



Compass Navigation (Bush) Safety Operating Procedure (SOP)

1. Purpose

This SOP outlines the safe planning and delivery of the Compass Navigation activity to ensure bush navigation and outdoor safety risks are effectively managed and all participants are supported throughout the experience.

2. Scope

Applies to all AOEC staff, instructors, supervising adults, and participants involved in the Survivor activity.

3. Description of Activity

Compass Navigation is a bushcraft/outdoor safety activity where participants work as in small teams to navigate through a designated bush area using compass navigation and back-bearing techniques.

The activity focuses specifically on:

- Compass use
- Back-bearing navigation
- Team work
- Decision making
- Bush awareness
- Communication
- Navigation safety
- Responding appropriately to environmental and navigation hazards

The activity takes place in a natural outdoor environment and may involve:

- Uneven terrain
- Bush tracks and off track bush navigation
- Slippery and steep surfaces
- Variable weather conditions
- Physical activity

Participants are supported by trained AOEC instructors who manage environmental conditions, provide navigation instruction, establish and monitor routes, and continuously assess risks throughout the activity. Small Groups will have an adult for supervision and support.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

AOEC Instructors - Lead and manage the activity safely - Conduct risk assessments and make go/no-go decisions - Deliver safety briefings and monitor conditions - Teaching compass and back-bearing navigation techniques - Monitoring participant wellbeing throughout the activity - Coordinate emergency response if required

Supervising Adults (Teachers/Parents) - Retain duty of care for students at all times - Actively supervise assigned students (max 1:4-5 ratio) - Follow all instructor directions and safety procedures - Monitoring students for fatigue, cold exposure, confidence levels, or concerns - Assist with risk management and emergency response if required.

Supervising adults must understand that this activity requires active participation and support. They should not assume the instructor alone is responsible for monitoring all participants.

Participants - Follow all instructions - Wear required clothing and equipment - Working cooperatively with their team - Remaining with their assigned group - Disclose relevant medical or behavioural conditions

5. Instructor Requirements

- Minimum of 2 trained AOEC instructors per session
- New instructors are trained by a senior instructor, with training based on - Outdoor experience - Navigation knowledge - Bush safety skills - risk management - group management.
- Returning & Seasonal Instructors are updated with new safety practices and procedures
- Risk Management Workshops are held on a regular basis for all instructors.
- Instructors must be familiar with:
 - Activity route and environment.
 - Compass navigation procedures
 - Emergency procedures
 - Risk management systems (RAMS)

6. Ratios

- Minimum instructor ratio: 2 instructors per 20 participants
 - Supervising adult ratio: minimum 1 adult per 4-5 students
 - Ratios may be increased depending on participant age and ability, medical or behavioural considerations or risk level
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7. Pre-Activity Requirements

7.1 Risk Disclosure & Medical Information

- All participants and their caregivers must have completed risk disclosure forms prior to activity, which includes the acceptance of Risks of this activity disclosed by AOEC.
- Medical conditions, injuries, behavioural needs, fitness considerations, and medication requirements must be disclosed.
- A responsible adult must be assigned for participants requiring medication

7.2 Equipment Checks

Instructors must ensure the group carries: - Waterproof pack or dry bag - Communication device - Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) - First aid kit - Warm clothing and emergency food/drink - Rain protection - Activity-specific equipment - Map and Compass

7.3 Clothing Requirements & Checks

Participants must wear: Thermal, polyprop, or merino layers required - No cotton! Additional thermal layer during colder conditions - Waterproof jacket - Beanie - Covered footwear suitable for bush conditions - Participants are checked for correct clothing and footwear.

7.4 Other Requirements

- Participants must go to the bathroom before leaving.
- ENSURE participants bring their personal medication with them, and that there is someone present (adult supervisor) who knows how to administer it
- Hair should be tied up and out of the face.

8. Environmental & Weather Assessment (Go/No-Go Criteria)

The activity must not proceed if:

- Severe weather creates unsafe conditions
- Heavy rain affects tracks or terrain
- Wind creates hazards in the bush environment
- Environmental conditions increase risk beyond acceptable levels

Guiding principle: If in doubt, stay out.

Instructors must:

- Assess conditions before departure
 - Monitor weather and participant wellbeing throughout the activity
 - Modify routes, activities, or cancel if conditions deteriorate
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9. Safety Briefing (Mandatory for all participants)

Must include:

- Activity expectations
- Behaviour expectations, team work, staying with their group
- Use of navigation equipment
- Radio and whistle communication
- Navigation safety and bush hazards.
- Appropriate clothing and equipment
- Emergency procedures.
- Environmental care expectations

Supervising adults must be present and engaged during the briefing.

10. Activity Management

During the activity:

- Instructors lead navigation and route decisions
 - Participants remain with assigned groups. Supervising adults actively monitor students.
 - Instructors regularly check participant wellbeing
 - Equipment is used only as instructed
 - Participants are regularly checked for: - Cold exposure (hypothermia) - Fatigue - Injury - Confidence levels
 - Activity must be stopped if safety is compromised.
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11. Emergency Response (Summary)

In the event of an incident:

- Instructor takes control of situation
 - First aid is administered by trained person
 - Emergency services contacted via 111 or PLB if required
 - AOEC Management contacted.
 - Group managed and kept safe by supervising adults
 - Designated person meets emergency services at access point
 - All incidents must be reported to AOEC management and recorded.
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12. Environmental Care (Reinforce this to the students)

- Respect the forest and natural environment.
- Stay on designated routes where possible
- Avoid damaging vegetation by standing on seedlings and breaking branches
- Leave no Trace. Everything we take to the forest must be removed and disposed of properly back at camp, including food/scraps, footwear and clothing.
- Respect nature and its wildlife.

Compass Navigation – Risk Disclosure



Understanding the Risks

We acknowledge that participating in Compass Navigation involves inherent risks, including but not limited to: - Slippery and uneven terrain - Bush environment hazards - Getting lost or separated from the group - Weather exposure - Cold exposure and risk of hypothermia

We understand these risks cannot be completely eliminated.

Medical & Fitness Declaration

We confirm that: - we have disclosed all relevant medical conditions, injuries, medications, and behavioural considerations - all participants (students & adults) are physically and mentally able to participate in this activity. We will inform staff of any changes prior to participation.

All participants have consented to receive medical treatment deemed necessary in an emergency.

Participant Responsibilities

We agree to: - Follow all instructions given by AOEC staff - That everyone will wear appropriate clothing and footwear at all times - Act responsibly and not endanger themselves or others

We understand that failure to follow instructions may result in removal from the activity.

Acknowledgement of Risk

We confirm that: - We understand the nature of the activity and associated risks - we have had the opportunity to ask questions - We are aware that everyone voluntarily choose to participate.

Liability

We understand that, to the extent permitted by law, AOEC is not liable for injury, loss, or damage resulting from risks inherent to the activity, particularly where instructions and safety requirements are not followed.

Additional Conditions

- We agree to care for any equipment provided and accept responsibility for damage caused by misuse
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Bush Navigation – Risk Disclosure (continued)

Risk Disclosure Documentation

All adult participants, and the parents/caregivers of participating students, have signed the risk disclosure document, confirmed they have read the activity overview and risk management summary, and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

In addition, the school is required to complete and return a Risk Disclosure and Emergency Management Summary document. This document includes a full list of all participants (adults and students), relevant medical information, behavioural considerations, and any injuries. It also records confirmation, by way of a checklist against each participant's name, that signed risk disclosures and activity overview documents have been received.

Consent

Name of Teacher in Charge

Signature: _____.

Date: _____

Name of Principal/Member of BOT

Position _____

Signature: _____.

Date: _____

Bush Compass Navigation - Risk Analysis & Management

	Reviewed: Karen Tobich & Emily Underwood Approved: Board of Trustee - Nisha Duncan		Date: 03/08/2026		Next Reviewed by: 03/08/2027	
	Risk Rating System: Likelihood (1–5) x Consequence (1–5): 1–5 Low - 6–10 Moderate - 11–15 High					
	What would cause someone to get hurt?	What could happen?	Risk Rating	Risk Management Control Measures		Risk Rating
	Hazards/Harm	Risk	Initial	What can be prevented? By Whom?	Post Control	
People	• Poor Instructor Training	• Loss of process • Instructor lost in bush • Participants lost in Bush • Hypothermia • Loss of mana • Damage to environment	10	• Compass and Navigation Training • Knowledge of the terrain/area • Regular Risk Management & Emergency Plan Training • Lead Instructors must have a minimum of 6-8 sessions assisting a trained and competent Instructor. • Radios for communicating with others/staff	4	
	• Supervising Adults not familiar with activity instructions, responsibilities & risks i.e. not following instructions	• Loss of Process • Group lost in Bush • Loss of Mana	5	• Activity Leaders / Adult Supervisors familiarise themselves with Activity Instructions, Responsibilities and RAMS prior to camp/ activity commencement.	2	
	• Poor Instructions	• Loss of Process • Group lost in Bush • Loss of Mana	6	• Go with group through instructions, environment care, safety guidelines & hazards	2	
	• Not sufficient compass Training	• Loss of Process • Group lost in Bush • Loss of Mana	5	• Thoroughly go through compass training with participants and supervising adults. Students & parents need to participate	2	
	• Failure to disclose risks	• Lack of safety for self/others	10	Firmly go through the risks. This activity is about accuracy NOT speed.	2	
	• Poor Navigation	• Loss of Process • Group lost in Bush • Loss of Mana	6	• Supply Radio to all groups. • Outline Emergency Procedure - Clear landmark boundaries (rivers/tracks). If lost or need help, STOP and radio/whistle for help	2	
	• Lost	• Loss of Process • Group lost in Bush • Loss of Mana	12	• Be continuously aware of compass bearing and use back bearing technique for accuracy. • Stay together	6	
	• Not sufficient Supervision	• Loss of Process • Larger groups causing damage to environment or unable to process	4	• One supervising adult per team of 4-6. • Cancel/change activity if supervision ratio can not be reach	1	
	• Not listening & Unruly behaviour	• Loss of Process • Damage to environment • Missing important instructions • Affecting others learning	8	• Students& Supervising adults must listen well • Good Leadership is essential • Adequate Supervision • Halt the activity if necessary	4	
	• Special Needs not identified	• Loss of Process • Loss of Mana • Minor/Major injury • Death	15	• Know medical conditions/behaviour issues of students & adults. Who is the nominated knowledgeable person to deal with known medical/behavioural issues	8	
	• Student/Group Leader/Supervising Adult becomes incapacitated (Injury, heart attack, asthma, etc)	• Minor Injury • Major injury • Death	20	• Other Adults in Group must know what to do in an emergency	15	
	• Failure to practice environment awareness	• Minor Injury • Major injury • Physical wellbeing (hypothermia, hyperthermia) • Death • Damage to environment	15	• Discuss minimum impact on the environment	6	
Equipment	• Poor Clothing & Footwear	• Death • Major injury • Minor Injury • Physical well-being (hypothermia, hyperthermia) • Loss of process	20	• Before leaving, check that everyone in group (students and adults) are wearing appropriate clothing and foot ware. Must wear covered shoes, dress for the conditions. • Check wet weather gear, take emergency rain ponchos or black plastic bags	2	
	• Lost or broken compass	• Loss of Process • Lost in the bush	12	• Use other group members compass to get through	2	
	• No or insufficient Emergency Supplies (emergency food & drink, first aid, additional warm clothing, communication device)	• Physical well-being (hypothermia, hyperthermia, low blood sugar) • Minor injury • Major injury • Death	15	• Ensure supervising adults have emergency supplies (radio, water, food, warm clothing, whistle, map)	6	
	• Weather unsuitable for session	• Death • Major injury • Minor Injury • Damage to environment • Physical well-being (hypothermia, hyperthermia) • Loss of process	15	• Cancel if necessary, the instructor will make this call • Halt the activity if necessary	6	

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	Risk Rating System: Likelihood (1–5) x Consequence (1–5): 1–5 Low - 6–10 Moderate - 11–15 High				
	What would cause someone to get hurt?	What could happen?	Risk Rating	Risk Management Control Measures	Risk Rating
	Hazards/Harm	Risk	Initial	What can be prevented? By Whom?	Post Control
	Environment	• Ground steep, slippery & wet	• Minor injury • Major Injury • Damage to the environment	10	• Wear close-toe shoes • Move slowly it's not a race
• Wasps		• Minor Injury • Major injury • Death	8	• Report any sightings of wasp, carry first aid kit and Wasp Spray	6
• Fallen Trees and dense bush		• Minor Injury • Major injury • Death	12	• Naviagte carefully around a fallen tree/dense bush	8
• Weather hot/cold/wet/dry/lighting		• Minor Injury • Major injury • Death	15	• Dress for the conditions, weather can change rapidly, in lighting storm stay away from tall trees and crouch down	6

Emergency Plan	First Aid	Medical Treatment	Serious Injury
	• Who is the trained and nominated First Aider	• Follow Emergency Action Plan Discussed at Pre Activity Safety Talk and at Safety Stations	• See Emergency Action Plan discussed at Safety Talks and at Safety Stations
	• First Aid Kit - Instructors have this	• Katikati Medical Centre 07 549 0411 4 • Clive Road, Katikati	• Call 111 or activate PLB
	• Know medical conditions/behaviour issues of students & adults and knowledgeable person to deal with it	• Tauranga Hospital, Cameron Road, Tauranga • 07 579 8000	• Nominate someone to meet Emergency Services at Gate
	• Incident & Accident Reporting	• Report to AOEC Management • Incident & Accident Reporting on Safety Log at Kitchen Safety Station	• Report to AOEC Management • Incident & Accident Reporting on Safety Log at Kitchen Safety Station