

Avon Outdoor Activity Club Health and Safety Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the club have a health and safety policy?

The Avon Outdoor Activity Club is a non-profit recreational club entirely managed, run and enjoyed by its own unpaid, volunteer members. For this reason, we are not bound by the Health and Safety at Work Act.

We observe good practice in health and safety because we believe it is in the interests of our members. A few, simple, precautions can significantly reduce the risk of trauma, personal injury and death. New members are encouraged to join our club by our professional attitude to safety and because we communicate our expectations and commitment clearly. Furthermore, confidence is central to the enjoyment of many outdoor activities and we can reinforce this through strategies for minimising and managing risk.

I am a new Member. Will I be safe?

The AOAC health and safety policy provides strategies for minimising the risks associated with outdoor activities. It does not remove them completely. All outdoor activities (including crossing the road) could be described as hazardous. The obligation of an Activity Leader is “*to protect people as far as is reasonably practical from harm.*” We expect our leaders to have addressed risks which are serious and/or which can be removed through a few simple precautions. However, some risk will always remain.

I am a non-Member but I wish to participate. What responsibility does AOAC have in respect of my safety during activities?

You have the status of a private individual who is “tagging along” on the walk (or other activity) that our club Members are completing. We assume no formal responsibility towards you under our Health and Safety policy. Any help or attention you receive from an Activity Leader is entirely at their own discretion.

I am a participating Member. Surely the personal equipment I use is my business and no-one else's?

The nature of most outdoor activities means that any risk you take (for example, by wearing jeans on a long walk through mountains in winter rain) will also affect all other members of your group. An injured or hypothermic member cannot be left alone in an isolated location. The Activity Leader may need to halt the group and others may get cold or exhausted as a result of waiting for mountain rescue. Your actions or omissions affect all those who participate in the same activity. For this reason, an Activity Leader can turn you away if you do not attend with the correct equipment or clothing.

Will there be a trained First Aider on every activity that I participate in?

We can guarantee this only if you train to become that First Aider. We subsidise First Aid courses generously because we believe this training is important for all members and not just Activity Leaders. If you have a close friend or partner with whom you often participate, why not complete a first Aid course together? You will be able to look after each other if ever the need arises.

Why is it necessary to report every accident that causes personal injury?

Firstly, an accident may not be serious but may suggest that we need to provide better information or equipment to guard against a potentially more serious accident in future. Secondly, monitoring accidents allows us to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Who can I approach for more information?

Nick Walker, the club policy officer <policies@aoac.co.uk> will be happy to answer your questions.