



Get out and enjoy the outdoors...
and using an Adventuremark
accredited provider gives you
reassurance that they have
been checked and operate
within recognised standards.

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www.sportni.net

Published: March 2013

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Northern Ireland

Enjoy the Great Outdoors

A guide for using accredited activity providers

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Northern Ireland

Department of
**Culture, Arts
and Leisure**
www.dcalni.gov.uk

**Northern Ireland
Executive**
www.northernireland.gov.uk





Adventure activities are great!

They provide excitement, challenges and enjoyment which often take place in fantastic natural environments.

There are also great benefits from taking part in these activities including:

- Improving self-esteem;
- Building confidence;
- Developing team cohesion;
- Improving health; and
- Developing mental well-being.

There are more opportunities than ever to participate in adventure activities, either through clubs or by using the services of an activity provider.

There are lots of activity providers across Northern Ireland now and the range of activities offered by these providers has become very extensive. It's possible to do anything from canoeing to hover-crafting, from orienteering to rock climbing, and from ropes courses to archery.

Most of the activity providers and details of the activities they offer can be found at www.outdoorni.com



However, activity providers have a duty to ensure that they operate safely and according to industry recognised standards and are compliant with their legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Teachers and leaders of groups who take students on trips also have a duty of care to ensure that the activity provider they are using is competent and compliant.

How can you know if your provider operates to these standards?

In England, Scotland and Wales activity providers who provide certain activities for young people must have a licence to operate, which is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. The licensing scheme checks that a provider carries out their activities according to recognised industry standards.

However, this requirement for a licence does not extend to Northern Ireland and so the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and Sport Northern Ireland have been supporting and implementing a non-statutory scheme of accreditation for activity providers.

This scheme is called ADVENTUREMARK

The Adventuremark scheme mirrors statutory licensing in England, Scotland and Wales, but it also includes a much greater range of activities than licensing. This is important in Northern Ireland as there is a very great range of activities being offered here.

Adventuremark checks that:

1. The staff are competent, through confirmation that they are suitably experienced and/or qualified for the activities they do;
2. The risks that participants are exposed to are identified and appropriately managed;

3. The provider has access to appropriate technical expertise and advice for the activities it offers;
4. Good operational procedures are documented and followed;
5. Communication both internally and to customers and stakeholders is effective;
6. The activities meet the needs of clients; and
7. Safety equipment, facilities and services are all fit for purpose.

A list of the activity providers in Northern Ireland that have achieved the **Adventuremark** accreditation can be found at www.adventuremark.co.uk by clicking on 'holders'.

Some activity providers may have other forms of accreditation whether through national governing bodies or statutory agencies. While some of these schemes are robust and involve external inspection others simply require the provider to "self-declare" that they operate safely and within the industry this is recognised as a weakness.

Sport Northern Ireland recommends that group leaders and individuals use accredited activity providers that are externally inspected to demonstrate that they are compliant with the Health and Safety at Work legislation. **Adventuremark** provides assurance that the provider has been inspected to nationally recognised standards.

More information on **Adventuremark** can be found at www.adventuremark.co.uk

