



**Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasangh**

# **Club Guidelines**

(Guidelines for Member Clubs)

**Based on  
UIAA guidelines  
and  
originated from  
British Mountaineering Council (BMC) Guidelines**

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dated August 15, 2020*

## **Mountaineering in Maharashtra**

Mountaineering is a unique activity which combines the passion for sport, adventure, and nature. It is physically demanding, but the joy it gives to the mountaineer more than compensates for it. It is also a unique sport; it is not competitive per se. Moreover, it is a great tool for personality development and development of team-spirit as well as leadership skills.

Trekking and mountaineering as hobby/sport was introduced in India by the British. Post Second World War, the Indians took it in a big way. The first successful scaling of Mt Everest (1953), made mountaineering and trekking glamorous world-over, as also in India and Maharashtra.

Organized trekking and mountaineering started in Maharashtra in 1953, under the banner of University Hikers Club, founded by faculty members of Mumbai University for the students. University Hikers Club had organized treks in the Sahyadris. The past students of Mumbai University formed Girivihar, the first mountaineering club to be registered under The Bombay Public Trust Act, in Mumbai in 1964.

In the subsequent years, the activity became extremely popular in the State, which is gifted with an extensive Sahyadri mountain range and other hilly terrain, dotted with Buddhist-era caves, and forts built in the later centuries.

In general, the trekking is a week-end activity. But several clubs also organize long-duration trekking and mountaineering expeditions in Himalayas, and even in the Sahyadris. Veterans in the club lead the expedition, with juniors assisting them, and taking over the leadership role in few years. This practice has developed a 'culture' and an unwritten set of norms, which are passed on through the generations to generations.

## **Apex organizations**

The Indian Mountaineering Foundation works at the national level, with a major focus on mountaineering in the Himalayas, but there was no such Organization at the State level. To cater to the said requirement Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasangh henceforth mentioned as "AMGM", was formed in 1992, as an umbrella organization of trekking / mountaineering clubs in the State of Maharashtra.

## **Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasangh (AMGM)**

Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasangh (AMGM) is a voluntary organization registered under The Bombay Public Trust Act. It is an apex body of a mountaineering clubs in Maharashtra. The clubs working in the field of trekking, climbing and mountaineering are the members of AMGM. The nominated representatives of the Member Clubs form the General Body of AMGM. Which elects

the Committee to look after the affairs of Akhil Maharashtra Giryarohan Mahasangh, as an Office Bearers.

## **Clubs**

AMGM has member Clubs spread across the state, which form the vitally important democratic basis of AMGM. Each club holds Regular Meetings, which club members can attend so as to join in discussions in relation to the club's activities on local and national level.

Club members get an opportunity to participate in trekking, rock climbing or Himalayan programmes organised by clubs as per their objectives. Some Clubs organise other outdoor activities such as fort conservation, nature conservation and other social programmes for their members.

## **AMGM Programs**

AMGM also organizes some specific programs with specific purpose with the help of member clubs. Keeping in line with this, AMGM celebrated Silver Jubilee of 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Everest Expedition under the patronage of IMF on large scale to create awareness about mountaineering amongst general public. In this function, the senior mountaineers were felicitated for their contribution to the mountaineering field in Maharashtra.

- AMGM organized rock climbing competitions for few years at Kenheri Rocks Borivali to create interest about rock climbing amongst youths and appreciate the skills earn by the rock climbers.
- AMGM fought the case till Supreme Court against the Raigad Ropeway to protect the fort from probable damage due to Ropeway.
- AMGM organized the First Successful Indian Civilian expedition to Mt Everest with the participation of selected members from different clubs. This expedition was organized to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence. It was a part of official program of Golden Jubilee Celebration of Govt of India. This expedition gave the First Everest Summiteer to Maharashtra.
- AMGM also organizes special programs for a specific group of the society to create awareness amongst them about the trekking and mountaineering. The general co-ordination of the program is done by AMGM and on field organization is given to different clubs.
- On this basis, AMGM organized monthly treks for Mumbai Police for their physical and mental fitness.
- Weekend treks for TCS staff were organized to create the awareness about Fit for Life amongst them.

- Forest Fort conservation project was organized in different districts jointly with Forest Department.
- Recently the efforts of AMGM resulted into getting permission for practice of rock climbing at Kanheri Rocks for the members of the Clubs from the authorities of Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivali.

## **Adventure Sport Policy of Government**

AMGM tries its best to keep effective co-ordination with government and local body officials in subjects related with trekking and mountaineering. Keeping in line with this, AMGM has contributed significantly in framing first ever Adventure Sport Policy of Government of Maharashtra in 2010. The draft of Trekking, climbing and mountaineering activity prepared by AMGM was accepted and included in the final draft of Adventure Sport Policy of Sport Department of Govt of Maharashtra. AMGM also filed an application of Intervention at Bombay High Court in the hearing of PIL filed for framing a Guideline for organizing trekking and mountaineering programmes. Hon'ble Bombay High Court accepted the application and gave the direction to Government of Maharashtra to involve AMGM in the process of framing of Guideline for trekking and mountaineering. Accordingly office bearers of AMGM were involved in the meetings organized for framing the guidelines for adventure sport by Govt of Maharashtra.

The office bearers of AMGM were involved in framing the guidelines for Shiv Chhatrapati Puraskar for Adventure Sport by Govt of Maharashtra.

## **Girimitra Sammelan**

Girimitra Sammelan / Mountain Festival is organized under the banner of Maharashtra Seva Sangh, a voluntary social organization based in Mulund, since 2002. This is a yearly convention of mountain lovers organized to create platform for trekking and mountaineering activity. This is a one of its kind in our country. Though the Mountain Festival is not organized officially under the banner of AMGM, AMGM is actively involved in this Festival and the office bearers of AMGM are the key organizer of this Mountain Festival.

Every year, eminent personalities from mountaineering field are invited as guests to share their experiences with the gathering. Some of them such as Col Kumar, Mr Mark Inglis (New Zeland), Mr Apa Sherpa and Mr Ang Tshering (Nepal), Mr Elie Chevieux (Switzerland), Ms. Chandraprabha Aitwal, Ms SantoshYadav, Maj HPS Ahaluwalia , Commander Dilip Donde, Ms. Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner (Austria), Mingma Sherpa and Kami Rita Sherpa (Nepal), Khoo Swee Chiow (Singapore) and many more in the past.

To recognize and encourage the contribution of trekkers, climbers, mountaineers and clubs to the mountaineering field some of them are felicitated every year for their remarkable contribution. Also the rock climbing and Himalayan expeditions are felicitated in the festival for encouragement.

## **Skills**

AMGM use Girimitra Sammelan / Mountain Festival as variety of mechanisms to help trekkers, climbers and mountaineers develop their various skills. The photography and film competitions, seminars, book stalls, equipment stalls and such other things presented during the Girimitra Sammelan gives an opportunity to individual adventure lover enhance their knowledge in the field.

AMGM also supports various seminars, film festivals etc organized by other clubs for mountaineers.

## **Mountaineering Clubs**

Mountaineering clubs are great places to meet new people, explore new places and generally have a great time. Coming in many guises - small, large, local, national, predominantly climbing, predominantly trekking - there's something for most tastes.

Now's the time to join a club!

## **What is a club?**

### **Club Status**

- Ordinary club (this is known as) unincorporated association
- Company limited by guarantee as per Sec 8 of Company Act
- Community amateur sports club (CASC) formed in government, semi government offices or in companies.
- Registered clubs incorporated under The Registrar of Societies Act and/or The Bombay Public Trust Act.

A mountaineering club is a group of like-minded people whose main focus is to spend time out in the mountains. Clubs started off as social gatherings where trekkers, climbers and mountaineers planned their weekend and holiday exploits, and that hasn't changed very much at all over time.

One of the great strengths of trekking, climbing and mountaineering clubs is that they are full of individuals with a wide range of experience and involvement. They are great places to start planning trips to Sahyadri hills and to Himalaya. There is often someone who has been to your planned destination, or who knows someone who has. Clubs are a great source of partners and information and, most importantly, enthusiasm.

As a general rule, clubs are open to everyone over the age of 18.

Most mountaineering clubs have a geographical base with many of its members living in the local area. Clubs also organize programmes with specific main purpose. Some are focused with only trekking while some are focused with only climbing while

some are focused with only Himalayan mountaineering while some are focused in all activities. Also some clubs are focused only on trek to forts and its conservation or combined with trekking and climbing. Most of these clubs organize local evening meetings for planning of future programmes.

## **Programmes**

All clubs organize programmes throughout the year varying from a weekend treks to a weeklong treks in Sahyadri or climbing on Pinnacles, Cliffs in Sahyadri or hitting the heights in the Himalayas and many other places in between. Clubs sometimes stray a little from their main focus of climbing, walking and mountaineering by offering their members opportunities in other outdoor activities such as fort conservation, nature conservation, and other social programmes for mountain people etc.

Most weekend treks that clubs organise are held at one of the forts in Sahyadri. Forts in Sahyadri offer shelter and drinking water which serves as comfortable bases for long weekends in the mountains.

How extensive a trekking programme is usually depend on the size of the club – the larger the club the more treks throughout the year. However, one of the big advantages of joining a club is meeting people who would be eager to go outdoors with you.

Apart from the outdoor experiences that club membership will give you, clubs are a great social scene too. It's not always sack, boots - as many clubs have annual gathering, film shows, talks and presentations, and non climbing/walking nights out and days in. Members are likely to meet regularly on a weekday evening, usually at a local popular joint or at other public places, and then head outdoors at the weekend.

## **Training**

More and more trekking and climbing clubs are willing to take on inexperienced trekkers and climbers, although some prefer you to have some experience and equipment. There is a time honoured system of informal, hands-on instruction from the more experienced members, and it is a system that works well. Clubs are also a great source of hands on training to develop leadership qualities amongst their members by organising necessary training sessions through experts.

If your local club requires you to have some basic skills, you may wish to consider attending an outdoor rock climbing course or a basic mountaineering courses before going outdoor climbing with club members.

If you would like to take advantage of the support that clubs can offer it is best to talk to your local club to see if their aims and objects matches your need.

## Cost

Clubs charge an annual fee to their members and there will be an amount to cover the running costs of the club. Each club sets its own annual fee.

Club programmes are also excellent value as there are usually three main components to consider: travel, accommodation and food. The programme organiser will try to arrange for people to share transport thereby saving our planet alongside saving your pennies. Accommodation, whether camping or in a shelter on foot, is usually free, and food costs are limited. Clubs generally don't place a charge on attending a trekking programme.

As with any adventurous activity there is an element of risk in mountaineering that you need to accept. Take responsibility for your own involvement and read AMGM's participation statement, an introduction to risk in climbing and mountaineering.

AMGM Participation Statement say that: ***AMGM recognises that trekking, climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.***

## Injuries

Injuries are possible in trekking, climbing and mountaineering, as in all sporting activities, as a result of over-training, inappropriate training regimes, or poor technique as well as those that might be sustained during a slip or fall, or if something or someone falls on a person.

## Risk

Risk is an integral part of the activity and can play a vital role in helping young people to acquire these extremely important life skills. Minimizing the risk boils down to having the right level of skill and experience relative to the difficulty of the activity. When starting out climbing, choose the easiest routes available and work your way up as you feel comfortable. Accidents can happen due to circumstances over which the climber has no control, such as a rock fall, and in these events first aid training can make all the difference.

## Accident

Because experienced climbers strive very hard to know their own limitations, the sport enjoys remarkably low accident rates. Incidents that make news headlines often involve individuals operating in environments for which they are ill-prepared, and this can give a somewhat skewed impression of the dangers involved in the sport. Many of the 'trekkers' reported in the media as having been involved in accidents, died or got lost in mountainous areas are not dedicated trekkers or climbers. Often they are tourists who have gone out walking or people who don't have much experience in the mountains. Therefore some of the tragedies that hit the headlines may reflect poorly on dedicated mountaineers who are more likely to be better prepared and not as likely to require mountain rescue.

AMGM stresses the need for personal responsibility and self-reliance coupled with self discipline in all mountaineering activities. It makes sense to prepare contingency plans in the event of an emergency, to carry first aid and emergency equipment and to invest in some good first aid training. AMGM and other old clubs are actively involved in a number of initiatives aimed at reducing accident statistics still further. These include Seminars, lectures, slideshows and a range of publications on safety.

## **AMGM club guidelines**

Setting up and managing a trekking, climbing club can throw up many questions. These guidelines for AMGM clubs will help answer some of them.

Several areas are covered including child protection, equipment, risk etc. Each area has a concise document.

The advice is intended not to constrain club activities but to help clubs manage their affairs effectively so they can enjoy the established freedoms of the mountains and cliffs and protect them in their natural state for future generations to enjoy.



# Club Guidelines-1

## Access and Conservation

### 1. Introduction

These guidelines are for Clubs, Club Office bearers, Programme Leaders and Club Members. They cover preparing a club programme, access legislation, club climbing / trekking programmes, choosing a climbing / trekking site etc. It is necessary to consider access and conservation issues when organising club programmes. AMGM and clubs often share information about the availability of access arrangements to the rocks/hills/mountains which are being used for adventure sports activities. But it is expected on the part of the Club(s) and the organizers to inform AMGM about the variation in the said information. Occasionally, access arrangements can change or can be withdrawn, so care needs to be taken to keep up to date and use the rocks/hills/mountains considerately.

### 2. Preparing a club programme / event

Club programme organisers should:

- Check the information of access at Local/Regional Administrative Authorities.
- Check the information of access at Forest Department if the area belongs to Forest.
- Check the information of access if it is a private property.
- If you are still not sure about the current access issues then contact local clubs.
- Ensure participants follow the Countryside Code.

### 3. Access, the law and you

The activities so carried by the Clubs shall be governed by the Laws as applicable for the time being in force.

### 4. Club climbing programmes

Being part of a big group can often have an impact on the other climbers / trekkers who are at the field carrying out the activity. Please be aware of this and bare the mountain code in mind. While climbing, top roping and abseiling on routes for long periods causes erosion and can spoil other climbers' enjoyment. This should be avoided. Other users, landowners, local people of the surrounding land should see climbing / trekking as a quiet and informal recreation. Please note there are documented examples of inconsiderate behavior of climbers / trekkers towards

residents / locals which in some cases has lead to permanent or temporary bans. When you leave the place take any litter home.

## **5. Choosing a climbing / trekking site**

Consider the following:

- Popularity of a particular site with other groups and individuals, especially at weekends and public holidays.
- The shelter situation if a large number of climbers / trekkers are planned to be used.
- The sensitivity of access to the place. There may be an 'active' situation that could be jeopardized by a visit.
- Group size and ability with regard to the nature of the routes.
- Avoid taking groups to the most popular areas at weekends.
- While conducting the activity ensure that as far as possible no ecological imbalance is caused to the area

## Club Guidelines-2

### Child Safeguarding (Under-18s)

#### 1. Introduction

The guidance given in this document is intended to help clubs and their office bearers to act both reasonably and prudently in the area of Child Safeguarding and assist them in fulfilling their duty of care. Child Safeguarding is an area which has become a matter of concern to many. There are clear issues to understand and simple steps to take to guide our actions. This document covers Loco Parentis, risk and reasonableness, AMGM Child Safeguarding Policy, and a sample consent form (final page).

#### 2. Overview

If...	...then
1. Your club does not allow under 18s to join as members and/or attend club program.	These three situations are similar and your club is not required to adopt AMGM Child Safeguarding Policy or appoint a Youth Officer (Escort).
2. Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend club programmes, but only with a parent/carer.	
3. Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend club programmes, but only with a parent/carer or an adult <i>in loco parentis</i> , nominated by a parent.	

If...	...then
Your club allows under 18s to join as members and/or attend programmes <u>without</u> a parent/carer or an adult <i>in loco parentis</i> .	The club and/or the office bearers have additional responsibilities and duties that relate to those under 18 <b>AMGM's Child Safeguarding Policy needs to be put in place.</b> An appointment of a Youth Officer (Escort) must be made.

### 3. Loco Parentis

**In Loco Parentis:** A parent may give express consent to anyone they wish so as to take their child for trekking, climbing or mountaineering. This is an arrangement between the parent and the person taking the child. The person taking the child will be in *loco parentis* and this requires them to exercise a duty of care that would be provided by a reasonably prudent parent.

If an adult is acting as loco parentis, make sure that the parent has nominated the Adult concern (not the club). Also make sure that it is precisely clear as to who has the duty of care at any given moment and whether or not that duty of care is handed from one person to another. Whilst it is not a requirement, a consent form is used by many clubs for situations where an under 18 is attending with an adult *in loco parentis*. This is not a requirement, but recommended since it can prove useful.

When taking another person's child for trekking, climbing, or mountaineering it is always advisable and expected to inform both, the parent(s) and the child, about the nature of the activities to be undertaken and any arrangements, so that they can decide whether to send their child or not, for the said activity. It is important that they are not only informed about the activities, but also understand the nature of risks, hazards or hardships attached, so that they can make an informed decision.

### Risk and Reasonableness

Clubs which allow under 18s with or without parents/carers or an adult in loco parentis should ask themselves two questions that can help to serve as useful guides where considering difficult issues:

- What are the risks to the young people and how can these risks be managed?
- What is reasonable in these circumstances and how can we take all reasonable steps to ensure the well-being of the young people in our care?

This would include, as examples, common sense actions such as identifying and minimising hazards such as access to toxic cleaning materials, ensuring correct storage of sharp tools at maintenance meets or informing other trekkers that children may be or are present.

### 4. AMGM Child Safeguarding Policy

For clubs which allow under 18s to attend programmes without a parent/carer or adult in loco parentis.

- The club should have a designated Youth Officer (Escort) who is responsible for child safeguarding within the club. It is desirable that this person should know how to respond if any allegation or concern is raised and that they should know what to do next.

- At programmes, it is recommended that there is a designated person responsible for Child Safeguarding issues present at all times. This person should be identified as such to all present – including children. This may, or may not, be the designated Youth Officer/Escort/Club Child Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- There should be separate male and female sleeping areas for children if there are both boys and girls present.
- When both boys and girls are present there should also be male and female supervising adults.

If you are acting in *loco parentis*, it is wise in these circumstances that in addition to obtaining parental consent, you make clear to the child(ren) and parent(s) before the programme precisely what the sleeping arrangements are likely to be in the shelter (or on the campsite).

However, the club and its officers do have a duty of care, for example to make parents/specified adults and children aware of known hazards and risks. It may also be wise to suggest that other shelter users respect the fact that there are children in the same shelter.

Clubs allowing adults acting in *loco parentis* to bring a child to stay at a camp may wish to require that adult to obtain written consent from the child's parent. This form may be used for that purpose. View the 'Parental Consent Form' on the next page.

**This form is to be completed by the parent(s) and given to the accompanying adult (named below) before start of the scheduled activity.**

**Parental Consent Form**

I give consent for my child ..... (name of child)

to accompany ..... (name of adult)

to ..... (place/camp site)

from (date) ..... to .....

I have been informed about the nature of the accommodation and the likely sleeping arrangements. I understand that accommodation may have communal/common facilities, which include common sleeping arrangements.

I understand that the above adult will endeavour to ensure that appropriate sleeping (staying) arrangement will be made for my child, with regard to age and sex and the needs of other members present

In the event of illness or an accident requiring emergency hospital treatment, I authorise the adult named on this form to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital authorities, if the delay required to obtain my own signature is considered inadvisable by the doctor or surgeon concerned.

Signed .....(parent) Date .....

Address .....

Tel ..... Mobile .....

## Club Guidelines-3

### **Youth Officer (Escort) Role**

#### **1. Introduction**

This document is for AMGM-affiliated clubs which allow under 18s as members, or allow under 18s to attend club programmes without a parent/carer or adult in loco parentis. It covers the role and person specification of a Youth Officer (Escort).

**If,**

Clubs allow under 18s as members or let under 18s to attend programmes when not accompanied by either a parent/carer or a specified adult in loco parentis.

**Then,**

- The club and/or the office bearers have additional responsibilities and duties that relate to those under 18 years.
- The club must put in place AMGM's Child Protection Policy.
- The club must appointment a Youth Officer (Escort).

Clubs which allow under 18s as members or to attend programmes, only if they are accompanied by a parent/carer or by an adult who has accepted the role of being *in loco parentis*, do not need a Youth Officer (Escort) within the club. If an adult is acting in loco parentis, make sure that it is clear who has the duty of care at any given moment and whether or not that duty of care is handed from one person to another.

#### **2. What is a Youth Officer?**

A Youth Officer (Escort) is the key contact within the club for managing child protection procedures. These are set out in AMGM Child Protection Policy.

The Youth Officer (Escort) is responsible for raising awareness of the issues of Child Protection within the club and working towards implementing AMGM Child Protection Policy within the club.

#### **3. Person Specification for a Youth Officer**

- Club member.
- Experienced trekkers, climber or mountaineer.
- Ideally with experience of supervising or working with young people.

- Willing to attend training that will enable them to fulfill the requirements of the role.

#### **4. What a Youth Officer needs to do?**

- Read AMGM Child Protection Policy.
- Consult AMGM office bearer responsible for youth and child protection.
- Attend a Safeguarding & Child Protection Awareness course and other appropriate training.
- Work towards implementing AMGM Child Protection Policy within the club.
- Inform and advise the club and its members on Child Protection issues.
- If a club is running a specific youth event where there are under 18s not with their own parents or a specified person in loco parentis, ensure that there are suitably vetted people supervising the children and that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Pass Child Protection concerns to AMGM office bearer responsible for youth.



# Club Guidelines-4

## Club Equipment

### 1. Introduction

The following recommendations are given to Clubs for the usage of Equipments.

This document will be useful to anyone who uses or is responsible for pooled (common) or club equipment. Some key points have been highlighted by case studies.

### 2. Pooled Equipment

#### **Pooled equipment is used at the individual's own risk**

The individual should check to make sure any pooled equipment that they borrow is safe to use and is appropriate for its intended purpose. Check it before you use it. This is fine if club members are experienced, but what if they aren't? Provide training to your club members to allow them to check their equipment confidently.

#### **It is recommended that records of age and usage of pooled equipment are kept, and any inspections are recorded.**

It's relatively easy to monitor your own personal equipment, and to build up a picture of its use and history. From this you can decide when to retire it from service. It isn't such an easy task when dealing with pooled equipment used by a wide range of individuals. Good record keeping helps keep track of usage and history, and enables information to be passed on.

### 3. The Equipment Officer

#### **A club has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that equipment is reasonably safe for the use of the club members**

In addition to the individual checking equipment prior to using it, appointing a suitably experienced person as an Equipment Officer can greatly assist the management of equipment in order to achieve this. If responsibility is shared between club members and an Equipment Officer, the chances of unsafe or unsuitable equipment being used are greatly reduced. The equipment officer should not be responsible for tasks such as ensuring that all kit is fit for purpose, or logging in/out each piece of equipment, or cleaning dirty kit. All of those are the responsibility of the user. However, running 'equipment inspection classes' for all club members, ensuring that kit is stored by the club appropriately and managing the club's kit inspection records would likely be included in the equipment officers responsibility.

The equipment officer is just a facilitator for keeping the records of the club equipments on a voluntary basis and hence any error of judgment or accident arising

out of the usage of such equipment shall not hold the equipment officer responsible or liable.

## **4. Equipment Checking**

Inspecting and checking equipment is our main method in avoiding incidents caused by faulty equipment. We can break this down into two types of checking:

### **Pre-use check by the user**

This goes back to shared responsibility, in which the user must check that equipment is safe to use before using it. This advice and training should be given to novices and new club members.

A typical pre-use procedure would be doing a quick visual and tactile check of a rope when flaking it out at the base of a route.

### **Thorough detailed check by a responsible person**

We'll refer to this type of detailed check as Equipment Inspection and cover it in some detail below.

## **5. Equipment Inspection**

### **Why Inspect?**

- To help meet the club's duty of care.
- To assist with budgeting and purchasing – you can avoid buying kit which hasn't lasted for very long, and keep track of when replacements may be required.
- Have the confidence to enjoy your climbing without having to worry whether your kit is up to scratch or not.

### **When to Inspect?**

- Immediately after purchase - even new equipment may be faulty.
- At regular intervals based on the manufacturers guidance. This will vary depending on the manufacturer, and the specific product. For example, from the Wild Country website:

“In addition to the normal inspection required before use this product should be thoroughly examined at least once every THREE MONTHS by a competent person.”

Also, be prepared to shorten inspection intervals if necessary, based on circumstances.

- After a reported incident. If a rope gets handed in with the comment in the signing out book “ 40 ft fall factor 1 at Pinnacle, after block pulled out”... there is a chance the rope may be damaged and requires inspecting!

## How to Inspect?

- Be systematic. Do one thing at a time, for example if checking a harness, check the webbing, then the stitching, then any buckles.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions. There may be specific points to check for instance, that are more critical than others.



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### **Visual check of the body, of the hook or nose of the connector, of the closing gate, of the rivet and of the sleeve**

On the connector, look for any cracks, marks: look for the cause; sharp tools, impacts... This analysis will provide information on the history of the product. Check that the connector is free from deformation, wear.

For a connector, a wear mark more than 1 mm deep is serious. Beware there is no trace of corrosion which may be present on the body.

Pay particular attention to the angles, to the hook and to the gate. Check that the rivet and the sleeve are present and check their condition.

- Record the results. If you don't record the results, you may as well not bother doing the inspection in the first place.

## Who Inspects?

- Involve as many club members as possible. This will increase individual's knowledge and awareness, and help foster a good attitude towards kit maintenance and care.
- Have one experienced person managing the system. In other words, an Equipment Officer, who doesn't get lumbered with all the work!

## Inspection Records

It's up to you whether you keep the records of any inspections separate or include them as part of your signing in/out book. Keeping them separate tends to make it easier to manage as signing in/out is often done in a hurry and records can get a bit scruffy!

Here's an example of a rope log where inspections and signing in/out have been combined:

Rope	Description	DOM	In Service	Retire By	Scrapped
4	Red 8mmX50m	Oct/2014	Oct/2015	Oct/2020	<i>Put the date when scrapped</i>
Comments:		<i>General comments about the item can be put here .....</i>			
Log out	Signed	Log in	Signed	Usage	Comment
1-11-2015	A.B.	1-11-2015	A.B.	Inspection	Pre-use inspection. Fine, correct length
20-11-2015	C.D.	30-11-2015	C.D.	Pinnacle climbing	Fine
25-12-2015	E.F.	30-12-2015	E.F.	R.C. Camp	Fine

## 6. Retiring Equipment

At some point you will have to retire kit from service. This is easy if it has been damaged – you can see that it is unsafe to use, and you then scrap it. What about lifetime? All equipment has a lifetime, given by the manufacturer, after which it should be scrapped, even if it seems to still be OK. The rules for this are simple:

- Follow the manufacturer's guidelines.
- If possible, record the end of service date on the equipment log (see the rope log above).
- Make sure items are identifiable.
- Write down that you've scrapped it, and actually dispose of it so it can't get back into the system.

What if, as sometimes happens, you inherit a load of kit which you can't identify or tell how old it is? This is a tough one. However, the club can take a pragmatic approach in assessing the kit. For example, all modern equipment is date and batch marked, so the year of manufacture can be established. That alone is important knowledge. If nothing about the kit can be established then it may be best not to use it. To avoid these situations arising in the first place, maintain comprehensive equipment records and pass them on to the next Equipment Officer.

*Case study 1 – a bag of karabiners is found at the back of the club store room, there are no records for them. An inspection shows that they are all in a good condition and appear almost unused, and they pass an inspection. Phoning the manufacturer with the batch code indicates they are 7 years old, and the manufacturer gives an indefinite lifespan for their metallic products. It is decided*

*to use the karabiners, as they are within their lifespan and there is no reason to suggest that they are unsafe to use.*

*Case study 2 – a new Equipment Officer is going through the club harnesses, and finds one with no records to go with it. There is no label or date marking, and the harness is well used but still passes an inspection – it is decided to scrap the harness because there is no way of working out its age. Textile items generally age and degrade over time more than metallic items.*

## **7. Quarantining Kit**

A system that works really well is having a quarantine box. This enables suspect kit to be taken out of service temporarily until it can be thoroughly inspected. Make sure everyone knows about it, and try to foster an attitude where people aren't afraid to report damaged kit and related problems. There's nothing worse than when people try and sneak knackered kit back in because they are afraid of being told off.

## **8. Choosing Club Equipment**

Choose your kit with care, and look for the following features:

- **Hard wearing, durable**
- **Large safety reserves**
- **Easy for novices to use**

### **Some ideas:**

- Single ropes: Use 10.5mm, rather than 9.1mm diameter.
- Double ropes: Use 9mm rather than 8mm diameter.
- Use Fully adjustable harnesses.
- Use Rigid shell helmets rather than lightweight foam.
- Use 16mm Nylon slings rather than 6mm.
- If you intend to do top-roping, low-stretch rigging ropes and steel karabiners are useful.
- Grabby belay devices for novices rather than slick devices.

## **9. Storing Equipment**

Some tips

- Put away dry, clean, away from light and chemicals (especially acids).
- Lightly oil moving parts, wiping away excess. Normal oil does not affect nylon.

- Been Seacliff climbing? Rinse equipment in cold water and allow to dry.
- Use rope bags and clean ropes with a rope brush.

## 10. Further Information

Individual Inspection Record				
ID	Description	DOM	In Service	Retire By
Comments				
Date	Signed	Inspection/Comment		

Equipment Log Book					
ID	Item		Description		
Comments					
Date Out	Signed	Date In	Signed	Usage	Comments

**A word of advise:** Do not engrave or itch marking on equipment, the process might damage or reduce strength of the equipment.

## Club Guidelines-5

### Risk, Responsibility, Duty of Care and Liability

#### 1. Introduction

Fear of litigation has become very high profile over the last few years. Instances of litigation have been rare and personal responsibility has been recognized and balanced within many judgments, especially with inclusion of Clubs / Organizers within the ambit of Consumer Protection Act, it has become utmost important to sensitize all the stake holders and also to be aware of the Risks & Responsibilities in this field of Adventure Sport where children and adults are concerned.

With the participation of AMGM it will help to perpetuate the ethos of personal responsibility and acceptance of risk involved in this sport.

Within that context, we also have to remember that we owe a duty of care to other people in many aspects of our lives.

In mountaineering, using common sense will go a long way in helping us to fulfill that duty of care to others. This is especially the case in situations where members of any kind (club or individual) are voluntarily taking responsibility for novices or people with less experience than themselves.

- If you take on the role of introducing/mentoring novice mountaineers, make sure that the objective is well within your own technical capabilities and experience
- Make sure that the objective could reasonably be expected to be within the mental and physical capacities of the group.

#### 2. Detail

**It is not just important that we take actions to reduce the risk of litigation against ourselves. We should also be taking actions to reduce in the first place the possibility of contributing any harm to others.**

*'Trekking, Climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death', individuals should 'be responsible for their own actions and involvement'.*

Taken from the British Mountaineering Council - BMC Participation Statement, this quote reflects the ethos within which trekking, climbing and mountaineering have developed in India.

AMGM recognizes the value of training and qualifications.

However, unlike some other sports which require that novices in clubs are *coached* by members who have qualifications appropriate to the level of activity, AMGM does not require volunteer mentors in a club environment to hold qualifications.

Clubs are not providers of trekking, climbing, or mountaineering courses. They are usually comprised of groups of people coming together at many different levels of skill and experience. But many people join all types of amateur sports clubs wanting to learn. All of us were novices at some point and through a combination of personal experience and guidance from others, a novice becomes a competent trekker, climber or mountaineer. AMGM supports the principle that clubs can provide a framework for people to share their skills and learn from each other.

As part of this, AMGM has a duty to ensure that its members are aware of their legal and moral obligations. This includes publishing and perusing accepted good practices.

### **3. Duty of Care**

When looking at the issues of risk, responsibility, duty of care and liability, there seems at first to be two apparently conflicting principles in Indian law:

*Volenti non fit injuria* – suggests that an adult taking part willingly in an activity, aware of the risks and accepting them, can't later seek compensation for an injury suffered as a result of participation.

The *neighbour test* – suggests that we all owe a duty of care to other people.

This means that anyone involved in trekking, climbing and mountaineering should not only recognise the danger of personal injury and death to themselves but also that their actions or inactions may affect other trekkers, climbers and mountaineers and possibly others passing by or living nearby. The standard of care must be that of the "reasonable person".

But are the two necessarily conflicting? When driving a car the driver owes his or her passengers and other road users a duty of care to act in a way which follows the conventions of the road. If a passenger gets into a car and the driver causes them injury by swerving all over the road and crashing into oncoming vehicles, can the driver argue that the passenger knowingly accepted the risk of injury by getting into the car in the first place?

The answer of course is no. This is because it is not possible to waiver one's obligation *vis a vis* duty of care. A driver owes passengers and other road users the duty of care inherent in following the conventions of the Road Safety.

However, lack of foreseeability is a defense against negligence. If an "unforeseeable" event happens, it is an accident (though this might not be usable as an argument if a similar accident has happened before).

So, when we partake in a risky activity, if we are aware of the risk, we accept that accidents can happen, but we are also expected not to act in a manner which a reasonable person could conclude puts other people recklessly at risk.

A competent belayer owes the climber a duty of care to belay appropriately and not recklessly endanger the climber's well being. This is different from an incompetent



belayer, who may cause unforeseeable injury through ignorance, rather than negligence.

By following a few simple procedures, individuals, clubs and club members can reduce the likelihood of a negligent act arising in the first place and help ensure that the traditional principles of personal responsibility and sound mountaineering judgment are maintained.

These procedures are especially important where the involvement of under 18s is concerned.

#### **4. What Duty of Care do you have?**

Everyone has a Duty of Care not to cause harm to others by their acts or omissions - when driving a car, lighting a bonfire – or when mountaineering.

<p><b>Peer Groups</b></p> <p>In situations where individuals of comparable experience climb or walk together (in a club situation or otherwise) there is often no discernable 'leader'.</p> <p>Each individual is capable of making their own, informed decisions and each will owe the other an equal Duty of Care, but nothing more.</p>	<p><b>Different Levels of Experience</b></p> <p>At times, individuals will find themselves providing informal advice, or more formal mentoring, to those less experienced than themselves. This could include introducing a newcomer to the sport, or taking a group to the mountains.</p> <p>Less experienced adult group members are still capable (to a degree) of making their own informed decisions (appropriate to their knowledge), such as accepting reasonable responsibility for the situation they are in and will owe a reasonable duty of care to others in the group.</p> <p>But in this situation the duty of care applies proportionally and the more experienced persons are expected to act within the context of their own knowledge or experience.</p> <p>Within this type of situation, those with more experience have a duty to choose reasonable objectives and ensure that those with less experience are aware of the hazards and risks that may arise.</p> <p><b>Put simply, the main considerations are that the objective should be demonstrably within the capability of the experienced member(s) and reasonably within the expected physical and mental capacity of the whole group.</b></p> <p>The duty of care will be higher where under 18s are concerned.</p>
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In a mentoring situation make sure you follow these simple guidelines:

- To sustain the traditional principle of personal responsibility (*volenti non fit injuria*) make sure that members are aware of and accept the risks of mountaineering. Always include AMGM participation statement in club literature
- It is sensible for clubs to include a consent form with a AMGM participation statement in application forms for the club. – (signed by parents if the club allows under 18 membership)
- Ensure that every person involved is aware (and accepts for themselves) that those perceived of as 'in charge', or even just leading a trek, are not necessarily qualified, do not need to be qualified, are not regarded by the club nor regard themselves as 'technical experts', but are amateur climbers, trekkers or mountaineers with some experience who are happy to impart their knowledge and that any advice given be viewed with this in mind by the recipient.
- Plan activities which are, with reason, within your capabilities and could reasonably be expected to be within the capabilities of the group.

**(In other words, using common sense goes a long way to fulfilling your duty of care)**

More experienced individuals with groups of people less experienced than themselves in a club capacity should:

- Have an awareness of foreseeable hazards.
- Make those hazards clear to those involved.
- Manage those risks appropriately.
- Respond appropriately to changing situations.
- Be aware of appropriate actions to take if emergency situations do occur.

**(In other words, only undertaking activities when you have sufficient experience and using that experience wisely goes a long way to fulfilling your duty of care)**

## **5. Understanding Liability**

The following is a summary of AMGM's understanding on issues relating to liability, as mentioned by the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) guidelines which include advice from the UIAA.

Individuals in any sport face a risk of injury as part of normal participation in that sport. However, if a person has been injured because of another person's

negligence, and that negligence can be proved, he or she may seek financial compensation under civil law.

To establish that there has been negligence three factors must exist:

- (i) a duty of care must be owed in the first place
- (ii) there must have been a breach of that duty of care
- (iii) actual damage must have resulted from that breach of duty of care.

A duty of care is always owed to persons who are so closely and directly affected by an individual's acts that the individual ought reasonably to have had them in contemplation as being affected when directing their mind to the acts or omissions that are called into question.

Anyone involved in trekking, climbing and mountaineering should not only recognise the danger of personal injury and death to themselves but also that their actions or inactions may affect other climbers and mountaineers and possibly others passing by or living nearby.

When considering the nature of a particular duty of care the following factors should be considered:

- (i) the age of the persons concerned (e.g. with minors, a duty to take the care one would expect from reasonably prudent parents)
- (ii) the experience and expertise, or any other relevant characteristics, of the persons concerned (e.g. greater care would be expected climbing with a beginner than with an expert)
- (iii) the dangers of the particular activity
- (iv) the risks of the injury occurring
- (v) the foresee ability of the particular accident occurring
- (vi) the suitability of the equipment or premises.

A very clear duty of care exists between a qualified mountain guide or climbing instructor and those that they are professionally leading or teaching. Guides and instructors engaged in such work would normally have professional negligence or liability insurance. Amateur climbers must be made aware of and accept the risks of participation and be instructed to read AMGM participation statement. There are often situations where a group contains individuals with different levels of experience.

Where minors (those under 18 years of age) are involved in club activities parental consent must be obtained. Adult members of the club who accept responsibility for minors should be aware that they have the same duty of care as a reasonably prudent parent would have. Read the Child Protection Club Guidelines.

Expert legal advice would be necessary to defend any liability claim.

However, the following defences are available in an action for negligence:

- (i) that the particular accident could not be foreseen
- (ii) *volenti non fit injuria* (a willing person cannot be injured in law)
- (iii) contributory negligence by the injured party
- (iv) a break in the chain of causation