

## OEAP EG: Assistant Leader Role

It is a critical aspect of visit planning at all levels to ensure that there is proper understanding of the status of various visit guidance documents - which ones are useful and which ones must be followed because they will become the key point of reference in any legal proceedings. This understanding will set the expectations of good practice demanded by Employment and Health and Safety law.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer. It is critical that employees understand "who is my employer" (Refer to "Basic Essentials MUST read –Remit and Rationale").

**If you are an Assistant Leader, (Deputy Leader or assistant supervisor) you must be specifically competent to carry out that role.**

Being competent requires that you can demonstrate, as far as is necessary, the ability to meet the responsibilities specifically allocated to you and the ability to operate to current standards of recognised good practice, with:

- Appropriate knowledge and understanding of employer guidance, establishment procedures, the group, the staff, the activity and the venue. Structured and employer-approved training should reinforce this.
- Appropriate experience to fulfil the specific role allocated to you.
- A formally accredited qualification is often required to meet national expectations, as in First Aid.
- Where an assistant leader wishes to lead an adventure activity, it is good practice for the generic definition of leader competence to be confirmed by an external and robust verification process, such as:
  1. holding a NGB leadership/coaching award at an appropriate level.
  2. or to be working within the terms and conditions of an AALS licence.
  3. or by a "signing off" process by a Technical Adviser approved by the employer.

As an Assistant Leader, you should:

- Be specifically competent and knowledgeable about establishment and employer policies/procedures, in so far as they affect the responsibilities you have been assigned;
- Be aware that the overarching duty of care remains with the accompanying Visit Leader and Assistant Leaders, even when partial responsibility is shared with a provider. Should the provider run the activity in a way that causes concern, the Assistant Leader should consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention will need to be used with great sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk;
- Ensure that you have been sufficiently involved in the planning and preparation for the visit, including contributing to the organisation of risk management;
- Ensure that you understand the role and responsibilities that you have been assigned and how these integrate with other staff;
- Contribute to the evaluation of all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event;
- Ensure that staff and other supervisors have been appropriately briefed on:
  1. the young people making up the group, including age, health characteristics, capabilities, special educational needs, behaviour and any other information that seems relevant in the context of the planned activities.
  2. the nature and location of the activity.
  3. Ensure that you have a proper understanding of how the Assistant Leader role relates to that of the Activity/Visit Leader.