ADVENTURE GUIDES
— at the fireside —

ADVENTURE GUIDES AT THE FIRESIDE

HARD-WON LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

A Taster

There is a particular moment that experienced guides will recognise immediately. You are out front — maybe ten, maybe forty metres ahead — and you turn around. Something has changed. You cannot name it yet. But you turn anyway, and when you do, the picture is wrong. Someone is not where they should be. Someone has stopped. And the quiet, ordinary morning has just shifted into something that requires every bit of professional judgement you have ever built up, right now, in the next thirty seconds.

This book is about that moment. And everything that leads to it, and everything that follows from it.

It is not a qualification manual. It is not a workbook, a legal reference, or an academic study of outdoor leadership theory. **It is a guide talking to guides** — specifically, to guides who are serious about their work, who want to do it well, and who are honest enough with themselves to know that technical skill, while necessary, is never the whole story.

Over fifty years in the adventure industry, first as a participant, then guide and thirty of them training guides across disciplines from rock climbing and rafting to mountaineering and zip lines, I have watched thousands of people come through this profession. I have seen who lasts and who doesn't. I have watched careers built carefully over decades and careers end in a single afternoon. And the difference between those two outcomes is almost never what the guides involved thought it would be.

> **Technical skill is what gets you into this work. Professional judgement is what keeps you there.**

The gap between a competent outdoorsperson and a professional guide is real, significant, and largely invisible until something goes wrong. This book is about that gap — what lives inside it, why it matters, and how to close it deliberately rather than by accident or attrition.

What follows is a taster. Snapshots from the field — one that will make you wince with recognition, one that may make you laugh (*uncomfortable as that laughter might be*), and one that should make you think seriously about a question most guides never quite get around to asking themselves. Between them, they cover the terrain this book maps across twenty-seven chapters. Call it a fireside conversation before the main event.

In the Field — The Four-Day Forecast

The trip had been planned for eight months. Six clients, four days, a remote stretch of coastline that required a twelve-kilometre open crossing on day one if the weather window held. The guide had checked the forecast twice the night before. Winds building from the south-west, arriving later than the original model had predicted — a three-hour window that should be enough, if they launched at first light and moved well.

They launched at first light. The conditions were good. Not perfect, but good enough, and the clients were competent intermediate paddlers with solid fitness. He had guided this crossing before. He knew the water.

By the time they were six kilometres out — past the point of no easy return — the window started closing early. The south-westerly arrived not three hours late but ninety minutes late. The sea state changed. Not dramatically, not dangerously in isolation, but in combination with six clients who were now tired, one of whom had gone very quiet in the last forty minutes and whose paddle strokes had shortened without the guide noticing because he had been focused on the navigation bearing and the building chop.

They made the far shore. Everyone made it. That is not the point. The point is this: the guide had confused a good outcome with a good decision. The forecast had been borderline. The margin he had built into the plan — the three-hour buffer — had been consumed almost entirely by the crossing itself. The quiet client, it turned out, had been managing a lower back issue she had not disclosed because she had not wanted to cause problems. The guide had not picked it up because he had been navigating instead of watching.

Sitting on the beach an hour later, drinking hot tea and listening to the group exclaim about what a spectacular day it had been, the guide did the professional thing, which is also the uncomfortable thing: he played it back honestly. And he found, if he was truthful, that he had made at least three decisions that day which, in different conditions or with a different client group, would have produced a very different result on that beach.

This is one of the central arguments of this book: **a safe outcome does not prove a sound decision.** The adventure guiding profession is full of guides who have made questionable calls and gotten away with them, and because they got away with them, they believe the call was sound. It was not. It was just lucky. And luck is not a planning tool.

Chapter 13, which covers risk management and margin in detail, introduces a framework for understanding what 'margin' actually means in practical terms — not just a vague sense that you have left some room, but a specific, conscious calculation of what happens to your plan when the thing you did not expect to happen, happens. The kayaking guide had planned for good conditions. He had not genuinely planned for the conditions that arrived. That distinction, multiplied across a career, is the difference between a guide who retires with stories and one who ends up in an inquest room explaining a decision that, to everyone else in the room, seems obvious in retrospect.

> **The guide who gets lucky and the guide who makes good decisions often look identical from the outside. They look very different from the inside.**

In the Field — The Laminated Sheet

The outdoor centre ran an introductory archery session for corporate groups on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. It was, in the guide's private estimation, the least glamorous part of his week. Forty-five minutes, twelve participants, a script he could deliver in his sleep, and — reliably, on every second group — at least one man in his forties who had seen archery at the Olympics and wanted to discuss draw weight.

This particular Thursday, the man arrived in a polo shirt with the company logo on it. He stood at the back of the group during the safety briefing with his arms crossed and the look of someone doing the session because HR had put it on the agenda, not because he had chosen it. He was, the guide noticed immediately, the most senior person in the room. The others kept glancing at him.

The guide had seen this before. He gave the briefing, ran the safety demonstration, and then — instead of going to the man directly, which would have put him on the spot in front of his team — he set the group up at the range with a simple first exercise and wandered across to where the man was standing, not yet shooting, watching the others.

'These things have a draw weight of about eighteen pounds,' the guide said, conversationally. 'Olympic recurves are around fifty. I'm not going to pretend today is the same sport.'

The man laughed. Actually laughed. 'Thank you,' he said. 'I was wondering if you'd try to tell me it was.'

He shot for forty-five minutes. He was, objectively, not good at it. He also had an extremely good time. At the end, he told the guide that it was the first activity he had genuinely enjoyed at one of these things in years, and he asked for a business card.

The guide gave him one. He booked three more sessions in the following month.

The story is not about archery. It is about reading the room — specifically, reading the one person in the room whose engagement or disengagement will set the tone for everyone else. It is about the difference between delivering a session and leading one. And it is about something this book returns to repeatedly: the guide who is technically competent but professionally switched off is a guide who is present in body and absent in function.

Chapter 7 covers group dynamics, and Chapter 25 covers specialist client groups including corporate bookings. Both of them come back to the same basic observation: the group you are guiding is not a homogeneous unit of participants. It is a collection of individuals with their own anxieties, hierarchies, and agendas, and your job is to work with all of that simultaneously while also running a safe, competent activity. The guide who sees only the activity and not the people running it through their particular filters is doing half a job.

Also: never underestimate the man in the polo shirt. He almost always books again.

> **A briefed group is not the same as a managed group. Knowing the difference is what separates the guide who gets everyone safely to the end from the guide who was technically excellent and still missed the thing that mattered most.**

In the Field — The Client Who Went Quiet

The multi-pitch route was rated at a comfortable level for the group — two clients, both experienced club climbers, both fit, both well-geared. The guide had climbed with one of them before. The other was new to guided climbing but had a strong logbook: several seasons in the Alps, a handful of longer routes completed with partners.

On the fourth pitch, the new client's movement changed. Not dramatically — not in a way that would have flagged as a problem in a brief observation. But the guide had been watching, as guides do, and what he noticed was not what was happening but what had stopped happening. The client had been chatty. Easy, comfortable chat between pitches, the kind that people make when they're settled in their body and enjoying themselves. By the fourth pitch, the chat had stopped. The client was climbing correctly. His technique was sound. But something was running on fumes.

At the belay ledge, the guide asked him directly: 'When did you last eat?'

There was a pause that told the whole story before the answer came. 'Last evening. I'm doing an intermittent fasting protocol — I don't usually eat until two.'

It was eleven-fifteen. They were four pitches up on a nine-pitch route with a walk-off descent.

The guide made the call. They descended. The client argued, briefly and politely, that he was fine, that he did this regularly, that his body was adapted. The guide listened to all of it and then held the decision, because the thing about being the guide is that you are not paid to agree with your clients. You are paid to make the call that the situation actually requires, regardless of what the client believes about their own condition.

On the descent, an hour later and two pitches down, the client admitted that he had been starting to feel it. He had not said anything because he had not wanted to ruin the day.

This is the scenario this book uses to open its chapter on leadership, and it is used there not because it is dramatic — the descent was safe, the client was never in serious danger — but because it contains, in a relatively quiet package, almost every important thing there is to say about professional field leadership.

First: the guide caught it early, which is the whole game. The client's movement had changed before he was symptomatic in any obvious way. That kind of observation — watching not just what is happening but what has changed from the pattern you established earlier — is a skill that takes years to develop and that no qualification workbook teaches in useful terms. Chapter 12 talks about what guides are actually watching when they are watching well.

Second: the client concealed the information because he did not want to cause problems. This happens constantly in guiding, across every discipline, at every level of client experience. People do not disclose the thing the guide most needs to know because they are self-conscious, or optimistic, or they have paid good money for this day and they do not want to be the person who ruins it. Building the kind of professional relationship in which clients tell you the truth — quickly, honestly, without worrying about the judgement — is one of the quieter arts of this profession. Chapter 6 covers the briefing process and Chapter 7 covers group dynamics, and both of them are really about this: creating the conditions in which the information flows.

Third, and most importantly: the guide held the decision under social pressure. The client was friendly about it. He was not aggressive or confrontational. He simply believed he was fine and said so, with reasonable arguments. And none of that changed the call. This is where professional guiding diverges sharply from enthusiastic outdoorsmanship. An enthusiast might have listened to the arguments, reconsidered, and continued. The guide did not, because the guide was not making a decision about how he felt about the client's arguments. He was making a decision based on the objective picture: four pitches up, five to go, eleven-fifteen in the morning, client in a known energy-deficit protocol, movement already degraded. That picture did not change because the client had a thoughtful explanation for it.

> **You are not paid to have your own adventure. You are paid to manage someone else's safely.**

What This Book Is — And What It Is Not

Those three scenarios between them — a sea kayak crossing, a corporate archery session, and a rock climb cut short — cover perhaps a small sample of what this book addresses across twenty-seven chapters. The rest ranges from the legal and ethical architecture of the profession (duty of care, negligence, the question of what a 'reasonable guide' standard actually requires) through to expedition planning, equipment management, environmental responsibility, emergency response, critical incident stress, client psychology, business and marketing, and the question of what a long, clean, professionally satisfying guiding career actually looks like and how you build one deliberately rather than hoping it assembles itself.

The book does not assume you are a beginner. It assumes you are a working professional who wants to be better at this than you currently are — not because you are failing, but because this is the kind of work where the ceiling is high enough that even the most experienced guides can keep reaching. I have been in this industry for nearly fifty years. I am still reaching.

It does not tell you what qualifications to hold or how to pass any particular assessment. Those conversations happen in workbooks and training rooms, and they are important — but they are not this. This is the conversation that happens

afterward, when the assessment is over and the real work starts and you are standing at the put-in or the trailhead or the base of the climb with a group of clients who are trusting you with something significant.

It does not promise that if you follow its advice nothing will go wrong. This is adventure guiding. Things go wrong. The promise — the only promise this book makes — is that if you have genuinely absorbed its arguments and applied them seriously to your practice, the things that go wrong will be fewer, less serious, and better managed. And the things that go right will be more consistently, deliberately, professionally right.

There is a thread that runs through every chapter here, not always named, but always present. It is the idea that the guides who build lasting careers — the ones still out there after twenty, thirty years, still curious, still sharp, still standing between their clients and the consequences of the environment — are not necessarily the most talented or the most technically gifted people who entered this profession. They are the most honest. Honest about what they know and what they don't. Honest about when the picture is wrong. Honest about the call that needs to be made, even when the call is unpopular.

That honesty, applied consistently over a career, is what this book is really about.

> **The best guides I have known were not the ones who never made mistakes. They were the ones who made fewer of the same mistake twice.**

There is a lot to cover, and most of it, I promise, was learned the hard way.

About the Book

Adventure Guides at the Fireside: *Hard-Won Lessons from the Field* is a 27 Chapter, 377 pages, 180 000+ words professional resource for adventure guides across all disciplines — from introductory outdoor centre activities to multi-day wilderness expeditions and technical mountaineering. Written in the voice of an experienced guide-trainer with fifty years in the industry, it covers the full arc of a guiding career: professional identity and legal responsibility, planning and preparation, group management, field leadership, risk and emergency management, business and operations, wellbeing and career longevity, and professional development.

It reads like a professional memoir. It functions like a field manual. It is the book that working guides reach for not to pass an exam, but to think more clearly about the work they are already doing.

A Word Before You Read Any Further

This book does not come with a guarantee.

It comes with experience — a few decades of it — and that is a different thing entirely. Experience means I have made mistakes, witnessed mistakes, and on a handful of occasions been close enough to serious incidents to understand what the word 'consequence' actually means outside of a classroom. It also means I have had the good fortune to work alongside guides who were considerably better than me, and the humility — eventually — to learn from them.

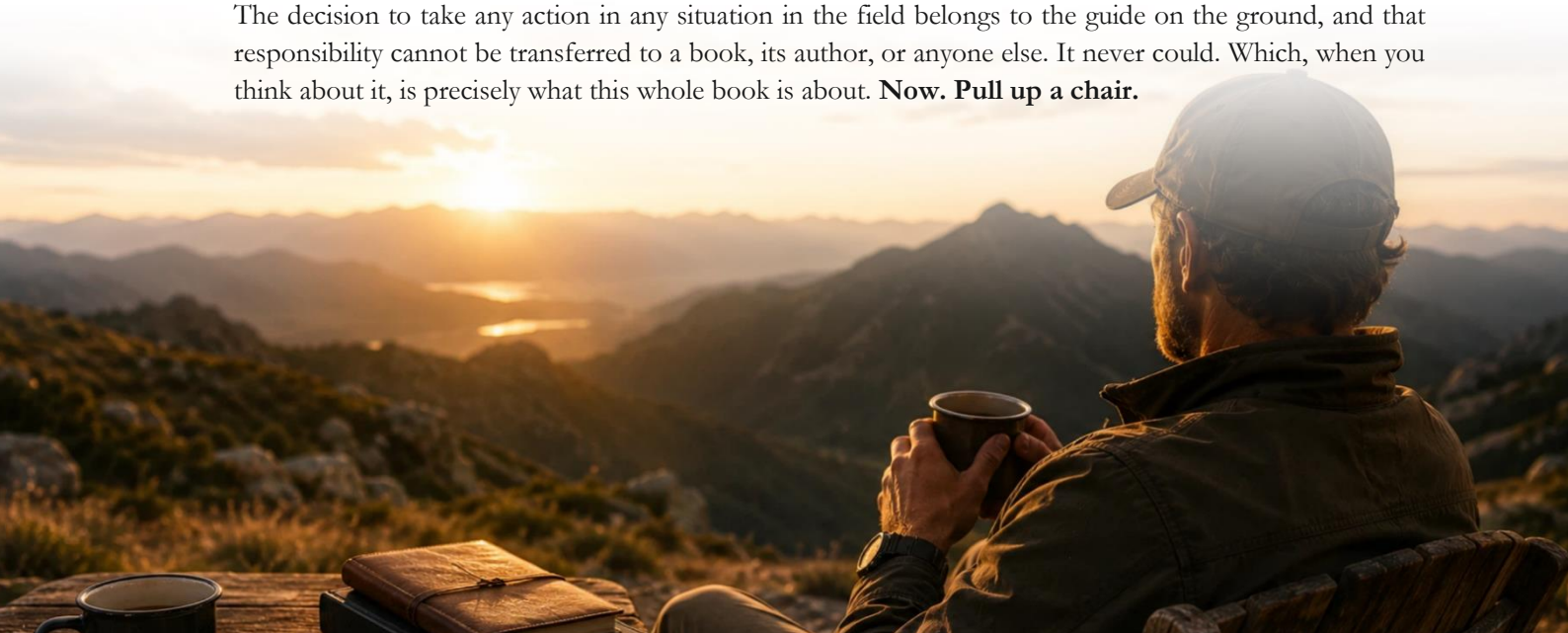
What follows is my best attempt to pass on what I have learned. It is not a legal document, a qualification framework, an operations manual, or a substitute for proper training under a competent mentor in your specific discipline and environment. It is not peer-reviewed, academically sourced, or endorsed by any regulatory body, yet! It is one guide's honest account of what has worked, what has not, and why the difference matters.

Adventure activities carry real risk. Some of that risk can be managed. Some of it cannot. This book addresses the manageable portion — the decisions, habits, and professional behaviours that separate the guides who build long careers, from those who don't. It does not, and cannot, eliminate the portion that remains. If you are looking for a book that promises zero risk in exchange for reading it, you will need to look elsewhere. I have no such book. Nobody does.

Every environment is different. Every client group is different. Every guide is different. What applies directly to your context, take and use it. What doesn't apply, file it away — it may apply later, or it may never apply at all, and that is fine too. What contradicts your experience or your jurisdiction's specific legal requirements, push back on it. You are a professional. You are expected to think.

Nothing in this book constitutes legal advice. Nothing in it replaces the obligation to know and comply with the legislation, regulations, and professional standards that govern adventure guiding in your country, region, or operating environment. Those standards exist for good reasons. Read them. Follow them. When this book and your local requirements disagree, your local requirements win every time.

The author and publisher accept no liability for any incident, injury, loss, or outcome — to guides, clients, or third parties — arising from the application or misapplication of anything contained in this book. The decision to take any action in any situation in the field belongs to the guide on the ground, and that responsibility cannot be transferred to a book, its author, or anyone else. It never could. Which, when you think about it, is precisely what this whole book is about. **Now. Pull up a chair.**



Why This Book Exists

She arrives at the put-in — the riverside launch point where a day's paddling begins — at seven in the morning, paddles over her shoulder, dry bag already sealed. She's done the trip before — or one like it — and she's quietly confident in the way that experienced paddlers are quiet. The group trickles in behind her. One is nervous and loud about it. Another is silent and scanning everything, which you understand immediately to be a different kind of nerves. There's a couple at the back, mid-forties, dressed identically in new gear they bought for this trip. And there's a young guy who wandered slightly too far from the group already — buoyancy not properly buckled, water bottle not yet filled — with that easy confidence that hasn't met real consequences yet.

You stand there taking all of it in before anyone has said good morning.

In six hours, every single thing you've noticed in this first five minutes will matter. The couple whose gear is unfamiliar to them. The quiet nervousness that is harder to manage than the loud kind. The young guy who doesn't know yet that this environment doesn't care about his confidence. The experienced paddler, who you'll need to keep inside the group rather than out front of it.

From this moment, everything that happens is on you!

What that opening scene demonstrates is the core of professional guiding: assessment begins before the briefing does. The moment your group arrives, you are already working. The guide who waits until the safety talk to start reading their people has already fallen behind.

Over the years I've noticed that the guides who develop this habit early — the ones who treat arrival as information, not admin — make consistently better decisions once the day is underway. Not because they're more talented. Because they started sooner.

> **Assessment begins before the briefing does. The moment your group arrives, you are already working.**

What This Book Is

Adventure guiding is one of the few professions where technical skill alone — the ability to read a river line, place an anchor, navigate in poor weather, manage a steep descent — is genuinely necessary but genuinely insufficient. The gap between a technically competent outdoorsperson and a professional guide is enormous. Most of it is invisible until something goes wrong. This book is about that gap.

It was written guide-to-guide. Not institution to trainee, not regulator to practitioner, not textbook to student. It assumes you have some experience, or that you're building it now, and that what you actually need is not another list of what to do but an honest account of how the work actually operates. What the decisions look like from inside. Where the pressure comes from. What erodes judgement, what builds it, and what the difference costs when it matters most.

It covers the full span of a guiding career — from your first group to running an operation with other guides under you — across the full range of adventure disciplines: hillwalking and mountaineering, adventure bike tours, rock climbing and abseiling, mountain biking, paddling and kayaking, zip lines and canopy tours, ropes courses, archery, vehicle-based touring, multi-day expeditions, and camps and youth programmes. The details differ by discipline. The professional

foundations don't. This book deals with foundations. One exception is worth naming at the outset: guiding in genuinely extreme environments — high-altitude mountaineering, or deep cave diving etc. expeditions where death is an acknowledged possibility rather than a theoretical one — operate under a different ethical calculus, and where it appears in these pages it is treated as the distinct context it is.

What it is Not: an activity-specific technical manual. Rope systems, paddle strokes, and bike handling belong in specialist texts, and there are good ones. This is not a qualification workbook. There are no tasks or assessment criteria, and if a phrase in here sounds like one, something has gone wrong. It is not a legal reference — specific legislation varies by jurisdiction and it changes. It is written for professional guides anywhere in the world, and when law comes up, it appears as principle rather than a statute.

> **The gap between a technically competent outdoorsperson and a professional guide is enormous. Most of it is invisible until something goes wrong.**

The Ethical Position

This book has a spine. It is not neutral on the question of what a guide owes the people in their care. **Zero Tolerance for Preventable Harm** is not a slogan. It is the assumption behind every chapter that follows, and it is not flexible.

Zero tolerance for preventable harm. Not zero risk — adventure is inherently risky, and that is part of its value. Zero tolerance for harm that good planning, good judgement, and professional conduct would have prevented.

Clients accept inherent risk. They understand that a rapid has current, that a descent has exposure, that weather changes and rock is hard. What they do not accept — and what no indemnity form, however carefully drafted, protects a guide from — is risk that was created or ignored through poor decision-making.

A safe outcome does not prove a sound decision. You can get lucky. You can cut corners on a day when nothing happens to punish you for it. You can push through on failing safety margins and have it work out fine. The outcome doesn't tell you whether the decision was sound. Process does. The question investigations ask is not whether you intended harm. It is whether you operated below the standard a competent professional would have maintained.

That standard is present throughout this book — not as a recurring lecture, but as the unstated assumption behind every recommendation. When it is stated explicitly, it should feel like articulation of something you already knew was right.

> **A safe outcome does not prove a sound decision. The question investigations ask is not whether you intended harm — it is whether you operated below the standard a competent professional would have maintained.**

How to Use This Book

Read it non-linearly if that's what the moment requires. A guide preparing for their first multi-day expedition will need different chapters more urgently than one managing their first staff hire. The cross-references in the text are there for a reason — follow them when they point somewhere you need to go. But read the early chapters first, regardless of where you are in your career. The professional foundations they cover are not beginner material. They are the material most likely to be built upon even by experienced guides.

> **Don't read this book cover to cover — you will exhaust yourself. Read the chapters and topics you need now, read the rest when you need them.**

One practical note before you go further. Depending on the activity and the context, the person doing this job carries different names — instructor, leader, facilitator, divemaster, ranger,

warden, and several others besides. All of them describe variations of the same professional function as it is defined in this book. Throughout these pages, "guide" is the default term, but where another title is the natural one for a specific discipline or setting, that's what you'll find. A divemaster is a divemaster; a ropes course instructor is an instructor. The title changes with the context. The professional obligations don't.

The reflection questions at the end of each chapter are most useful after a trip, not before. They'll mean more when you have specific experience to press them against. Don't use them as pre-trip checklists. Use them as post-trip honesty.

There is a version of this profession that anyone can do: take people outside, keep them alive, collect the fee. This book is not written for that version. It's written for the professional one. The version that requires something of you and gives something back.

A Note on the Scenarios

The scenarios throughout are illustrative. Most are real. They are drawn from the kind of situations that happen in this work. They are not invented to make a point — they are the points themselves, in the form that makes them most useful to remember.

Some I lived through myself. Others were told to me by colleagues over campfires, but told in the first person, in debriefs, in the kind of honest conversations that only happen when the clients have gone to bed and the professional masks come off. A number were recorded in trip logs and training journals by guides and trainee guides who trusted me with their accounts and are used here with their permission.

Where names, locations, or identifying details have been changed, it was to protect the people involved. In a handful of cases, composite scenarios have been constructed from two or more similar incidents because the pattern they illustrated was too important to leave untold, and the individuals could not be reached for permission. The legal position on all of this is set out in the front pages. The professional position is simpler: none of it was invented, and none of it was embellished for effect.

The industry does not need embellishment. It has enough real material to fill several books, and most of it is uncomfortable enough without any help from me.

> **This profession doesn't need embellishment. It produces the real thing faster than you can write it down.**

A Note on the Images

The images in this book were created using artificial intelligence. That is worth explaining, because it was a deliberate choice, not a shortcut.

Adventure guiding happens across an enormous range of environments, disciplines, and situations. Assembling a consistent library of photographs that accurately represents all of them — the right river, the right mountain, the right client in the right moment of the right scenario — is not practically possible and expensive. What photographs do exist tend to reflect whoever had a camera and remembered to use it. That is not a reliable basis for a book.

AI image generation was used because it allows the visual content to follow the text rather than the other way around. Each image was prompted from the content it accompanies. Some are fully generated. Others were produced by processing original photographs through AI tools to produce a consistent visual style. A number are composites — real elements combined and rendered to represent situations that exist in the text but were never photographed.

The result is a body of imagery that looks like it belongs to the same book, because it does. The style is consistent across disciplines, environments, and chapters in a way that a mixed collection of field photographs never would be.

Readers familiar with the environments described will recognise them. That is the intention. The images are not decoration — they are the visual equivalent of the scenarios: representations of real situations, crafted to serve the point being made.

Being AI generated, the images are not meant to train technical methods, and the sharp-eyed reader will find errors. Ignore them, this is not a technical training book, the images are just to create a visual impression.

What Every Chapter Covers — And Why You Need to Read It

This is not a qualification manual. It is a guide talking honestly to guides — about the work, the responsibility, the judgement calls, and everything the workbooks never quite got around to covering. Twenty-seven chapters. Fifty years of hard-won experience. Every discipline from introductory archery to technical mountaineering. Whether you are in your first season or your thirtieth, something in here will change how you work.

Introduction: Why This Book Exists

Most guides enter this profession through passion. That is exactly as it should be. But passion is a starting point, not a credential — and the gap between loving the outdoors and being professionally responsible for other people in it is wider than most new guides have been told. This introduction names that gap honestly and sets out what this book is going to do about it. It will not take long. But it will change the way you read everything that follows.

PART ONE — WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU OWE

Chapter 1: ***The Adventure Guiding Industry***

What is this industry, really? Not the version in the brochure — the actual professional landscape: the disciplines it spans, the regulatory patchwork it operates within, the five levels of development from novice to expert guide-trainer, and the uncomfortable truth about how most people in it are positioned. This chapter maps the territory. If you have been guiding for years and never quite understood where you sit in the wider picture, this is where that clarity starts.

Chapter 2: ***Who Is a Professional Guide?***

There is a specific kind of guide who frightens everyone who has spent serious time in this industry. They are technically competent, enthusiastic, and have stopped paying attention to their clients because the activity is too interesting. This chapter introduces the Participant Guide — and the far more serious question of what separates someone who guides from someone who is genuinely professional. The competence zones model, the chronic injury trap, and why most guiding careers end earlier than they should. This chapter asks hard questions. You should answer them honestly.

PART TWO — THE LEGAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATION

Chapter 3: ***Duty of Care, Negligence and Legal Awareness***

At some point in your career, you will make a decision under pressure and something will go wrong. What you knew before that decision — legally, ethically, professionally — will determine everything that follows. This chapter covers duty of care in real field terms, what negligence actually looks like from an investigator's perspective, why indemnity forms cannot protect you from the consequences of poor judgement, and what the 'reasonable guide' standard requires. Not theory. The real thing. Read this before you need it.

Chapter 4: ***Professional Identity and Personal Standards***

The red lines of this profession — the things a professional guide simply does not do, regardless of pressure, context, or how reasonable the exception seems in the moment — are not always where guides expect them to be. This chapter covers professional conduct in specific terms: impairment, boundaries with clients, the obligation to report a colleague who has crossed a line, and the particular failure mode of the guide who

starts using paying clients to fund their own objectives. If you are certain none of this applies to you, that is exactly when to read it.

PART THREE — KNOWING YOUR CLIENTS

Chapter 5: ***Client Readiness — Medical, Physical and Psychological***

The health form that sits on your clipboard is only as useful as the questions it asks and the seriousness with which you read the answers. This chapter covers what you actually need to know about a client before they arrive — medical history, fitness, disclosed and undisclosed conditions, the specific challenges of differently abled participants, and the psychological preparation that determines whether a client is ready for what you are about to ask them to do. The client who does not tell you about their asthma until they are halfway up a canyon is in this chapter. So is the one who has invested far more in this trip than you realise.

Chapter 6: ***Communication and Briefing Skills***

The briefing is not an admin task. It is the most powerful safety instrument you have, and the guides who treat it as a formality are the ones who later find themselves unable to explain why a client did not understand a critical instruction. This chapter covers the full briefing structure, what it must contain, how to deliver it with authority rather than with a clipboard and a monotone, and how to handle the client who nods throughout and understood nothing. There is also a complete pre-trip briefing checklist that belongs on your wall.

Chapter 7: ***Reading and Managing Groups***

A group is not a collection of individuals. It is a system — with dynamics, hierarchies, undercurrents, and a quiet failure mode that the best guides read instinctively and the rest miss entirely. This chapter covers the invisible work: spotting fatigue before it announces itself (the client who stops taking photographs is telling you something), managing dysfunctional behaviour without creating conflict, working with youth groups by age band, navigating generational differences, and reading the cultural subtext that determines whether your group trusts you or merely tolerates you.

PART FOUR — PLANNING, EQUIPMENT AND PREPARATION

Chapter 8: Planning an Adventure Activity

The Adventure Trip Plan is not a form you fill in to satisfy an operator. It is the document that answers 'what do we do if' before 'if' becomes 'when'. This chapter builds the ATP from scratch — all eight components, the thinking behind each one, and the critical difference between the full office version and the condensed field version you actually carry. It also covers Standard Operating Procedures and what good SOP writing looks like in practice. The guide whose horse trek went wrong because nobody asked the outfitter about individual animal temperaments is in here too, for reasons that will become obvious.

Chapter 9: Equipment — What to Carry and Why

The climbing helmet issued for a mountain biking session is not a minor error. Neither is the PFD with the flagged buckle that never got pulled from service. Equipment failure is one of the most preventable causes of serious harm in adventure guiding, and it almost always traces back not to a single catastrophic oversight but to a small permission given early in the process — a check not done, a flag not acted on, a system not built. This chapter covers equipment selection, inspection, segregation, and maintenance across disciplines, and the specific mindset that makes a guide's kit reliably trustworthy rather than probably fine.

Chapter 10: First Aid and Remote Medical Planning

The guide who is six hours from the nearest road with a client who has just lost consciousness needs to have thought about this before today. This chapter covers first aid frameworks for remote and wilderness contexts, the progression from basic first aid to wilderness emergency medicine, the 48-hour self-reliance mindset that should underpin every multi-day plan, and how to build a remote medical protocol that is specific to the route and group rather than generic and hopeful. The gap between a first aid certificate and genuine remote medical competence is significant. This chapter maps it clearly.

Chapter 11: Nutrition, Hydration and Camp Management

The gluten-intolerant client discovered on night one of a five-day paddle trip was not a freak event. The dietary health form had been sent. It had not been read carefully. Five days of unsuitable food followed, resolved only by the generosity of other clients. This chapter covers nutritional planning, hydration management, campsite selection, fire and stove safety, hygiene protocols, and the camp routines that keep

a multi-day group functional and safe. It also covers the guide's own nutritional and physical preparation — because a guide running on last night's bad decisions is a narrower margin than any client deserves.

PART FIVE — LEADING THE EXPERIENCE

Chapter 12: ***Leadership in the Field***

The canyoneering guide who pushed forty metres ahead to set the anchor knew the route well. He had done it dozens of times. The client who froze on the exposed ledge traverse behind him was the reason that familiarity had quietly become the most dangerous thing in his planning. This chapter covers the real work of field leadership: positional leadership and what each position costs you, the difference between professional authority and dominance, making unpopular decisions with clarity and without apology, and the specific failure mode of the guide who has confused a habit with a considered decision. This is where guiding happens.

Chapter 13: ***Risk, Hazards and Managing Margin***

Risk is not something you eliminate in adventure guiding. It is something you manage — and the guide who cannot quantify it honestly is as dangerous as the one who pretends it does not exist. This chapter introduces the FLASH risk rating tool, builds a complete hierarchy of controls framework, examines the five factors that erode good judgement (including one that most training programmes do not name), and addresses the concept of margin: not a vague feeling that you have left some room, but a specific, honest calculation of what happens to your plan when the thing you did not expect arrives. I have been forty metres underwater when two people did not come back. This chapter is informed by that.

Chapter 14: ***Environmental Responsibility***

The environment is not a backdrop. It is the reason clients come, and it is the thing that most depends on guides who take their responsibility to it seriously. This chapter covers Leave No Trace principles in genuine depth, environmental impact assessment, wildlife interaction protocols, minimum-impact camping and activity management, and the cultural responsibility that comes with guiding in areas of indigenous significance. The guide who leaves a trace — visible or otherwise — is not a professional. They are a visitor who charged for the privilege.

PART SIX — WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Chapter 15: ***Incident and Emergency Management***

When a paddler goes into the water and does not come up immediately, the guide has approximately ninety seconds before the decisions they make in the next ten minutes become the ones that define the rest of their career. This chapter covers the first minutes of incident response in specific, sequential terms: scene safety, triage, calling for help, controlling onlookers and the media at an incident scene, evacuation decisions, self-rescue when help is genuinely not coming, and the lost person behaviour psychology that most guiding manuals never adequately cover. The incident report is also here. It matters more than most guides realise until they need it.

Chapter 16: ***Extreme and Environmental Emergencies***

Some emergencies are not the result of anything the guide did wrong. The mountain generates its own contributions to risk: lightning on an exposed ridge, a flash flood through a dry riverbed campsite at 2am, altitude sickness on day three of an ascent, extreme heat that turns manageable fatigue into a medical emergency. This chapter is organised by hazard type — recognition, prevention, response — and covers the full range of environmental emergencies across disciplines. Every guide will encounter at least one of these. Thinking about it before it happens is the professional obligation. Thinking about it during it is too late.

Chapter 17: ***Fatal and Serious Non-Fatal Accidents***

This chapter does not tell you how to handle a death. Nothing can fully prepare you for that. What it does is ensure you have thought about it before it happens — so that the decisions made in the first minutes are guided by something more considered than shock and adrenaline. Scene preservation, managing surviving group members, communicating with next of kin, the legal obligations that activate immediately, and the specific errors that guides make in the aftermath because they are trying to help and do not know that what they are doing is complicating the investigation. Read this once. Then hope you never need it.

Chapter 18: ***The Psychological Aftermath***

Incident management does not end when the helicopter leaves. For many guides, it ends months later — if it ends at all. Critical incident stress is real, it is common in this profession, and the industry is significantly

under-resourced in its response to it. This chapter covers what acute stress response looks like versus post-traumatic stress, why guides who hold it together in the field are sometimes the ones who fall apart three weeks later, the guilt cycle that follows serious incidents, peer support and its limits, when professional help is the only appropriate answer, and what returning to guiding after a serious incident actually requires. This is not soft content. It is career-survival content.

PART SEVEN — SECURITY AND PERSONAL SAFETY

Chapter 19: ***Crime Awareness and Personal Safety***

Adventure guides operate in some of the least supervised environments available. Sometimes that means spectacular wilderness. Sometimes it means isolated roads, unfamiliar locations, and people whose intentions require assessment. This chapter covers criminal threat awareness in non-paranoid, analytical terms — including the predator risk-reward framework that changes how you read ambiguous situations. It also covers the physical reality of personal threat and what professional conduct in those moments actually requires. This is the content most guiding programmes leave out entirely because it is uncomfortable. It is also the content that has saved lives.

PART EIGHT — THE BUSINESS OF ADVENTURE GUIDING

Chapter 20: ***Setting Up an Adventure Guiding Business***

The guide who loved the work, had the qualifications, and went independent without building the administrative infrastructure first is a familiar figure in this industry. They are usually out of it within three years — not because the guiding was poor, but because the business was not built properly. This chapter covers the transition from employment to independence: business structure, booking systems, pricing, written agreements, the documentation that protects you in a dispute, and the specific administrative habits that separate guides who build lasting operations from those who burn through goodwill and savings and go back to employed work. The story of the guide who had no written agreement and could not counter a damaging online review is in here. So is the guide who could.

Chapter 21: ***Insurance, Liability and Legal Protection***

Most guides think about insurance once a year, when the renewal arrives. Professional guides think about it every time they design a new programme, take on a new activity, or hire another guide. This chapter covers public liability, professional indemnity, employer's liability, equipment cover, and the specific gaps

that leave guides exposed without knowing it. It also covers indemnity forms in clear terms: what they can and cannot do, how to draft them properly, and why a well-meaning form that has not been reviewed by a legal professional may be giving you confidence you have not actually earned.

Chapter 22: Financial Management for Guides and Operators

The adventure guiding business model has a specific vulnerability: high seasonality, inconsistent cash flow, and a strong tendency among guides to treat good months as normal and bad months as anomalies. This chapter covers financial planning in practical terms — pricing for actual sustainability rather than hope, managing the seasonal income pattern, separating personal and business finances, understanding the tax obligations that come with self-employment, and building the financial resilience that keeps a guiding business running through the seasons that do not go to plan. The guide who cannot afford a quiet winter is one equipment failure away from a difficult decision.

Chapter 23: Running a Team — Hiring, Managing and Developing Guides

Hiring another guide is one of the most consequential decisions an operator makes, and most operators make it badly — quickly, under pressure, based on a CV and a personality rather than a structured assessment of capability and professional conduct. This chapter covers recruitment, induction, supervision, the painful business of managing a guide whose performance is deteriorating, and the professional obligation to develop the people who work for you rather than simply deploying them. The guides who build strong teams build strong operations. The ones who hire in a hurry are the ones who spend years managing the consequences.

Chapter 24: Technology, Social Media and the Modern Guide

Social media is the most powerful marketing tool most guides have access to and the most consistently misused one. This chapter covers digital presence and content strategy in terms that are genuinely useful for working guides — not generic marketing theory but specific guidance on building an audience that converts, managing your professional reputation online, protecting client data and privacy, and using navigation and communication technology in the field without creating a dangerous dependency on it. The guide who has never thought about what happens when the GPS fails is in here too, for reasons that are not flattering.

PART NINE — THE LONG CAREER

Chapter 25: Specialist Markets and Client Types

The family group with a grandmother who wants to try abseiling, a fifteen-year-old who has decided she is too cool for this, and a twelve-year-old who wants the hardest route immediately is not an unusual booking. It is a Tuesday. This chapter covers the full range of specialist client types — corporate groups and the specific challenge of the disengaged senior executive, differently abled participants and the planning discipline that genuine inclusion requires, multi-generational families, school groups, older adults, and the clients whose needs are not stated in the booking form but are very much present on the day. Every one of these groups requires a different approach. This chapter maps all of them.

Chapter 26: Guide Resilience and Avoiding Burnout

Marco was thirty-four when his guiding career in technical terrain ended. Both patella tendons. A decade of overloading that had felt, for most of that decade, like normal professional wear. This chapter covers the specific ways that guiding careers end prematurely — not through dramatic incidents but through accumulated damage, unmanaged passion, and the quiet erosion of the thing that made the work meaningful. Physical resilience, mental health in guiding contexts, recognising the early signs of burnout, the professional importance of the off-season, and what deliberate career design looks like rather than hoping the next season will be better. The guides who last thirty years planned to.

Chapter 27: Professional Development and Career Roadmap

The thirty-year guide at the professional association dinner had reinvented himself four times: technical guide, lead guide, trainer, author. When asked what he would tell someone at the very start, he did not hesitate. This final chapter covers what a genuinely long guiding career can look like and how you build one deliberately: qualification pathways by discipline, wilderness medicine progression, mentorship — finding one, being one — the educational dimension that separates guides who teach as they lead from those who merely accompany, and the contribution that experienced guides can make to the next generation. The best guides never finish. They just change what they are learning.

Plus Nine Appendices

Adventure Trip Plan Template • SOP Framework • FLASH Risk Rating Tool • Pre-Trip Briefing Checklist • Emergency Action Plan • Incident Report Form • Equipment Lists by Activity • Guide-to-Client Ratio Reference • Professional Development Resources

Topic Finder

This is a guide to where the main ideas, terms and themes in the book are covered. Chapter numbers in bold show where a topic is dealt with in most depth. The others are where it comes up again in a different context. Short definitions are given for technical terms.

0–9

48-hour mindset — Managing the margin across the whole trip, not just the current moment, such as making the conservative call on day one to keep reserve for day four. Ch **12.** See also Safety margins

A

Adventure guiding industry Ch **1**

Adventure Trip Plan (ATP) — The main written plan for a trip. Its eight components give a complete account of what the trip is, where it goes, how it is run safely, who is involved, what it costs and what happens when something goes wrong. Ch **8**, 20, 21. See also Itinerary; Standard operating procedures (SOPs)

Alcohol and substances Ch **4**, 6, 11, 23. See also Fitness to guide

Allergies and anaphylaxis Ch 5, **10**, 16. See also Medical conditions

Alternative venues and backup plans Ch 6, **8**, 25. See also Escape routes

Altitude illness (AMS, HACE, HAPE) — Illness caused by gaining height faster than the body can adjust. It ranges from acute mountain sickness (AMS) to life-threatening swelling of the brain (HACE) or fluid on the lungs (HAPE). Ch 10, 15, **16**

AMS, HACE, HAPE see Altitude illness (AMS, HACE, HAPE)

Arrival and departure procedures Ch **6**. See also Briefings

Artificial intelligence (AI) Introduction; Ch **24**

Assistant guides Ch 6, 8, 19. See also Guiding ratios

Asthma Ch **5**. See also Medical conditions

ATP see Adventure Trip Plan (ATP)

Authority, the guide's Ch 6, 7, **12**, 23, 25. See also Control without dominance

B

Backwash — The recirculating water below a drop or weir that can catch a swimmer and hold them in place. Ch **18**

Body as a professional tool Ch **2**, **26**. See also Career longevity

Bookings and cancellations Ch **20**, 22, 25. See also Terms and conditions

Briefings Ch 3, **6**, 7, 14, 21, 23, 25. See also Arrival and departure procedures; Buddy system; Debriefs; ICE numbers

Buddy system — Pairing participants so that each knows where the other is and raises the alarm if their buddy is missing, struggling or unaccounted for. Ch **6**

Burnout Ch 18, 24, **26**. See also Mental health; Off-season; Passion

Business viability Ch **22**

Business, setting up Ch **20**. See also Business viability; Insurance; Terms and conditions

C

Calling for help Ch 6, **15**, 17. See also Emergency signals; Satellite communicators and radios

Camp and vehicle security Ch **19**

Camp hygiene Ch **11**, 14

Campfires and fire bans Ch 11, **14**. See also Stoves and cooking; Wildfires

Campsite selection Ch **11**, 14, 16, 19

Career longevity Ch **2**, 4, 10, 12, 26, **27**. See also Body as a professional tool; Burnout

Cash flow Ch 20, **22**. See also Pricing; Profit

Child protection and safeguarding Ch 3, 5, **19**, 25. See also Minors, working with; Youth groups

Client readiness Ch **5**, 25. See also Medical questionnaires and screening; Physical ability; Psychological readiness

Client's investment in the day Ch **5**. See also Expectations, managing client

Coaching Ch **23**. See also Mentoring

Code of conduct Ch **4**

Colleagues who cross the line Ch **4**

Commercial pressure Ch 4, 8, **12**, 13. See also Unpopular decisions

Communication failure Ch 8, **16**. See also Communication planning

Communication planning Ch **8**. See also Satellite communicators and radios

Communication under pressure Ch **6**, 15

Competence zones — A model that maps skill against challenge in four zones: Recreation, Cruising, Adventure and Misadventure. Ch **2**, 12

Competence, guiding outside your Ch **3**. See also Qualifications

Complacency Ch 9, 10, **13**

Complaining clients Ch **7**, 20. See also Difficult clients

Comply, fight or flight — The decision a guide faces under direct physical threat. With robbery or theft, complying is almost always the right starting point. Ch **19**. See also Crime

Consent, informed Ch **3**, **21**, 24, 25. See also Indemnity forms and waivers

Continuing professional development (CPD) Ch **27**. See also Portfolio

Control without dominance Ch **12**. See also Authority, the guide's

Corporate groups Ch 20, **25**, 26. See also Team-building programmes

Costing a guiding day Ch **22**. See also Pricing

CPD see Continuing professional development (CPD)

Crime Ch **19**. See also Camp and vehicle security; Comply, fight or flight

Cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge Ch **14**

Cultural sensitivity Ch **7**, 14, **25**. See also International clients

D

Data privacy and client images Ch **24.** See also Social media

Debriefs Ch **6, 7,** 15, 18, 23, 25, 27. See also Briefings

Decision-making Ch 3, **12**. See also Defensible decision-making; Go/no-go criteria

Defensible decision-making Ch 1, **3**, 17, 18, 20. See also Documentation and record-keeping; Reasonable guide standard

Development levels — The rough stages of a guiding career: Site Guide, Area Guide, Senior or Lead Guide, Operator or Manager, and Expedition Specialist. Ch **1, 27**. See also Qualification pathways

Dietary requirements Ch **11**. See also Menu planning

Difficult clients Ch 6, **7**, 12. See also Complaining clients; Dysfunctional behaviour; Hostile questions; Unpopular decisions

Disabilities, clients with Ch 5, **25**

Discipline, staff Ch **23**. See also Performance management

Diversity and inclusion Ch **7**

Documentation and record-keeping Ch **3,** 17, 19, 20, 21, 23. See also Defensible decision-making

Drones Ch **24**

Drowning Ch 16, **17**, 18

Duty of care — The legal and ethical obligation to take reasonable care for the safety of the people you lead. Ch 1, 2, **3**, 24. See also Negligence; Reasonable guide standard

Dynamic risk assessment — Continually updating your picture of the risks as conditions, clients and terrain change during

the activity. A habit of mind, not a form. Ch **13**. See also Risk assessment

Dysfunctional behaviour Ch **7.** See also Difficult clients

E

EAP see Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Educational role of the guide Ch **27**

Elite and experienced clients Ch **25**

Emergency Action Plan (EAP) — A written, site-specific plan for handling an emergency, prepared before the trip. Ch 8, **15**

Emergency contacts see ICE numbers

Emergency rations Ch **11**

Emergency signals Ch **15**. See also Calling for help

Employers and operators, disagreeing with Ch **4**

Environmental emergencies see Extreme weather

Environmental stewardship Ch 4, **14**. See also Leave No Trace

Equipment failure Ch **9**, 17

Equipment on a budget Ch **9**

Equipment records and maintenance Ch **9**

Equipment replacement and budgeting Ch **22**

Equipment, guide and client Ch **9**

Escape routes Ch **6**, **8**, 16. See also Alternative venues and backup plans; Turnaround points

Ethics Introduction; Ch **2**, 4, 14

Evacuation Ch 10, **15**, 17, 19

Expectations, managing client Ch **5**, 7, 24, **25**

Extreme weather Ch 15, **16**. See also Flash floods; Heat illness; Hypothermia and cold; Thunderstorms and lightning

F

Family groups Ch 5, 7, **25**

Fatalities Ch 16, **17**. See also Next of kin; Serious non-fatal incidents

Fatigue, client Ch **7,** 11, 16. See also Photography as a fatigue signal

Fatigue, the guide's Ch 9, 11, 12, **13**, 23, 26. See also Burnout

Fear and anxiety Ch **5**, 6, 12, 15, 16, 17, 25. See also Psychological readiness

Fire bans see Campfires and fire bans

First aid Ch **10,** 27. See also Remote and wilderness medicine

First minutes of an emergency Ch 15

Fitness to guide Ch **4**. See also Alcohol and substances; Burnout

Flash floods Ch 11, 15, **16**

FLASH rating tool — Factors Likely to Accentuate Serious Harm. A rating tool that sits on top of a risk assessment and gives a consistent way to communicate the risk level of an activity at a particular site. Ch 13, 15, 16. See also Risk assessment

Freelance guides Ch **21**, 22, **23**. See also Insurance

G

Generational differences Ch **7**, 25

Go/no-go criteria — Conditions set in advance that decide whether an activity goes ahead, so the call is not made under pressure on the day. Ch 4, 8, 12, 16. See also Turnaround points

Golden hour — The period straight after serious trauma in which definitive treatment gives the best outcomes. Ch 10

Group formation Ch **7**

Guide as ambassador Ch **4**

Guiding days, how many Ch **20**, 22

Guiding ratios Ch 1, **8**, 13, 23, 25

Guilt after incidents see 'If I had only' cycle

H

Harnesses and buckles Ch 6, **9**, 25

Hazards Ch 3, 6, **13**, 15, 16. See also Risk assessment

Heat illness Ch **16**

Helicopters Ch **15**, 18, 19

Helmets Ch **9**

Hierarchy of controls — The order in which risk controls are applied: eliminate the hazard, substitute it, engineer a control, add administrative controls, and only then rely on protective equipment. Ch 13. See also Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Hiring guides Ch **23**. See also Induction; Qualifications versus experience

Hostile questions Ch **6**. See also Difficult clients

Hydration Ch 5, 10, **11**

Hypothermia and cold Ch 10, **16**

I

ICE numbers — In Case of Emergency contacts, collected from every client before the activity. Ch **6**

'If I had only' cycle — The pattern of guilt after a serious incident, in which the guide replays events and fixes on one decision point as the cause of the outcome. Ch **18**. See also Psychological aftermath

Incident command Ch **15**

Incident investigation and reporting Ch 3, **15**, 17, 21. See also Reporting obligations

Incidents and emergencies, the difference — An incident is an unplanned event that needs the guide's attention but is still contained. An emergency calls for a full emergency response. Ch **15**

Indemnity forms and waivers Ch **3**, 6, **21**. See also Consent, informed

Induction Ch **23**. See also Mentoring

Insurance Ch 8, 19, 20, **21**, 22, 27. See also Personal accident cover; Professional indemnity insurance

International clients Ch 17, 19, **25**. See also Cultural sensitivity; Language and comprehension

Itinerary Ch **3**, 4, 5, 7, **8**. See also Adventure Trip Plan (ATP)

K

Keeping the group together Ch **7**

Knowing your area Ch 3, **8**

L

Language and comprehension Ch **6**, 25. See also International clients

Leaders and followers Ch **7**

Leadership in the field Ch 7, **12**. See also Authority, the guide's; Decision-making; Positional leadership

Leading under pressure Ch **12**

Leave No Trace — The standard minimum-impact framework used by outdoor practitioners internationally, built on seven principles. Ch 11, **14**. See also Environmental stewardship

Legal process after an incident Ch **17**, 18

Lifejackets and buoyancy aids Ch 3, **9**

LNT see Leave No Trace

Loan and hire equipment Ch **9**

Lost person behaviour — Patterns in how lost people move, drawn from decades of search and rescue data. Most are found close to where they were last seen. Ch **15**. See also Missing group members

M

Marketing and brand Ch 8, **20**, **24**. See also Social media

Media, the Ch 15, **17**. See also Scene control

Medical conditions Ch 3, **5**, 6, 10, 15

Medical questionnaires and screening Ch **3**, 4, **5**, 6, 10

Medication Ch 5, **6**, **10**, 16

Mental health Ch 25, **26**. See also Burnout; Psychological aftermath

Mentoring Ch 20, **23**, **27**. See also Coaching

Menu planning Ch **11**. See also Dietary requirements; Nutrition

Minors, working with Ch **3**, 25. See also Child protection and safeguarding; Youth groups

Missing group members Ch **15**. See also Lost person behaviour

Monitoring the group Ch **12**

Multi-role reality Ch **2**

N

Natural objects, removing Ch **14**. See also Leave No Trace

Navigation technology Ch 6, 9, 12, **24**

Near misses Ch 8, 10, 18, 27

Negligence — Failing to meet the duty of care, either by doing something you should not have done (commission) or by failing to do something you should have done (omission). Ch **3**, 17, 21. See also Duty of care

Next of kin Ch **17**

Night emergencies Ch **16**, 19

Non-verbal communication Ch **6**, 7

Nutrition Ch **11**

O

Off-season Ch 20, 22, **26**. See also Seasonal income

Older adults Ch 5, **25**

Omission and commission see Negligence

Operators' duty to guides Ch **18**, **23**

Organise-Manage-Motivate-Communicate-Resolve framework — A sequence for leading groups that is worked through in order and then repeated throughout the activity. Ch **7**

P

Participant guide — A guide so caught up in their own experience of the activity that they stop watching their group. Ch **2**. See also Passion

Passion Ch **2**, 4, 23, **26**. See also Burnout

Peer support Ch **18**

Perceived and actual risk Ch **13**

Performance management Ch **23**

Personal accident cover Ch **21**. See also Insurance

Personal protective equipment (PPE) Ch 9, **13**. See also Hierarchy of controls

Personal safety Ch **19**. See also Crime

Photography as a fatigue signal Ch **7**

Physical ability Ch **5**. See also Client readiness

Plan B see Alternative venues and backup plans

Porters and local labour Ch **8**, 14. See also Working animals and animal welfare

Portfolio Ch **27**

Positional leadership — Where the guide stands in relation to the group, chosen deliberately for its consequences. Ch **12**

Pricing Ch 20, **22**. See also Costing a guiding day

Professional identity Ch 2, **4**

Professional indemnity insurance Ch **21**. See also Insurance

Profit Ch 20, **22**. See also Cash flow

Psychological aftermath Ch 17, **18**. See also Trauma; 'If I had only' cycle

Psychological readiness Ch **5**. See also Fear and anxiety

PTSD see Trauma

Q

Qualification pathways Ch **27**. See also Development levels

Qualifications Ch 1, **3**, 10, **23**, **27**. See also Competence, guiding outside your

Qualifications versus experience Ch 3, **23**

R

Reasonable guide standard — The legal test of what a competent professional in your position, with your information and your options, would have done. Ch **3**. See also Duty of care; Negligence

Relationships with clients Ch **4**

Remote and wilderness medicine Ch **10**, 27. See also First aid

Reporting obligations Ch **3**

Responsible tourism Ch **4**, **14**

Returning to the scene Ch **18**

Rip currents and coastal hazards Ch **16**

Risk assessment Ch 3, **13**, 24. See also Dynamic risk assessment; FLASH rating tool; Hazards

Risk management see Dynamic risk assessment; FLASH rating tool; Hazards; Hierarchy of controls; Risk assessment; Safety margins

S

Safeguarding see Child protection and safeguarding

Safety margins Ch 2, 11, 12, **13**

Satellite communicators and radios Ch 8, 9, 15, 16, **24**. See also Calling for help; Communication failure

Scene control Ch **15**. See also Media, the

School groups Ch 9, 10, **25**. See also Youth groups

Seasonal income Ch **20**, 22. See also Off-season

Self-rescue Ch **15**

Sensory overload — The narrowing of attention in a crisis, which leaves memories of a serious incident fragmented rather than continuous. Ch **18**. See also Psychological aftermath

Serious non-fatal incidents Ch **17**. See also Fatalities

Setting limits Ch **26**. See also Burnout

Social media Ch 15, 17, **24**. See also Data privacy and client images; Marketing and brand

SOPs see Standard operating procedures (SOPs)

Special needs see Disabilities, clients with

Staff conflict Ch **23**

Staff morale Ch **23**

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) — Written statements of how a specific activity is run: the safety checks, the order they are done in, the criteria for going ahead, and the response if those criteria are not met. Ch **8**, **20**, **23**. See also Adventure Trip Plan (ATP)

Stoves and cooking Ch 9, **11**, 14. See also Campfires and fire bans

Striking camp Ch **11**. See also Leave No Trace

Supporting clients after an incident Ch **18**

T

Talking to the remaining group Ch 15, **17**

Tax Ch 20, **22**

Team-building programmes Ch **23**, **25**. See also Corporate groups

Terms and conditions Ch **20**. See also Bookings and cancellations

Therapeutic adventure Ch **25**

Third-party liability Ch **3**

Thunderstorms and lightning Ch **16**

Trade associations Ch 1, **27**

Trauma Ch 17, **18**, 25. See also Psychological aftermath

Travelling to develop Ch **27**

Turnaround points Ch **6**, **12**, 16. See also Go/no-go criteria

U

Unpopular decisions Ch **12**. See also Commercial pressure; Difficult clients

V

Vehicle breakdowns Ch **8**, **19**

Vehicle-based tours Ch **12**, 19

W

Waivers see Indemnity forms and waivers

Weather forecasting technology Ch **24**

Weather monitoring in camp Ch **11**

Weather planning Ch 3, **8**, 13. See also Go/no-go criteria

Wildfires Ch 14, **16**

Wildlife and animal encounters Ch 14, **16**. See also Working animals and animal welfare

Working animals and animal welfare Ch **8**, 13, 14. See also Porters and local labour

Writing and teaching Ch **27**

Y

Youth groups Ch **5**, **7**, 25. See also Child protection and safeguarding; School groups

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