair. This steering group is representative of both providers and adventure sports National Governing Bodies.

The Consultation Steering Group wish to ensure that the consultation process is comprehensive and are anxious to proactively shape the operation of the statutory scheme. Those affected by the legislation should take on the responsibility of working to achieve consensus as the way forward. (See Consultation Steering Phases and Timetable overleaf).

At the recent Europas conference the Minister of Marine, Dr. Michael Woods, announced the establishment of a new Marine Leisure Division within his Department to address safety regulation of marine leisure activity including the provision of adventurous activities. Dr. Woods envisaged that the framework legislation for the statutory regulation of the adventure sports provision, would be in place early in the year 2000 with the scheme operational for the year 2001. There is a limited window of opportunity to engage in consultation we need to ensure that the best use is made of this time. If there is comprehensive consultation and debate, the resulting legislation is more likely to be practical and effective. We have been given ownership of the consultation process and so have an opportunity to shape the legislation under which we will be operating. We shouldn't miss this opportunity. For your views and ideas to have a voice in this process you can make a written submission to the Consultation Steering Group, before March 25th. and/or attend one of the consultation meetings outlined overleaf.



At the Cheque presentation to AFAS from the Minister for the Dept of the Marine, left to right: Brendan Cryan, Minister Michael Woods, Humphrey Murphy, Dawson Stelfox, Frank Nugent, Mr O'Neill (House of Sport), Tomas Alyward, Joss Lynam, Michael Guilfoyle (Asst Sec Dept Marine) Paul Dolan (Dept Marine) and Stephen Hannon.

Centre Standards & the Future

BRENDAN CRYAN — CHAIRMAN, CENTRE STANDARDS BOARD

I doubt anyone was aware at the start of my Chairmanship of the extent and pace of developments which were to follow. These developments being due to the combined work of the various Standards Board members over the past ten years. I follow the work of the three previous CSB Chairman, Joss Lynam, Bill Hannon and Paddy O'Leary, who were instrumental in the development of the Standards Board.

My own role in the Standards Board is a consequence of my background in Orienteering. Having participated in the sport for over 25 Years I became the development officer for the Irish Orienteering Association. Through my role as the Orienteering Association representative on the Standards Board, I became the Chairman in March 1999. The allocation of £30,000 by Minister Dr Michael Woods T.D. of the Department of Marine and Natural Resources, has aided

the expansion and enhancing of the present Standards Board scheme and underpins the present consultation process for the forthcoming Statutory Authority. Part of the enhancing of the scheme involves the publication of the Standards Boards newsletter once every two months.

Legislation

The Centre Standards Board partnership of Providers and Governing Bodies has aided the already excellent safety record of the industry and

added to consumer confidence. However the growing number of Irish providers and their increasingly diverse offerings, allied to the tragedies in adventure sports in the United Kingdom, Ireland and elsewhere, requires a revisiting of the industries safety issues. These issues face impending legislation governing the commercial provision of adventure sports. The excellent work and report of the Interdepartmental Working Group, clearly states that regulation should "take the

Continued overleaf . . .



Continued from page 1

form of compulsory adherence to a set of safety codes in centres, which would be required to notify or register with the Statutory Authority as providers of certain specified adventure activities". The minister Dr Michael Woods has also clearly stated that legislation to underpin this process is imminent.

To gain maximum benefit from the consultation process, outlined in this Newsletter, it will not be enough to just Input viewpoints. True consultation requires the consideration and respect of others view points and the negotiation of these through debate. The effectiveness of this debate will also be determined by the extent of its consultation. All Governing Bodies should ensure that they have representation at these meetings and all Providers should attend their nearest regional meeting. To Governing Bodies, these are your sports and to Providers, these are your livelihoods, it is your collective responsibility and in your collective interest to make sure that you are suitably informed and that you fully participate in the consultation process. I look forward to the New Year ahead, and its challenges for our Adventure Sports Sector, my belief is that we can meet these challenges and take control of their certain change.

The 1999 inspection process has now been completed. I would like to thank all the members of the Standards Board for their work throughout the past year, especially Humphrey, Stephen and also Anita in the AFAS office. Finally can I take the opportunity to wish everyone in the industry a safe and prosperous new year and I hope to meet all of the members of this sector at the various consultation meetings and at the Conference in April.

Consultation Steering Group Phases

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| Phase 1 Database of providers | 20th January |
| Phase 2 Letter informing providers of the consultation process | 19th January |
| Phase 3 Advertise the process in newspapers | 19th January |
| Phase 4 Four regional meetings to debate the issues | Feb / March |
| Phase 5 Deadline for submissions to Consultation Steering Group | 25th March |
| Phase 6 Report on the meetings for the Consultation Steering Group | 30th March |
| Phase 7 Draft working mechanism for the Standards Authority | 15th April |
| Phase 8 Conference to debate the salient issues | End of April |
| Phase 9 'Blueprint' of a working mechanism presented to the Department | May |

CSB Monitoring Process

HUMPHREY MURPHY

CSB MONITOR

In order to provide a broader perspective of the monitoring process, the following is an overview of the results of the 1999-2000 Centre Standards Monitoring process.

- thirty eight providers of adventure sports took part in the Standards Board scheme.
- four providers joined the scheme for the first time of these, three are relatively recently established.
- eleven of the providers offer non-residential programmes
- twenty four providers operate for at least ten months of the year.
- a total of 276 instructors (part time and full time) were employed in the thirty eight centres (avg 7.3).
- twenty one providers failed to be approved for one or more activities, three of these twenty one were not approved for any activity.
- the most common issue for non approval was staff qualifications.
- the most common issue requiring further clarification, was the Operations Manual.
- the activity with the lowest approval rate was Orienteering (of 27 providers 9 approved).
- the activity with the highest ratio of qualified staff to providers offering the activity, was

Archery (4.5 instructors for every provider).

- the activity with the smallest number of qualified staff was Caving (2)

Based on previous years a number of trends appear to be emerging. Three of the key elements examined as part of the monitoring process, equipment, locations, and operations manual, have generally improved. The fourth element – staff qualifications, does not appear to have improved and anecdotal evidence would suggest that there is a scarcity of qualified and/or experienced staff. Correspondingly there appears to be an increase in the number of non-Irish staff employed by providers. There is also a gradual increase in the use of high ropes courses and abseil towers. An increasing number of providers now offer more advanced courses. As we move towards the new legislation and statutory scheme, there are a number of issues facing the industry. Key amongst these issues is the need to ensure that the provision of these activities continues to be through the use of suitably qualified staff. As part of the ongoing monitoring of providers, more detailed and seasonal information will be gathered regarding the numbers and qualifications of staff in the industry.

Buoyancy Aid Testing and EU legislation

The EU Directive on Personal Protective Equipment 89/656/EEC concerns itself with the responsibility of employers to provide, maintain etc Personal Protective Equipment for use by their employees while at work. This has implications for all Providers with respect to the working conditions of their employees. In effect equipment issued to protect the worker from any hazard such as cold or drowning, the equipment issued must comply with the EC Standard (CEN) provided one has been agreed. The main effect of this legislation is on equipment such as buoyancy aids. Buoyancy aids cannot be sold or manufactured for sale in the EU if they do not comply to CEN standards- where these have been agreed.

The standard for buoyancy aids which effects most providers of adventure Watersports concerns:

- 50 N Buoyancy Aids. "Intended for use in sheltered waters when help is close at hand and the user is a swimmer, in circumstances where more bulky or buoyant devices would impair the users activity or actually endanger him".

The N symbol equates to the minimum number of Newton's for the average adult. A Newton is a measurement of force, and can be determined by applying a measured load. In effect a 50N buoyancy aid will support a lead weight of 5.5 kg. This minimum stated buoyancy should be available in the device for the duration of its reasonable life. Frequency of use, abuse, and conditions of use and storage will all affect the buoyancy of the equipment over the course of its life. Surveys indicate that

average life expectancy for a buoyancy aid, that has not been abused, is between 3-5 years – the shorter term applying to frequent multi use. It is recommended that buoyancy aids be checked to ensure that sufficient buoyancy remains. The method of testing requires the following:

- The tying of an appropriate metal weight to the buoyancy aid.
- The placing of buoyancy aid and weight in a sufficiently deep tank of water.
- The removal of air and other extraneous buoyancy from the buoyancy Aid.

If the buoyancy aid continues to float on the surface, it meets the required buoyancy. It is very important to note that due to the varying density of metals, different dry weights are required for different metals. To establish a buoyancy of 50N requires a force of 5kg, in the case of lead, the dry weight of lead should be 5.5kg. The following are other common metal weights required for the testing of a 50N Buoyancy aid: Copper: 5.6kg. Iron: 5.7kg. Steel: 5.7kg. S/Steel: 5.7kg. Cast Iron: 5.8kg

Additional examination of the fabric and closures are also required to ensure the effectiveness of the Buoyancy Aid.

The random testing of Buoyancy Aids will take place in Centre Standard monitoring visits. Providers may wish to undertake regular tests of Buoyancy aids and outline in their operations manual the format and timing of these tests.

Abridged with kind permission from the British Canoe Union 'Notes for Guidance Concerning the Implementation of the EC Directives on Personal Protective Equipment'.

Equipment Information: Submissions regarding equipment issues or specific contributions on equipment are welcome. Please send to CSB at House of Sport.

