



Institute for **Outdoor Learning**

IOL Statement of Good Practice  
**Outdoor First Aid  
Training**

---

Version 3.0  
January 2020

# ***Outdoor First Aid Training***

---

## ***Institute for Outdoor Learning Statement of Good Practice***

### **Reason for the Statement:**

An appropriate level of first aid competence is an essential part of operating professionally when providing outdoor learning experiences. This Statement of Good Practice is designed to support the maintenance and development of standards in Outdoor First Aid training and assessment.

This statement for Outdoor First Aid supports:

1. **Organisations choosing outdoor first aid training courses** to meet their assessment of “*adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel*” to ensure the people in their care receive appropriate assistance if they are injured or taken ill.
2. **Providers of Outdoor Learning** (instructors, leaders, teachers, coaches, managers, etc.) when selecting an appropriate outdoor first aid training course.
3. **First Aid Training Providers and Awarding Organisations/Bodies** when seeking to ensure outdoor first aid training course standards and content is aligned with the generic needs of the sector.
4. **Outdoor Sector Awarding Bodies** when describing a required level of outdoor first aid competence to meet the conditions of an award or qualification.
5. **Any other interested stakeholder(s)** when considering outdoor first aid training course standards and content.

### **IOL Statement of Good Practice:**

The statement covers training courses specifically designed to cover the requirements for providing First Aid in an Outdoor Learning context.

It provides guidance for establishing need, course design and structure, course delivery and trainer and training provider competence and describes five outdoor first aid training bands.

The statement is subservient to guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Department for Education (DfE) regarding Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW), First Aid at Work (FAW), Emergency Paediatric First Aid (EPFA) or Paediatric First Aid (PFA).

## Appropriate and relevant

1. **Employers and participants must ensure the band and content of any Outdoor First Aid course is appropriate to their needs.**
  - a. Employers must decide the level of Outdoor First Aid training required by employees to be able to provide “*adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel*” to ensure the people in their care receive appropriate assistance if they are injured or taken ill.
  - b. Employers and participants should work in partnership with outdoor first aid training providers to ensure the course content is relevant to the first aid situations participants may experience when leading outdoor activities and experiences.
  - c. Participants are encouraged to check the specific requirements of an activity/sport governing body before choosing a particular course and ensure that any Outdoor First Aid Training undertaken meets any legal requirement for specific first aid qualifications e.g. commercially operated yachts.

## Course design and structure

2. **Each band describes a minimum expected content, delivery and assessment structure.**
  - a. Training providers may include additional topics to those mentioned at their own discretion or to meet the needs of their customers.
  - b. The minimum contact time is given for each course – there may be additional independent study time.
3. **Outdoor First Aid course delivery must reflect the context in which the participants might need to apply their skills and knowledge.** It must include:
  - a. Management of self, casualty, group (and others) safety at the scene of an incident for extended periods of time and/or in inhospitable conditions before rescue services arrive.
  - b. Provision of emotional support in the case of an incident.
  - c. Being reflective of the mechanisms of injury that course participants may experience. Casualty assessment and first aid treatment protocols will be similar across many outdoor activities; however, the course delivery should prepare participants for first aid situations they may experience. For these example activities, incidents could include:
    - i. **Bushcraft** – incision cuts, burns from open fires and hot utensils, splinters, poisoning from eating berries / mushrooms / greenery / roots, insect / animal bites, ticks, etc.

- ii. **Open country walking / running** – blisters, sprains, strains and cramps, slips and trips on uneven surfaces, heat exhaustion, hyperthermia, hypothermia, etc.
- iii. **Climbing / mountaineering** – head injuries, falls from height, trauma resulting in suspected internal bleeding, suspected fractures / dislocations, altitude sickness, frostbite, suspension trauma, etc.
- iv. **Caving** – trapped in cold and wet conditions for long periods, hypothermia, recovery position in cramped spaces, suspension trauma, suspected drowning, etc.
- v. **Mountain biking** – large and dirty grazes, suspected fractures to upper arm / collarbone / wrist, small objects in eye, supporting joints and maintaining mobility, head impacts, etc.
- vi. **Paddle sports** – impacts to head, sudden immersion in cold water, suspected drowning, hypothermia, etc.
- vii. **Boating** – seasickness, head injuries, cold water shock, crush injuries, suspected drowning, etc.
- viii. **Snowsports** – suspected fractures to upper arm / collarbone / wrist, head impacts, suspected fractures to lower leg, knee injuries, hypothermia, etc.

*Note: This list is not exhaustive.*

### Course delivery

- 4. **Outdoor First Aid involves an applied skill set where learners must receive demonstration, instruction, practice, coaching and assessment in the course content.**
  - a. Scenario based face-to-face learning must be included in all Band 2, Band 3 and Band 4 courses.
  - b. Blended or online learning can be considered for CPD courses. Any blended learning should meet accepted guidelines such as the *Blended Learning in First Aid Quality Assurance Standards* that have been agreed nationally by both the First Aid Quality Partnership and the First Aid Awarding Organisation Forum.

### Trainer and training provider competence

- 5. **Outdoor First Aid trainers must meet the relevant HSE guidance for first aid trainer competence PLUS:**
  - a. Have previously passed the course they are delivering.

- b. Have relevant knowledge of the first aid situations participants may experience when leading outdoor activities and experiences and the practical considerations / constraints of first aid in that context.

Ways that may evidence this include:

- i. Successful completion of the online assessment tool - IOL Outdoor First Aid Questionnaire.
  - ii. Associate Membership (RMemIOL, AMemIOL, LMemIOL) or Professional Membership of IOL (PMemIOL).
  - iii. Have at least 2 years' experience of working as an Outdoor Activity Instructor or Outdoor Learning Specialist (see IOL Occupational Standards - <https://www.outdoor-learning.org/Jobs/The-Outdoor-Professional/Occupational-Standards>). This may include holding an intermediate or advanced level award(s) in relevant sports/activities.
- c. It is **STRONGLY ADVISED** that trainers should have further relevant experience or training in Outdoor First Aid beyond the course they are delivering.
  - d. Show evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) relevant to the delivery of Outdoor First Aid training.

**6. Outdoor First Aid trainers must teach up to date skills and knowledge.**

- a. Teaching and assessing must meet currently accepted first aid practice in the United Kingdom as described by the Resuscitation Council (UK) and in other publications or sources (e.g. Voluntary Aid Societies, Royal Life Saving Society, Mountain Rescue, etc.) provided that they are supported by a responsible body of medical opinion.

**7. Outdoor First Aid Training Providers** must be able to demonstrate how they satisfy all the relevant HSE first aid guidance, including those laid out in the HSE document GEIS3, *Selecting a first aid training provider* [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.pdf) .

**8. Outdoor First Aid Training Providers** must have quality management systems, e.g. evidence of standardisation.

## Summary of Outdoor First Aid Training Bands

Band	Title	Typically appropriate for the needs of
1	Outdoor First Aid [Awareness]	Professionals working in a low-risk outdoor environment and the means to access qualified first aid provision, e.g. walking in a park, etc.
2	Outdoor First Aid [1 Day]	Outdoor activity instructors, teachers or leaders operating within defined grounds / locations and close to support, e.g. activity instructor, sports coach, primary / secondary teacher, remote rural visit leader, etc.
3	Outdoor First Aid [2 Day]	Unsupported outdoor activity instructors, teachers or leaders and outdoor learning specialists operating in situations where help may be up to a few hours away, e.g. outdoor education tutor, mountain leader, D of E assessor, bushcraft instructor, forest school leader, canoe expedition leader, etc.
4	Outdoor First Aid [Advanced]	Outdoor professionals requiring specialised training to operate in complex environments when professional help may be multiple hours or days away, e.g. mountain guides, overseas expedition leaders, mountain / fell / cave / marine rescue teams, etc.
CPD	Outdoor First Aid [CPD]	Those wishing to maintain, broaden or further develop their skills and knowledge in first aid.

### Alignment with the IOL Statement of Good Practice:

**Employers, National Governing Bodies of Sport, and other interested stakeholders** are encouraged to refer to the bands described in this statement where it simplifies the definition of a required level of First Aid Competence.

**Aligning with the IOL Statement of Good Practice is on a voluntary basis.**

**Providers of Outdoor First Aid Training** are encouraged to self-declare that their course content and delivery is aligned with the relevant band described in this statement using this phrase:



*“The content of this course is aligned with the IOL Statement of Good Practice on Outdoor First Aid at Band #”*

To obtain the IOL Aligned First Aid Course badge email a copy of your course scheme of work (training programme) to IOL. The Institute will check the course content is aligned and send a high-resolution image.

### IOL Course Accreditation (optional)

**Individual First Aid Training Providers** can also, should they wish, go through an IOL Quality Assurance process to accredit a course in order to display the IOL Accredited Course badge on publicity material and certificates.



IOL Course Accreditation demonstrates a course is relevant to outdoor instructors, teachers and leaders and offers assurance that the course includes a clear aim, learning outcomes, assessment for learning and is delivered by knowledgeable trainers.

Course Accreditation of Outdoor First Aid Courses requires the course to align with the requirements of this statement and for trainers delivering the course to have completed the online assessment tool - IOL Outdoor First Aid Questionnaire.

### Support for this statement

The following organisations have reviewed and supported the content of version 3 of this IOL Statement of Good Practice:

- British Canoeing
- Mountain Training UK
- The Mountain Training Board Ireland
- British Cycling
- Royal Yachting Association



## ***IOL Band 1 Course***

### **Outdoor First Aid [AWARENESS]**

<b><i>Typical role of holder within an outdoor learning context</i></b>	Professionals working in a low-risk outdoor environment and the means to access qualified first aid provision, e.g. walking in a park, etc.
<b><i>Previous experience</i></b>	No prior Outdoor First Aid experience required
<b><i>Course content</i></b>	<p>Incident management</p> <p>Summoning appropriate help/rescue services</p> <p>ABC primary survey</p> <p>Treatment for unconscious casualties</p> <p>Treatment for non-breathing casualties</p> <p>Use of an AED</p> <p>Treatment for severe bleeding/shock</p>
<b><i>Mode of delivery</i></b>	Face-to-face training
<b><i>Contact time</i></b>	Courses in this band will be typically half a day in duration, e.g. 3 hours
<b><i>Relevance for Outdoor Sector Awards</i></b> <i>(Employers and participants must ensure the course is appropriate to their needs)</i>	<p>Courses are likely to meet required minimum level for:</p> <p>Educational visit leaders.</p> <p>Bikeability leaders.</p> <p>British Cycling Ride Leader Level 1 and Level 2</p> <p>Psychological professionals providing Zone 1 Outdoor Engagement interventions (counselling outdoors).</p>



## **IOL Band 2 Course**

### **Outdoor First Aid [1 DAY]**

<b>Typical role of holder within an outdoor learning context</b>	Outdoor activity instructors, teachers or leaders operating within defined grounds / locations and close to support, e.g. activity instructor, sports coach, primary / secondary teacher, remote rural visit leader, etc.
<b>Previous experience</b>	No prior Outdoor First Aid experience necessary
<b>Course content to include</b> <i>* Additional topics may be included at the training providers discretion to meet the needs of the participants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities for first aiders</li> <li>Incident management</li> <li>ABC primary survey</li> <li>Summoning appropriate help/rescue services</li> <li>Treatment for unconscious casualties</li> <li>Treatment for non-breathing casualties</li> <li>Use of an AED</li> <li>Treatment for bleeding/shock</li> <li>Recognition and management of life threatening illness</li> <li>Recognition and management of drowning/hypothermia</li> <li>Insulation and shelter</li> <li>Age awareness for vital signs/CPR/bleeding</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring and casualty care whilst awaiting help.</li> </ul>
<b>Course delivery to include</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practical casualty assessment</li> <li>Practical treatment for unconscious casualties</li> <li>Practical CPR and AED use</li> <li>Practical treatment for bleeding and shock</li> <li>Practical treatment of life threatening illness</li> <li>Practical insulation and shelter of casualties</li> <li>Outdoor scenarios reflective of the first aid situations the course participants might need to manage</li> </ul>
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Face-to-face training
Contact time	<p>Courses in this band will be at least one day in duration</p> <p>Contact time will be a minimum of 8 hours not including breaks</p>
<b>Observable competence (assessment criteria to be achieved)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can recognise and manage incidents in the outdoors</li> <li>Can summon appropriate help/rescue service</li> <li>Can manage unconscious casualties</li> <li>Can perform CPR and use an AED</li> </ul>

	<p>Can treat choking          Can treat bleeding/shock          Can respond to signs/symptoms of hypothermia          Can insulate and shelter          Can monitor a casualty appropriately</p>
<p><b><i>Relevance for Outdoor Sector Awards</i></b>  <i>(Employers and participants must ensure the course is appropriate to their needs)</i></p>	<p>Courses are likely to meet required minimum level for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Canoeing Instructors, Coaches, Leaders and Guides working in very sheltered and sheltered environments</li> <li>• Mountain Training UK and Ireland Instructors, Coaches and Guides holding the following awards: CWI, CWDI</li> <li>• British Cycling Mountain Bike Leader Level 1 where appropriate to the pre-defined route. British Cycling Coaching Awards at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 including Discipline Specific Units</li> <li>• British Orienteering Coaches when appropriate to the areas and environments they are working in</li> <li>• Royal Yachting Association Dinghy Instructors, Windsurfing Instructors, Personal Watercraft instructors, Inland Waterways instructors, Powerboat Instructors</li> <li>• Scout leaders</li> </ul>

## ***IOL Band 3 Course***

### **Outdoor First Aid [2 Day]**

<p><b><i>Typical role of holder within an outdoor learning context</i></b></p>	<p>Unsupported outdoor activity instructors, teachers or leaders and outdoor learning specialists operating in situations where help may be up to a few hours away, e.g. outdoor education tutor, mountain leader, D of E assessor, bushcraft instructor, forest school leader, canoe expedition leader, etc.</p>
<p><b><i>Previous experience</i></b></p>	<p>No prior Outdoor First Aid experience necessary</p>
<p><b><i>Course content to include</i></b>  <i>* Additional topics may be included at the training providers discretion or to meet the needs of their participants</i>  <i>** Content in italics is in common with OFA Band 2</i></p>	<p><i>Roles and responsibilities for first aiders</i>  <i>Incident management</i>  <i>ABC primary survey</i>  <i>Summoning appropriate help/rescue services</i>  <i>Treatment for unconscious casualties</i>  <i>Treatment for non-breathing casualties</i>  <i>Use of an AED</i>  <i>Treatment for bleeding/shock</i>  <i>Recognition and management of life threatening illness</i>  <i>Recognition and management of drowning/hypothermia</i>  <i>Insulation and shelter</i>  <i>Age awareness for vital signs/CPR/bleeding</i>  <i>Ongoing monitoring and casualty care whilst awaiting help.</i>  <i>Secondary survey</i>  <i>Bone, joint and soft tissue injuries</i>  <i>Illness/medical conditions</i>  <i>Poisons, burns</i>  <i>Hypo/hyperthermia, dehydration</i>  <i>Stabilising/insulating/monitoring over time</i>  <i>Providing emotional support and promoting the wellbeing and mental health of first aiders post incident</i>  <i>Treatment of minor issues, e.g. small cuts, blisters, bites, stings, etc.</i>  <i>Additional first aid topics specific to the needs of the participants</i></p>
<p><b><i>Course delivery to include</i></b>  <i>** Delivery in italics is in common with OFA Band 2</i></p>	<p><i>Practical casualty assessment</i>  <i>Practical treatment for unconscious casualties</i>  <i>Practical CPR and AED use</i></p>

	<p><i>Practical treatment for bleeding and shock</i></p> <p><i>Practical treatment of life threatening illness</i></p> <p><i>Practical insulation and shelter of casualties</i></p> <p>Practical immobilisation of injuries</p> <p>Practical evacuation of walking wounded</p> <p>Practical incident management</p> <p>Practical management of casualties in a variety of positions/situations</p> <p>Practical management of more than one casualty</p> <p><i>Outdoor scenarios reflective of the first aid situations the course participants might need to manage</i></p>
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Face-to-face training.
<b>Contact time</b>	<p>Courses in this band will be at least two days in duration</p> <p>Contact time will be a minimum of 16 hours not including breaks</p>
<p><b>Observable competence</b> (<i>assessment criteria to be achieved</i>)</p> <p><i>** Competence in italics is in common with OFA Band 2</i></p>	<p>Can recognise and manage incidents in the outdoors</p> <p>Can summon appropriate help/rescue service</p> <p>Can manage unconscious casualties</p> <p>Can perform CPR and use an AED</p> <p>Can treat choking</p> <p>Can treat bleeding/shock</p> <p>Can respond to signs/symptoms of hypothermia</p> <p>Can insulate/shelter</p> <p>Can monitor a casualty appropriately</p> <p>Can immobilise injuries</p> <p>Can manage with casualties suffering from illness</p> <p>Can manage casualties with burns / poisoning</p> <p>Can manage casualties with hypo/hyperthermia</p> <p>Can treat casualties with minor issues</p>
<p><b>Relevance for Outdoor Sector Awards</b> (<i>Employers and participants must ensure the course is appropriate to their needs</i>)</p>	<p>Courses are likely to meet required minimum content for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Canoeing Coaches, Leaders and Guides working in moderate or advanced environments</li> <li>• Mountain Training UK and Ireland Instructors, Coaches and Guides holding the following awards: RCI, RCDI, LL, H&amp;ML, ML, WML, MCI, WMCI, BMG</li> <li>• British Cycling Mountain Bike Leader Level 2 and Level 3</li> <li>• British Orienteering Coaches when appropriate to the areas and environments they are working in</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• British Caving Association Local Cave &amp; Mine Leader, Cave Instructor Certificate Holders</li><li>• Scout leaders with adventurous activity Leadership permits</li></ul>
--	---

## ***IOL Band 4 Course***

### **Outdoor First Aid [Advanced]**

<b><i>Typical role of holder within an outdoor learning context</i></b>	Outdoor professionals requiring specialised training to operate in complex environments when professional help may be multiple hours or days away, e.g. mountain guides, overseas expedition leaders, mountain / fell / cave / marine rescue teams, etc.
<b><i>Previous experience</i></b>	Previous successful completion of a Band 3 Outdoor First Aid (2 Day) course would normally be required
<b><i>Mode of delivery</i></b>	Face-to-face training.
<b><i>Contact time</i></b>	Courses in this band will be two or more days in duration Contact time will be a minimum of 16 hours not including breaks, but often longer
<b><i>Course content could include</i></b>	<p>Any training course in this band will extend or deepen the participants knowledge of Outdoor First Aid beyond that covered in Band 3 Outdoor First Aid [2 Day].</p> <p>It is likely to involve specialist input and could cover, but not be limited to, topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expedition first aid to cover relevant environmental considerations (jungle, arctic, high altitude, extended sea voyage etc.), injury/illness identification, and first aid responses when professional help may be multiple hours or days away</li> <li>• First aid for mountain / fell / cave / marine rescue teams</li> </ul>

## ***Additional Courses***

### **Outdoor First Aid [CPD]**

<b><i>Scope</i></b>	Courses in this band are ideal as a continuing professional development (CPD) in outdoor first aid
<b><i>Previous experience</i></b>	Completion of Band 2 Outdoor First Aid (1 Day), Band 3 Outdoor First Aid (2 Day) or Band 4 Outdoor First Aid (Advanced), would be required
<b><i>Course content could include</i></b>	<p>Courses might cover a specific topic or be bespoke to the needs of the organisation commissioning it.</p> <p>Examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic skills refreshers</li> <li>• Management of incidents</li> <li>• Activity specific first aid scenarios</li> <li>• Recognition and first aid treatment of particular illnesses</li> <li>• Specific injury assessments and treatments</li> <li>• Mental health first aid</li> </ul>
<b><i>Mode of delivery</i></b>	Training can be face-to face or online as appropriate to the subject matter.
<b><i>Contact time</i></b>	This type of training will vary in duration depending upon the nature of the course.



### **Web links relevant to this statement:**

HSE guidance on First aid at work:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l174.pdf>

HSE Guidance for First Aid Needs Assessment:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/needs-assessment.htm>

HSE guidance on Selecting a training provider:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.pdf>

First Aid Awarding Organisations Forum - Assessment Principles for Regulated First Aid Qualifications:

<http://www.firstaidqualifications.org.uk/assessment-principles/>

First Aid Awarding Organisations Forum - Outdoor First Aid Assessment Principles:

<http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=346>

IOL Outdoor First Aid Trainers Questionnaire:

<http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=346>

### **Version 3 Issue**

Issued on: TBC 2020

Prepared by: Neal Anderson – IOL Professional Standards Manager

Reviewed by: TBC

### **Further Information:**

IOL Statement V3 introduced good practice requirements 1, 2, 3 and 4, and guidance on mode of delivery, contact times, and revision to the description of Band 1 and Band 4 courses and added details of CPD courses.

IOL Statement V2 simplified the definitions in Band 1 and 4 and added clarity to the requirements for outdoor first aid trainer competence. The changes were made following an IOL hosted meeting of stakeholders in Manchester on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

IOL Statement V1.3 clarified ways providers of First Aid Training, employers, National Governing Bodies of sport, and other interested parties can align with the statement.

The initial IOL statement was developed from a series of IOL consultations with First Aid Training providers in 2013 and 2014. The core guidance evolved from a meeting in Manchester on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014 attended by: HSE, AALA, ITC, React First, TQUK, Qualifications Network, BMC/Mountain Training, British Cycling, OEAP, PGL (BAPA member), EPA, Risk Lifesigns, Active Aid, FAIB, Marlin Training, Adventure Rapport, Active First Aid, REC, Training Expertise, IOL.

An article in Horizons 63 (Autumn 2013) “Outdoor First Aid Training By Outdoor Practitioners ” by Andy Robinson introduced the debate that has led to this IOL Statement of Good Practice. <http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Portals/0/IOL%20Documents/Horizons%20Documents/OFA%20Article.H63.pdf>

### **Future Revisions**

This Statement of Good Practice is seen as an evolving document that responds to the demands and needs of the sector, as well as guidance from HSE and other relevant bodies.

Please get in touch with the IOL Professional Standards Manager [neal@outdoor-learning.org](mailto:neal@outdoor-learning.org) with your comments. The Institute is open to supporting an Outdoor First Aid Training Research or Professional Discussion Group to guide future revisions to this statement if there is support from within the membership and wider sector.