Operational Risk Management Policy

This policy outlines strategies in the assessment and management of risks involved in the operations of Outward Bound Australia (OBA). The policy addresses Operational Risk Management across all sectors of the organisation and all phases of course implementation including:

- Design
- Delivery
- Review

Various committees and systems support these phases. They include:

- Outward Bound Safety Committee – (OBSAC – consisting of internal and external professionals)
- Medical Advisory Board – (MAB)
- Incident Support Network (ISN) and Psychological First Aid Training
- Incident Management & reporting processes
- Emergency Management Procedure (EMP)
- Learning and Development Department – Responsible for ensuring all staff are appropriately skilled and qualified to perform their job role
- Staff Qualification Database – To track all operational staff qualifications (competency and currency)
- HR Department - Recruitment and Placement
- OBA Operations Manual (All Operational Policies)
- OBA Instructor Handbook (Standard Operating Procedures for all field staff)
- Internal and External Audits & Inspections including Outward Bound International (OBI) and the Outward Bound Australia Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
- Industry Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) compliance
- Document Control

OBA has developed and uses the following hazard and risk identification and management tools:

- Risk Analysis and Management Forms (RAM)
- Risk matrix – evaluation of risk
- Field Risk Assessments
- Hierarchy of Controls
- Checklists
- Audits

Course Design

Business planning process for Delivery of Operations:

- Senior management project staffing and logistics twelve months ahead of time in line with the strategic plan
- Clients are confirmed and courses administration commences
- Operation Managers allocate operational staff to designated courses
- Learning & Development provide staff training requirements
- Human Resources provide future staff projections
• The operational checklist is initiated

Operational Planning for Delivery of Operations:
• The Operational Checklist is initiated biannually for each Operational Area. This includes resource allocation and risk identification (licences, land owners, suppliers, transport of staff and equipment).
• The Operational Checklist is followed in conjunction with Local Operating Procedures to ensure each area is systematically prepared for course delivery. This process considers all delivery functions from resource allocation through to activity and campsite risk analysis (RAMS).
• The Operations Manager responsible for the area, in co-ordination with the National Quality Risk Manager, must review and update any Local Operations Procedure’s for the area. This is also biannual practice.
• The Operational Checklist is used to ensure that courses are assessed holistically and systematically prepared.
• The Operations Manager writes the course in consultation with the Client Managers to ensure it meets the client’s needs.
• The Operations Manager and Quality Risk Manager assess the course to ensure safety, quality and educational outcomes are addressed.

If at any time an area of Operations becomes exposed to significant risk of any type, the Chief Operations Officer and Chief Executive Officer must be notified immediately.

New Delivery Area – Procedure:
• Outward Bound Australia is open to new areas of Operation. To establish if a course is viable in a new area, the Area Investigation and Reconnaissance Form must be completed in conjunction with the Operational Checklist.

Course delivery

Risk Management of course delivery considers the interplay of the following elements:
• People (staff and participants)
• Activities
• Equipment
• Environment

People: Staff

Staff selection:
• Staff are selected at OBA for strong personal qualities with life experience and further education.
• All staff at OBA must undertake a Child Protection Assessment.
• All field staff must undertake a police records check and a muscular-skeletal examination through a qualified physiotherapist.
• All staff must complete and keep updated their Personal Medical Declaration Form

Staff Qualifications:
• OBA is a nationally recognised training organisation (RTO) that delivers nationally recognised training in Certificate IV in outdoor recreation.
• All staff at OBA must have the training, assessment and qualifications (current and up-to-date) and/or demonstrated current competency as outlined for their job position.
• Staff qualifications (competencies and currency) are monitored by OBA and recorded in our Staff Qualification Database
Staff Allocation to course:

- Prior to commencement of a course, the Operations Manager allocates staff according to client needs, course requirements, staff member experience and qualifications.
- To ensure OBA courses are conducted in a professional manner and the safety, quality and educational aspects met, a variety of staffing roles and functions are employed:
  - Operations Manager - manages a team of staff plus equipment, logistics and client needs.
  - Team Coordinator - oversees the operations of individual courses and manages the day to day needs of the team.
  - Course Coordinator - Coordinates OBA outdoor experiential education courses.
  - Instructors/facilitators - Take on responsibility of delivering the course to participants and leads them through all lessons and activities.
  - Back Up / Support Staff - Provide the logistical and safety support throughout the course by ensuring all participants are supplied with food, water, clothing, and equipment. They also increase the supervision ratios during activities, and are on call 24 hours a day for emergency response purposes.
  - Staff in Training / Interns - Operate at an ‘assistant’ level both operationally during their course practicum as well as behind the scenes as back up staff.
  - Support Safety Structure - Behind every course a large safety network exists that is made up of the following.
    - On-Call 24 hours a day; Backup staff members, course coordinator, Team coordinator, and On Call Senior Staff member.
    - There is a comprehensive communication network for all courses. This includes:
      I. Radio contact in the field from the instructor/facilitator to local basecamp via UHF radio
      II. SPOT Satellite Technology – allowing instant communication to either local basecamp or emergency services.
      III. On-Call manager 24 hours a day at Outward Bound’s National Base in Tharwa, ACT

People: Participants

A significant portion of time is spent on physically and mentally preparing participants for their OBA course experience. Client Managers will provide specific information sessions for participants and managers to aid course preparation. They will also provide information such as gear lists, recommended suppliers and work through any concerns participants may have.

- All participants are required to completed a Personal Medical Declaration which identifies all past and present illnesses, injuries, conditions, medication, dietary needs etc. Additional information may be required from the participant/parent/guardian. This is gathered by the relevant Client Manager. Some participants may be required to undertake a physician’s examination as outlined in the Medical Screening Policy before proceeding to attend a course.
- Other concerns are also addressed during the screening phase, including: psychological conditions, addictions, inappropriate behaviours, etc. The intensity of the screening process is to enable OBA to deliver a quality product for all participants. The following policies aid this process:
  - Duty of Care Policy
  - Suicide and Self Harm Intervention Policy
  - Medical Policy
  - Privacy Policy
  - Drug and Alcohol Policy
  - Behavioural Issue Policy

OBA retains the right to refuse participants on an Outward Bound course where there is deemed to be too great a risk of harm to themselves or others.
Activities

All staff must comply with a comprehensive list of Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines as outlined in the Operations Manual. In addition, our activities are conducted in such a way as to comply with the Industry recognised Adventure Activity Standards (AAS).

Risk Assessment and Management in the field and at work:
- An awareness and understanding of the dangers and risks involved in each phase of a course will equip OBA staff with a greater ability to manage participants. It is vitally important to be continually assessing and identifying dangers to ensure a high level of safety.
- Delivery Staff continually undertake risk analysis and implement management strategies in the form of Field Risk Assessments.
- A staff member must make constant evaluations of risks and make decisions based on whether or not possible actions produce acceptable risks, minimize risks, eliminate risks, or cause further risk to safety of participants, staff, and bystanders.

Equipment

- All staff must ensure the appropriate running order of gear that is used in the field.
- All staff must comply with the relevant procedures and guidelines pertaining to the management, cleaning, care, use and transport of equipment.
- All staff are expected to comply with relevant Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and to uphold their OH&S responsibilities.

Environment

- All staff must be aware of specific environmental hazards in an operational area in which they are working. This information is made available through Local Operating Procedures.
- Weather reports must be collected twice daily for each operational area. Information is then relayed to the field instructors/facilitators. More frequent reports may be forwarded in extreme conditions such as severe thunderstorms, high fire danger and flood or wind warnings.
- Information about the weather is used by the instructional and field staff to assess the suitability of planned activities, as well as to prepare for any adverse conditions, such as potential snowfall or extremely hot days.
- Activities may be cancelled or postponed due to the impact of weather conditions.

Incident Management

- In the event that an incident arises in the field or in the workplace, all OBA staff members follow the Emergency Management Procedure (EMP). This defines a clear process to allow for appropriate incident management under stressful conditions, from immediate steps through to post-incident management. Other supporting documents include:
  - Subjective and Objective Assessment and Plan (SOAP) NOTE
  - Incident Response Sheet
  - Medical Evacuation Form
  - On call Policy
Evaluation

Valuable information may be obtained through a variety of feedback mechanisms to ensure the safest possible course for participants for the best possible personal development outcomes.

The feedback and review loops are critical to ongoing risk and quality management strategies.

Evaluation occurs across a number of areas:

- OBA has an implemented system to record, track, analyse and disseminate lessons learnt from any incidents that occur during operations.
- All incidents are reviewed after every course by the Course Coordinator and checked by the Operations Manager. Then finalised analysed by the Quality Risk Manager.
- The Course Coordinator alerts the Client Manager to all significant medical incidents and these are followed up with the appropriate Client.
- All incidents are tracked through incident report forms and recorded on an incident database. These are reviewed by the Quality Risk Manager, Chief Operations Officer, Outward Bound Safety Committee and finally by the Board of Directors.
- Recommendations, adjustments to training and review of Standard Operating Procedures may result from this process.

Incident Evaluations:

Near Misses:

- Near Misses are recorded on the Near Miss Form any time staff or participants are engaged in a potentially dangerous situation where safety is compromised but does not result in reportable injury

Medical Incidents:

- A SOAP Note and Medical Evacuation Form is used in the field to record any medical assessment, repeated treatments or in the event of an evacuation.
- A Medical Incident Report Form (MIRF) is used to record any medical incident from start to finish. This form becomes the basis for further analysis.

General Incidents:

- The Incident Report Form (IRF) must be completed following any incident that could have or did lead to:
  - Equipment damage of any property (private or OBA)
  - OBA vehicle and/or trailer incident resulting in a disruption of Operations
  - OBA staff or participants in danger
  - Behavioural issue with participants
  - Incidents with external persons

Course Evaluations:

Course Debrief:

- At the finalisation of course, all staff come together to report on the outcomes of the course. This information is gathered by the Course Coordinator to prepare the Course Report.
- Personal debriefs are conducted with each Instructor by the Operations Manager in order to ensure appropriate professional development.

Course Reports:

- On the completion of the course, the Course Coordinator is required to complete a Course Report
- It reports on the general conduct of the course, specific feedback pertaining to client aims and outcomes, relevant feedback (which is distributed to the relevant departments), incidents, etc.
• Departmental feedback is disseminated to all departments and reviewed by the Client Manager and other Departmental Managers

Staff Evaluations:

• Staff performance is monitored on each course, through self, peer, and client evaluations. Staff meet individually with the Course Coordinator prior to and following the course to discuss professional goals, issues, and performance. These meetings are recorded and forms are held for annual review by the Operations Manager.
• Clients and participants on some courses are asked for their feedback via the following forms - Colleague Evaluation of Program and Instructor form (CEPI), Participant Evaluation of Program and Instructor (PEPI).

Research

Research is conducted on selected courses in order to quantify and improve the quality of the courses in order to ensure best practice.

Research on Course Outcomes includes Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) and Participants Evaluation of Program and Instructors (PEPI)