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**Ice Caving**

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Quality and Environmental Certification

On the Way to Sustainable Tourism

Specific Quality Criteria no. 228

5th edition 2022

**The following quality criteria are filled out by a company representative. A clear explanation of how each applicable criterion is fulfilled must be given with reference to appropriate documentation, e. g. employee handbook/quality manual, safety plans, photos etc. Random and/or selected criteria will be verified by the auditor.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***228-1*** | ***Safety*** | | ***Yes*** | | ***N/A*** | ***How fulfilled/explanation*** |
| *228-1.1* | For each type of tours there is an itinerary (written description) including a description of routes, schedule and other trip arrangements. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.2* | A checklist has been compiled for safety equipment on tours and excursions e.g.:   1. First aid kit/equipment. 2. Communication devices. 3. Tracking devices. 4. Lights/helmets/crampons. 5. Ropes/lines 6. Ice picks/axes. 7. Extra clothing. 8. Other equipment according to conditions on each tour. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.3* | A written plan for renewal, cleaning and maintenance of safety  equipment is in place including procedures about i.a.:   1. Inspection and testing of equipment. 2. Disinfection and cleaning of equipment. 3. Lifespan of equipment (see manufacturer's accepted standards). | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.4* | All equipment is in a very good condition, i.e.:   1. Belts and straps unbroken. 2. Crampons sufficiently sharp. 3. Helmets and fasteners unbroken and in order. 4. Clothing is clean and in a very good condition. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.5* | All equipment is well and neatly stored after usage. The storage is appropriate and does not reduce the safety and usability of the equipment. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.6* | Written rules apply to customer/guide ratio according to conditions on each tour or excursion.  The number of customers per guide does not exceed:   1. 14:1 when guiding in ice caves at the edge of glaciers in a relatively fertile landscape and in best conditions. 2. 8:1 when guiding on glaciers without technical difficulties (where customers walk on tiptoe) in best condition. 3. 4:1 where special climbing equipment must be used and customers are connected in a line (top rope) in best conditions.   The number of customers per guide on glacier tongues (i. skriðjöklum) is based on the difficulties/risks of traversing the particular area and is determined by the head guide of the company. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.7* | To prepare guides for the tours/activities of each day they go through a checklist including the following items, among others:   1. Details of the itinerary and routes to be travelled. 2. Weather forecast. 3. Avalanche danger and other conditions in the mountains. 4. Equipment. 5. Information about customers. 6. That contingency plans are always included / accessible on tours. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.8* | There is a checklist for guides on the safety matters that are covered with customers before and during the tour, e. g. regarding:   1. Local conditions and weather. 2. Schedule. 3. Safety precautions in situations where special care must be exercised. 4. Appropriate clothing and equipment. 5. Proper use of safety equipment. 6. Food, drinks, and access to water during the tour. 7. 112 emergency number in Iceland. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.9* | Guides regularly check customers’ well-being. If a customer shows signs of distress, reduced physical ability, hypothermia or any other signs that cause concern, the guide takes immediate action. | |  | |  |  |
| *228-1.10* | The company has written guidelines on when to cancel tours due to weather. It is clearly stated who decides on the cancellation of tours. | |  | |  |  |
| ***228-2*** | ***Environment*** | ***Yes*** | | ***N/A*** | | ***How fulfilled/explanation*** |
| *228-2.1* | Marked roads or recognised vehicle tracks are always used. Off-road driving in winter and on glaciers shall be in accordance with Article 4. of Regulation no. 528/2005 regarding restrictions on traffic in Iceland's nature. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-2.2* | Lighting and the signage on tracks in and around ice-caves is kept at a minimum. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-2.3* | Customers are informed about toilet arrangements where conventional facilities are not available. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-2.4* | All equipment and waste are removed. The company ensures that no permanent traces/damages are seen in the nature in connection with the company‘s tours or activities. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-2.5* | Food is not consumed and the use of tobacco is prohibited inside ice-caves. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-2.6* | The company ensures that all support or climbing equipment is removed from caves, in so far as it is possible and keeps the use of fixed bolts or other equipment at a minimum. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-2.7* | Customers are reminded of responsible travel behaviour. |  | |  | |  |
| ***228-3*** | ***Education and Training*** | ***Yes*** | | ***N/A*** | | ***How fulfilled/explanation*** |
| *228-3.1* | Guides receive training in the use of equipment f. ex. to be able to provide a correct location and information on accessibility to areas visited if assistance is required. In the training the following shall be covered:   1. Use of compass and map. 2. Use of GPS positioning device. 3. Use of appropriate means of communication for different areas, e.g. mobile phone, radio and Tetra. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.2* | Emergency drills are conducted every year. The training is based on types of tours and covers the following aspects among others:   1. Crevasse rescue and other types of rescues using ropes and technical equipment. 2. Use of emergency equipment for transport e.g. use of stretchers and emergency packaging of a patient. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.3* | Guides on ice caving tours at the edge of a glacier have completed the course *Ice Cave Guiding* from AIMG (valid from 1.1. 2023). |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.4* | Guides have completed the course *Wilderness First Aid* (Fyrsta hjálp 1, 20 hours) from ICE-SAR or a comparable course from another organisation and attend a refresher course (4 hours) every two years. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.5* | Guides on tours through the wilderness\* have completed the course *Wilderness First Responder (WFR*) from ICE-SAR, or a comparable course from another organisation, and attend a refresher course every three years. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.6* | Guides have completed the course *Hard Ice 1* from AIMG. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.7* | Guides on tours where the ice cave is located on a glacier have completed the course *Hard Ice 2* from AIMG*.* |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.8* | The head guide has completed the course *Hard Ice 3 from* AIMG. |  | |  | |  |
| *228-3.9* | The head guide has a minimum experience of two years or 100 working days as a guide on glaciers and/or in ice-caves. |  | |  | |  |

*\* Wilderness is a place or area where it takes at least two hours to get assistance/rescue from first responders by land.*