

What the adventure & outdoor safety report means for you

The government's report into risk management and safety practices in the adventure and outdoor commercial sectors will mean changes for hunting guides that TIA is confident will strengthen your businesses.

A review of the sector was called for by the Prime Minister last year after several high profile incidents turned the spotlight on the sector's safety practices. TIA was part of the review team from day one and consulted with members to ensure their views were represented around the table. This included talking with hunting guides. Roger Duxfield was a key contact and we also kept the Association informed of progress.

We worked hard to remind other work-group representatives that every operator wants to avoid incidents and accidents. This approach helped ensure recommendations were developed that focused primarily on operator needs, rather than the development of highly prescriptive regulations supported by punitive action.

The key changes to come out of the review, announced by the government in late April, include the introduction of a registration scheme for the adventure and outdoor commercial sectors. There will be a requirement for up-front and ongoing external safety audits of operators' safety management provisions (to a level commensurate with the risk) and an obligation on operators to keep their registration up-to-date. Operators who have activity-specific regulation and/or have chosen to be externally reviewed by a third party, e.g. Qualmark or OutdoorsMark, should experience little or no change, other than better quality guidance and support. There will be a modest registration fee for the unregulated.

For operators that carry heightened risk and have neither specific regulation nor any form of credible external assessment, then the next phase of the review is likely to assess this group and decide which will qualify for compulsory start-up and on-going audits at a frequency and depth commensurate with the risks. The registration scheme recognises existing auditing bodies and largely keeps the responsibility for safety at the coal face.

Other key recommendations include the establishment of an industry-led entity to strengthen the safety management framework for the sector and the development of a practice guide. It is anticipated that guidance material may describe how to develop and implement a tailored Safety Management System with topics that include the development of standard operating procedures, safety reporting systems and crisis plans. TIA has offered to facilitate this piece of work.

There will also be evaluation of the voluntary safety auditing schemes for adventure and outdoor commercial sector operations to ensure they are fit for purpose. The development of a register of government-accredited adventure tourism-related safety auditing schemes will be investigated.

TIA will continue working with DOL, other key organisations and our members to ensure the recommendations result in workable, positive outcomes for the adventure and outdoor sector. We are keen to start work quickly on the recommendations and intend being fully involved with their implementation.

You will find a link to the full report and more information on TIA's website www.tianz.org.nz. For more information on this subject or anything else TIA can help you with contact me at email Geoff.ensor@tianz.org.nz.