

**DRAFT BELIZE STANDARD
CODE OF PRACTICE FOR WATER SPORTS ACTIVITIES**

Committee Representation

The preparation of this standard for the Standards Advisory Council established under the Standards Act 1992 was carried out under the supervision of the Belize Bureau of Standards' Tourism and Related Services Technical Committee and the Technical Sub-Committee for High Risk Activities, which at the time comprised the following members:

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

CHAIR

Mr. Herbert Haylock

REPRESENTING

Belize Tourism Board

MEMBERS

REPRESENTING

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University of Belize

Ms. Leisa Carr

Belize Hotel Association

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Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation

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NICH/Institute of Archaeology

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Belize Tourism Industry Association

Ms. Melanie Eiley

Belize Coalition of Service Providers

Mrs. Lourdes Smith

Association of Cruise Service Providers

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Belize Bureau of Standards

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(PTGA)

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Mr. Rodrigo Allen

Mrs. Lenny Ayuso-Cowo (**Technical Secretary**)

REPRESENTING

Belize Tourism Board (BTB)

REPRESENTING

Belize Tourism Industry Association

Belize School of Outdoor Leadership
Training (BSOLT)

Splash Dive Center

BELTRAIDE

Ministry of Health (MOH)

Department of the Environment (DOE)

Belize Port Authority (BPA)

Placencia Tour Guide Association

Belize Sailing Association (BzSA)

Hol Chan Marine Reserve (HCMR)

Belize Diving Adventures Ltd.

Monkey River Eco-Tours

TA Adventures Ltd.

Belize Tourism Board (BTB)

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DRAFT BELIZE STANDARD CODE OF PRACTICE FOR WATER SPORTS ACTIVITIES

0 FOREWORD

- 0.1 These standards were developed to address the safe operation and good quality of service to be provided by watersports establishments operating in Belize.
- 0.2 The standard was developed at the request of the Belize Tourism Board.
- 0.3 It is expected that this standard will form the basis for the development of effective management practices and a safe environment for persons engaged in watersports activities, as well as, ensure high visitor satisfaction.
- 0.4 In preparing this draft, assistance was derived from the following documents:
 - a) BZ CP 5: 2016 - *Belize National Code of Practice for Recreational Scuba Diving Services*;
 - b) GDS 114: 2014 - *Grenada Standards for Water Sports*; and
 - c) TS XX: 2014 - *Draft Dominica Specification for Watersports*.

1 SCOPE

- 1.1 This standard applies to all parties involved in the commercial operation of watersports in Belize.
- 1.2 This standard covers parties that are involved in the rental of equipment for certain water sports activities.
- 1.3 This standard does not apply to the activities associated with commercial fishing nor recreational scuba diving services.
- 1.4 This standard complements the role of the following organizations that currently regulate some aspect of water sports:
 - a) Belize Port Authority (BPA), responsible for registration of all vessels in Belize; CAP 234 and all subsidiaries and amendments;
 - b) Temporary Certificate of Competency (Master), Water Craft 10 feet and under, Belize Port Authority Policy 2017;
 - c) The Fisheries Department – responsible for granting licenses to all fishing vessels engaged in both recreational and commercial fishing and is guided by the Fisheries Act., CAP 210 and all subsidiaries and amendments;

- d) Fisheries Act., CAP 210 subsidiary laws (The Hol Chan Marine Reserve Regulations);
 - e) Belize Tourism Board – responsible for granting tour operators and tour guides licenses for providing services to tourists and is guided by the Belize Tourism Board Act, CAP 295 and all subsidiaries and amendments;
 - f) Belize Forests Act – Chapter 213
- 1.5 All Water Sports Equipment Providers shall hold the necessary insurances for all equipment being rented and passenger liability insurances for persons engaging in business with the provider.

2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this standard, the following terms shall apply in the territorial waters of Belize:

- 2.1 **Accident** means an unplanned/unwanted event that results in injury, ill health or damage to property.
- 2.2 **Airboating** (with fans) means a small open vessel having a very shallow draft and driven by a caged airplane propeller mounted above the rear transom, capable of traveling at relatively high speeds through shallow water and swamps.
- 2.3 **Beach** means a zone above the water line, at a shore of a body of water, marked by an accumulation of sand, stone or gravel that has been deposited naturally or man-made.
- 2.4 **Boat Captain/Master** means the person having command of a vessel and who has a valid and appropriate license for the said vessel.
- 2.5 **Canoeing** means an activity which involves paddling a canoe - normally an open vessel - with a single-bladed paddle normally, but not always, in a kneeling position.

NOTE: This includes the traditional Dory

- 2.6 **Catamaran** means a vessel, usually propelled by sail or engine, formed of two hulls or floats held side by side by a frame above them held in place by a single deck.

NOTE: This includes Hobie cats

- 2.7 **Commercial Fishing** means the taking, breeding, producing, killing or capturing of any fish by any means whatever or the attempt or preparation to do so for the purpose of selling or disposition of such fish for money or money's worth.

- 2.8 **Cruising** means leisurely travel by boat, yacht or any other vessel.
- 2.9 **Designated Area** means areas authorized by the relevant authority which may or may not be marked with buoys, signs, posts, geographic features or GPS marks which designate a specific safe area for a specific activity.
- 2.10 **Flyboarding/Water Jetpacking** means an activity using a device attached to the body that propels a person through the air by means of pressurized water pumped through a hose connected to a jet ski.
- 2.11 **Hovercraft** means a vehicle or craft that travels over land or water on a cushion of air.
- 2.12 **Incident** means an unplanned event that does not result in personal injury but may result in property damage or is worthy of recording.
- 2.13 **Kayaking** means the use of a kayak for moving across water in a seated position propelled by means of a double-bladed paddle.
- 2.14 **Kiteboarding/Kitesurfing** means the sport or activity of riding on water while on a board and being pulled along by wind power, using a kite.
- 2.15 **Lifeguard** means a person holding recognized certification in water safety, lifesaving and rescue from an accredited provider.
- 2.16 **Mentor** means a Senior tour guide or professional with current experience who has conducted at least fifty (50) site specific tours.
- 2.17 **Near Miss** means an unplanned/unwanted event that, while not causing harm, has the potential to cause injury, ill health or property damage.
- 2.18 **Paddleboard** commonly referred to as SUP (Stand up Paddle boarding) means the activity, sport or pastime of lying, kneeling, or standing on a paddleboard and propelling oneself through the water with a long handled single bladed paddle.
- 2.19 **Parasailing** means a recreational activity where a person is towed behind a boat while attached to a specially designed parachute, known as a parasail.
- 2.20 **Pedalo/Pedal Vessel** means a human-powered pedal-propelled boat used for pleasure.
- 2.21 **Personal Flotation Device (PFD)** means is a piece of equipment designed to assist a wearer to keep afloat in water.
- 2.22 **Personal Water Craft (PWC) – Motorized** means a power-driven vessel including jet skis, mini power boats, dinghy, etc. capable of carrying one or more persons in a sitting, standing or kneeling position.

- 2.23 **Pontoon** means a motorized or non-motorized floating structure that serves as a dock, vessel or take off/landing site.
- 2.24 **Rafting/White water rafting** means recreational outdoor activities which use an inflatable raft to navigate a river or any other body of water.
- 2.25 **Recreational Fishing** means fishing for leisure and enjoyment as well as fishing with the intention to eat the fish caught, but shall not include fishing for sale, exchange or barter.
- NOTE:** Recreational fishing may include but not limited to fly-fishing, spin-casting, spear fishing, hand-line fishing/bottom fishing.
- 2.26 **Rescue/Safety Vessel** means a vessel used in rescuing or providing support in case of emergency especially in watersports or competitions.
- 2.27 **River Tubing** means a recreational activity where an individual rides on top of an inner tube or similar on water.
- 2.28 **Rowing** means the action of pulling an oar or oars (poles with flat ends) through the water.
- 2.29 **Sailing** means the propulsion of a vessel and the control of its movement with large foils called sails. By changing the rigging rudder and sometimes the keel or centre board a sailor manages the force of the wind on the sails in order to move the vessel relative to its surrounding medium and change its direction and speed.
- 2.30 **Sailing Dinghy** means a small vessel normally open with a single mast and sails, used especially for recreational sailing. Some may be fitted with a small outboard engine.
- 2.31 **Snorkeling** means the exploration of the underwater environment using fins, masks and snorkels without the use of scuba equipment.
- 2.32 **Spear Fishing** means fishing using the below equipment:
- (a) speargun;
 - (b) polespears;
 - (c) handspears;
 - (d) hawaiian slings
 - (e) iki jime or kill spike;
 - (f) spearfishing masks; or
 - (g) any other elastic, pneumatic powered, or mechanically powered, spear gun or slings.
- 2.33 **Sports Fishing** means fishing for the purpose of leisure or competition only, and not for the commercial purpose of selling, exporting or otherwise.

NOTE: Sports Fishing may include but not limited to fly-fishing, spin-casting, spear fishing, hand-line fishing/bottom fishing, Trolling, Reel fishing.

- 2.34 **Spotter** means a person who is familiar with their operator's respective activity standard operating procedures and who looks for or observes the activity to ensure participants are safe.
- 2.35 **Surface Supply Diving** means diving using equipment supplied with breathing gas on the surface using an umbilical. These include snuba diving (regulator supplied by tank on the surface), sea trek (helmet supplied by compressor on the surface) and hookah diving (regulator supplied by a compressor on the surface).
- 2.36 **Staff/Workers** means any person who has entered into or works under a contract with an employer as per the Labour Act CAP 297 of the laws of Belize.
- 2.37 **Towable Inflatables** means inflatables designed to be towed on or over water behind a powered vessel on or in which single or multiple passengers ride.
- NOTE:** This includes banana boats
- 2.38 **Vessel** means any motor boat, dory, skiff, jet ski, sailing vessel, launch, tug, barge, airboat, or any other watercraft used in navigation within Belize;
- 2.39 **Wakeboarding** means the activity or sport of riding the wake of a vessel on a short, wide board resembling a surfboard and performing acrobatic maneuvers whilst being towed on a line behind a powered vessel.
- 2.40 **Water-skiing** means the act of a person, whether or not equipped with floats (also called skis) fastened underfoot, being towed through the water by a motorized vessel.
- 2.41 **Watersports activity** means the undertaking of any activity by use of specialized equipment or gear within and over any body of water, whether for commercial purposes, recreation, entertainment or otherwise.
- 2.42 **Water Sports Activity Plan** means a written statement of the details of the water sports activity filed and available upon request.
- 2.43 **Water Sports Equipment Provider** means any individual or company who solely rents water sports equipment to other licensed tour operators or individuals for the purpose of conducting activities with the use of the rented equipment.

- 2.44 **Water Sports Tour Operator** means an entity (business, individual or organization), including any individual acting on behalf of such entity, which organizes and guides Water Sports activities and tours, licensed under the BTB and is a member of or follows the guidelines and standards of an activity-specific recognized accredited agency.

2.45 **Wind Surfing** means a form of sailing in which a flexible sail, free to move in any direction, is mounted on a surfboard and the craft is guided by the standing rider.

2.46 **Yachting** means sailing a vessel, which is a large sailing boat normally with a cabin or covered area with sails and or a motor, used for racing or pleasure trips.

3 NORMATIVE REFERENCES

3.1 National Standards

- a) BZS 26: 2014 - *Belize Standards for Health and Safety of Archaeological Reserves and Parks*.

3.2 National Laws and Regulations (Belize)

- a) Chapter 210 - *Belize Fisheries Act*;
- b) Chapter 213 - *Belize Forest Act*;
- c) Chapter 275 - *Belize Tourism Board Act*;
- d) Chapter 297 – *Labour Act*;
- e) Chapter 233 - *Belize Port Authority Act*;
- f) Chapter 328 - *Environmental Protection Act*;
- g) Chapter 329 - *Coastal Zone Management Act*.

4 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WATERSPORTS OPERATORS

4.1 Minimum Requirements for Water Sports Tour Operators

Water Sports Tour Operators shall:

- 4.1.1 have a tour operator's license and adhere to all relevant Belize Tourism Board (Tour Operators) regulations Chapter 275 when conducting any of the activities covered in this standard;
- 4.1.2 have adequate public liability insurance to cover all available watersports activities offered as per Belize Tourism Board regulations;
- 4.1.3 register and license all motorized vessels engaged in water sports activities as per the Belize Port Authority regulations;
- 4.1.4 ensure that all motorized vehicles or trailers engaged in the transportation of equipment or guests partaking in Water Sports Activities be licensed as per the Belize Tourism Board (Tour Operators) regulations Chapter 275 and the Belize Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act Chapter 230;
- 4.1.5 ensure that all vessels carrying passengers and operating watersports comply with respective Belize Port Authority regulations relating to Speed, Licenses, and respective safety equipment etc.

4.1.6 ensure that all persons engaged in the activity of conducting tours after sunset and before sunrise are specifically trained to conduct said activity at the above stated time and further that all equipment utilized in the execution of said tour are insured and have met the requisite standards;

4.1.7 demonstrate competencies in the specific services provided and have respective licenses and/or certification(s) for the same, where applicable;

NOTE: All tour guides involved in any Water Sport Activity shall have relevant experience and training of the activity being conducted and familiarity of the area in which they are conducting the said activity;

4.1.8 ensure that all watersports personnel that come in direct contact with clients be able to communicate effectively in English as a minimum;

4.1.9 maintain a file for staff (full-time, part-time and voluntary) that will include a copy of the following documents:

- i. Social Security card;
- ii. current address;
- iii. job description;

And where applicable:

- iv. copy of insurance for staff;
- v. valid Belize tour guide license;
- vi. Boat Captain's license;
- vii. any other relevant licenses or credentials for the position held;
- viii. recognized oxygen administration training and or first aid certification;

4.1.10 adhere to Water Sports Operator ratio of 1:8 which means 1 guide per every eight (8) participants:

NOTE 1: This ratio is a maximum ratio based on Water Sports with ideal conditions; however, ratios may be adjusted to one (1) tour guide with less participants, but shall not be adjusted higher than 1 tour guide to 8 participants, at the discretion of the Water Sports tour operator considering environmental factors such as, but not limited to, strong currents, weather conditions, vessel traffic and participant's experience.

NOTE 2: the tour guide shall be a different person from that of the designated boat captain;

- 4.1.11 have written Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all activities carried out. The SOPs shall consist of daily routine procedures, an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and procedures in the event of emergency and or disaster;

NOTE: Relevant practical training relating to emergency procedures shall be provided for all staff and relevant documentation shall be available upon request to support it;

- 4.1.12 have a documented activity/tour specific Risk Assessment as part of a risk management process that shall be submitted to the Belize Tourism Board when applying for a license: See Annex A for a template example;

NOTE: A record of each staff members' signature to confirm that they have seen and understood a copy of the same shall be in file by the tour operator;

- 4.1.13 ensure that they adhere to the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Watersports Operators, as per Annex B;

- 4.1.14 ensure that the consumption of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs prior to or during a Water Sports Activity tour are not be allowed;

- 4.1.15 have liability waivers available for each participant (s) to sign. The liability waiver shall be explained thoroughly to the participant (s) by a representative of the tour operator. The waiver shall consist of at least the below:

- a) name and logo of the tour operator;
- b) acceptance of risk clause;
- c) recommendations for the tour;
- d) limitations for participation of the tour; and
- e) name, signature, and date filled by each participant;

NOTE 1: Parents sign on behalf of their children under eighteen (18) years old.

NOTE 2: One (1) liability waiver per person is to be used.

- 4.1.16 ensure that participants are advised on the personal clothing, shoes and equipment that is suitable for the water sports activity being undertaken;

- 4.1.17 provide a full range of equipment specific to the relevant water sports activity;

- 4.1.18 reserve the right to exercise his/her discretion to refuse a client from participating in his/her activity;

- 4.1.19 ensure that all equipment provided and used are kept and maintained as per manufacturer's specifications;
- 4.1.20 ensure that all incidents and accidents are logged and reported to the relevant authorities;
- 4.1.21 notify the nearest Belize Police Department formation and/or Tourism Police Unit immediately in the event of any incident or accident that results in the serious injury or death of a participant, the tour operator or one of its representatives; Any other incident or accident shall be reported within twenty-four (24) hours to the Belize Tourism Board in writing and shall include all details pertinent to the incident or accident.
- 4.1.22 have a designated secure storage space accessible for participants to leave their personal items or valuables during the water sports activity;
- 4.1.23 ensure that adequate rescue/safety vessel(s) are equipped, prepared and readily available when watersports activities are taking place. Each watersports facility shall have either a spotter(s) or any other relevant emergency support on duty during the periods of operation.
- 4.1.24 check the equipment for suitability and functionality in cases where customers wish to use their own equipment watersports operators.
- 4.1.25 ensure that all vessels subject to Belize Port Authority regulations are examined and licensed annually.
- 4.1.26 ensure that all vessels are maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications by the owner/operator and documented;
- 4.1.27 ensure that all participants are given a safety briefing that shall include, but is not limited to:
 - a) identity and role of staff;
 - b) local hazards;
 - c) vessel traffic where applicable;
 - d) safety and emergency procedures;
NOTE: It shall include emergency communication procedures
 - e) exit and entry procedures;
 - f) buddy or group assignments;
 - g) relevant signals (verbal, visual, audible);
 - h) participant's expected conduct;

- i) personal protective equipment including fitting (example: helmet, personal flotation device etc.)
- j) activity specific safety equipment, its use and location (example: hand-held radio, throw line, first aid kit, phone etc.)
- k) aquatic and environmental considerations (no touching or taking of corals & aquatic life)

4.1.28 keep a Water Sports Activity Plan for the activity. It shall include, but is not limited to:

- a) the number of participants;
- b) names of participants;
- c) date;
- d) time in and time out;
- e) equipment;
- f) destination (s);
- g) area(s) of operation;
- h) time table;
- i) communication details;

NOTE: It shall include an emergency communication plan

- j) local weather condition(s);
- k) person(s) in charge of activity; and
- l) first aid personnel on duty

NOTE 1: Documentation for 4.1.28 shall be attached to Water Sports Activity Plan and kept upon completion of activity.

NOTE 2: Records are to be kept a minimum of 6 (six) months on site thereafter at an appropriate location for a minimum of six (6) years.

4.1.29 state clearly the safe area(s) of operation where the activity(ies) shall take place, with visual aid where necessary.

4.1.30 ensure that unwarranted use of poisons and chemicals are avoided within the Marine environment;

NOTE: The use of environmentally friendly products are highly recommended.

4.1.31 ensure that all watersports equipment are stored and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications by the owner/operator and documented.

4.1.32 ensure that emergency equipment appropriate to the activity are available throughout and in accordance with the relevant specifications. It shall include, but is not limited to:

- a) First aid kit

b) Pocket/CPR mask

4.1.33 ensure that adequate personnel with first aid and CPR training are readily available when watersports activities are taking place.

4.1.34 have an effective communication device, which may include a functional marine VHF radio, cell phone, or similar alternative, which can be used in emergency situations.

4.1.35 ensure that all vessels and vessels in transit:

- a) conform to recognized 'international rules for prevention of collision at sea' ('rules of the road-proper reference');
- b) operate at 'no-wake' speeds at 5 nautical miles or less within a 100 ft. of any shore lines or river banks; and
- c) operated in accordance with information and rules governing the local marine environment.

5 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WATER SPORTS EQUIPMENT PROVIDERS

5.1 All Water Sports Equipment Providers shall hold the necessary insurances for all equipment being rented and passenger liability insurances for persons engaging in business with the provider.

5.2 All motorized vessels engaged in water sports activities shall be registered and licensed as per the Belize Port Authority regulations.

5.3 All watersports personnel that come in direct contact with clients shall be able to communicate effectively in English as a minimum.

5.4 The Water Sports Equipment Provider shall have liability waivers available for each participant (s) to sign. The liability waiver shall be explained thoroughly to the participant (s) by a representative of the Water Sports Equipment Provider. The waiver shall consist of at least the below:

- a) name and logo of the Water Sport Equipment Provider;
- b) acceptance of risk clause;
- c) recommendations for the activity;
- d) limitations for participation of the activity; and
- e) name, signature, and date filled by each participant.

NOTE 1: Parents sign on behalf of their children under eighteen (18) years old.

NOTE 2: One (1) liability waiver per person is to be used.

- 5.5 All Water Sports Equipment Providers that rent equipment shall only do so if:
- a) recognized activity certification is presented by the participant; or
 - b) an adequate level of competence is demonstrated by the participant; or
 - c) tutelage of a suitably trained and certified instructor is rendered by the Water Sports Equipment Provider.
- 5.6 The Water Sports Equipment Provider shall ensure that all participants are given a safety briefing that shall include, but is not limited to:
- a) identity and role of staff;
 - b) local hazards;
 - c) vessel traffic where applicable;
 - d) safety and emergency procedures;
NOTE 1: It shall include emergency communication procedures.
NOTE 2: Examples include minimum and maximum speeds accepted.
 - e) exit and entry procedures;
 - f) relevant signals (verbal, visual, audible);
 - g) participant's expected conduct;
NOTE 1: Advice against the reckless operation of the equipment.
 - h) personal protective equipment including fitting (example: helmet, personal flotation device etc.); and
 - i) where applicable, relevant activity specific safety equipment, its use and location (example: hand-held radio, throw line, first aid kit, phone etc.).
- 5.7 The consumption of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs prior to or during an activity shall not be allowed.
- 5.8 All participants shall be supplied with relevant safety gear and or equipment prior to the activity.
- 5.9 The Water Sports Equipment Provider shall maintain a rental log that shall include but is not limited to:
- a) name of participants;

- b) date;
- c) time in and time out;
- d) location of activity;
- e) type of activity;
- f) equipment identification; and
- g) emergency contact.

5.10 All incidents and accidents shall be logged and reported to the relevant authorities.

5.11 Water Sports Equipment providers shall only provide equipment that is activity specific, in good working condition, and maintained as per manufacturer's specifications.

6 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WATERSPORTS OPERATORS

6.1 Water-skiing

6.1.1 As per clause 4.1.29, operators shall ensure that activities are conducted in a safe area as per, but not limited to the below:

- a) safe distance from swimming and marine protected areas;
- b) away from reef systems;
- c) away from shipping channels;
- d) away from areas with high traffic;
- e) away from hazards and obstacles (channel markers, coral heads, wreckage, sandbars etc.); and
- f) in an area with a minimum depth of 5 feet/1.5 meters;

6.1.2 Vessels used for waterskiing shall:

- a) be suitable for the purpose of waterskiing;
- b) be fitted with a water skiing tow rope;
- c) be fitted with a water skiing bridle or pylon;
- d) have an insurance policy that covers this particular use of the boat;
- e) shall be equipped with an emergency kill-cord which shall be attached to the vessel operator; and
- f) be equipped with a ladder.

6.1.3 Activity specific ropes, skis and bindings shall be inspected before use by the operator and maintained or replaced when necessary to ensure functionality and increase safety.

6.1.4 In addition to safety procedures as per 4.1.27, water-skiing participants shall be briefed on, but not limited to:

- a) water Skiing hand signals;
- b) how to put on/off relevant equipment;
- c) how to enter and exit the water;
- d) what to do when falling;

- e) putting your skis on at the start or after a fall;
- f) coaching on technique of standing up and water skiing; and
- g) instructions on how to reset the water ski tow rope at the start or after a fall.

6.1.5 All water-skiing participants shall be provided with appropriate personal flotation device (PFD) prior to going afloat.

NOTE: Persons who refuse to comply with this safety regulation shall not be allowed to engage in the activity.

6.1.6 There shall be a minimum of two (2) members of crew in the boat during the skiing exercise; one for driving and the other to be the spotter.

6.2 Snorkeling

6.2.2 Operators shall abide by all site-specific rules, regulations and guidelines while conducting tours.

6.2.3 All persons shall abide by relevant environmental rules and regulations of the site where snorkeling tours are conducted.

6.2.4 Operators and guides shall ensure all gear be closely attached to the bodies of participants. Flashlights, cameras, etc. shall not be allowed to drag on the ocean floor.

6.2.5 All equipment and gear shall be sanitized before use.

6.2.6 In addition to safety procedures as per 4.1.27, snorkeling participants shall be briefed on, but not limited to:

- a) relevant signals (eg. Whistles, hand signals etc.);
- b) how to put on/off relevant equipment;
- c) how to enter and exit the water;
- d) coaching on snorkeling techniques;
- e) pressure injuries;
- f) planned snorkeling area or route; and
- g) On-site hazards (eg. tidal/current drifts, boat traffic etc.).

6.2.7 The below equipment shall be made available and be in good working condition:

- a) snorkeling vest/Personal flotation device (PFD);
- b) snorkel;
- c) mask; and
- d) fins.

6.2.8 All equipment provided shall be kept and maintained as per manufacturer's specifications.

- 6.2.9 Operators and guides shall use at least one (1) floating marker buoy (sausage), Surface marker buoy, or life ring while conducting a snorkel tour to facilitate the visibility of snorkelers.

6.3 Parasailing

- 6.3.1 Take off/landing shall only be done from a vessel specifically designed for Parasailing in a designated area free of hazards.
- 6.3.2 Take-off and landing shall be conducted in a safe manner.
- 6.3.3 The Water Sports tour operator shall ensure that the safety briefing covers hand signals prior to parasailing experience.
- 6.3.4 There shall be reliable communication between the vessel and the main office such as Very High Frequency (VHF) radios or cell phones.
- 6.3.5 During the participant's parasailing experience, there shall be a minimum of two (2) crew members in the vessel: A Boat Captain/Master with a valid and appropriate License and an appropriately trained person who shall conduct the activity.

NOTE: The above mentioned crew members' training shall be done by a recognized accreditation agency.

- 6.3.6 There shall be an unobstructed view of the parasailer at all times from the vessel.
- 6.3.7 The vessel shall be equipped with cutting equipment in case of entanglement or release failure.
- 6.3.8 The operator shall not make any unauthorized modifications/repairs to the equipment.
- 6.3.9 The following procedures and rules shall be observed in respect to parasailing operations:
- a) Prior to the activity commencing, the operator shall make a thorough inspection of all parasailing equipment to be used to ensure it is in safe condition. Equipment includes, but is not limited to, ropes, harnesses, webbing, clips, shrouds, canopies, winch controls and the vessels.
 - b) The operator shall not use or allow the use of parasailing equipment that is unsafe.
 - c) The operator shall keep a written record of each daily inspection, which shall provide the following:
 - i) the date of inspection;

- ii) the name of the person who conducted the inspection and;
- iii) confirmation that the equipment was found to be safe, or otherwise i.e unsafe;
- iv) confirmation that the equipment was found or suspected to be unsafe;
- v) the reasons for the equipment being unsafe;

NOTE: Records are to be kept a minimum of 6 (six) months on site thereafter at an appropriate location for a minimum of six (6) years.

- d) The operator of a parasailing vessel shall ensure that all equipment utilized for parasailing is fitted and maintained as per manufacturer's specifications.
- e) All parasailing operators shall ensure that each item of equipment used for parasailing (inclusive of winch) is thoroughly inspected annually by a relevant recognized accredited agency.
- f) The parasailing operators shall ensure that a written record of the inspection in subparagraph (e) includes the following information:
 - i) the date of inspection;
 - ii) any defect found in the equipment;
 - iii) any corrective action found for that equipment and;
 - iv) the serial number of the defective equipment (if applicable);

NOTE: Records are to be kept a minimum of 6 (six) months on site thereafter at an appropriate location for a minimum of six (6) years.

- g) The winch rope used for parasailing purposes shall have a minimum breaking strain of 6000 lbs.
- h) The length of the rope used shall not exceed the maximum length specified by the harness's manufacturer.
- i) The rope used in parasailing shall be replaced after one year. It shall be replaced before one year if the rope is frayed or damaged and that 15 cm (6 inches) is cut off at the earlier of:

- i) two (2) weeks after its first use; or
 - ii) the completion of 400 parasail flights.
- j) A suitably experienced spotter shall be provided to observe the participant (s) at all times.
- k) The operator shall ensure that no person under the age of 18 years is permitted to parasail without the written consent of their parent or guardian; and that any person under the age of 12 years shall be accompanied by an adult on the parasail.
- l) Whilst conducting parasailing activities, the operator of a parasailing vessel shall ensure that the tow line and the person parasailing maintain a minimum distance of:
- i) 67 m (200 ft.) from a helicopter, sea plane or other aircraft that is airborne;
 - ii) 100 ft. from another parasailing vessel conducting parasailing;
 - iii) 100 ft. from another ship, whether underway, moored or an anchor; and
 - iv) 100 ft. from a power-line, wharf, jetty or other fixed structure.
- m) The operator of a parasailing vessel shall ensure that the weather conditions, wind speed and wind direction is considered and monitored prior to and during parasailing operations.

6.4 Towable Inflatable

6.4.1 The following procedures and rules shall be observed in respect of towable inflatable operations, namely:

- a) operators of a towable inflatable shall be suitably qualified;
- b) a suitably experienced spotter shall be provided to observe the participant (s) at all times;
- c) personal flotation devices (PFD) are mandatory for all passengers on power boats and inflatable towables;
- d) the relevant authority shall set designated areas for inflatable towables;
- e) the boat towing the inflatable shall not proceed at a speed greater than 15 knots or the manufacturer's specification; and

- f) whilst conducting inflatable towable activities, the operator shall ensure that the operator maintain a minimum distance of:
 - i. 33 m (100 ft.) from a powerline, wharf, jetty or other fixed structure;
 - ii. 33 m (100 ft.) of a navigational hazard; or
 - iii. 67 m (200 ft.) outside of the swim-line.

6.5 Windsurfing and Kitesurfing

- 6.5.1 The windsurfing and kite-surfing programmes and rentals shall be conducted under the tutelage of a suitably trained and qualified operator/instructor.
- 6.5.2 Any area used for preliminary teaching shall be a buoyed zoned area.
- 6.5.3 Surfers shall be informed of the limits of the sailing area.
- 6.5.4 Surfers shall be given relevant safety briefing prior to the activity.
- 6.5.5 A suitable buoyancy aid shall be provided and correctly fitted to the surfer prior to entering the water.
- 6.5.6 “Recall Signals” shall be clearly demonstrated to all users prior to surfing.
- 6.5.7 Participants shall be advised to stay in close range of the instructor/facilitator.
- 6.5.8 Operators shall ensure that there is a reliable observer on the beach at all times while surfers are in the water.
- 6.5.9 A dedicated rescue safety craft shall be available for immediate use whilst activities are in operation.

6.6 Pedalos/Pedal Vessels

- 6.6.1 Pedalos/pedal vessels shall have attachments for lifting and towing.
- 6.6.2 Participants shall be given safety instructions and be taught emergency signals prior to entering the water.
- 6.6.3 A record of users shall be kept.
- 6.6.4 All shall be kept in good condition and maintenance logged.

- 6.6.5 The designated area shall be explained to the users prior to their departure.
- 6.6.6 Pedalos/pedal vessels participants shall operate a safe distance from swimmers.
- 6.6.7 A suitable buoyancy aid shall be provided and correctly fitted to the pedalos/pedal vessel participant.

6.7 Personal Water Crafts (PWC) - Motorized

- 6.7.1 There shall be a designated area for operation.
- 6.7.2 At the beginning of the operation, water sports personnel shall provide the participant with information on riding methods, location of the instructor, off limit areas, and other relevant information.
- 6.7.3 The operator reserves the right to exercise his/her discretion to refuse a client from participating in the watersport activity.
- 6.7.4 All watersports participants shall be fitted with safety equipment including floatation device.
- 6.7.5 Participants shall be given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the craft prior to departure.
- 6.7.6 Watersports operators shall not solicit bathers through undue coercion:
Example: Driving near to bathers and harassing them to take a ride.
- 6.7.7 Automatic kill-switch shall not be tampered with or modified and the "kill cord" shall be worn by the vessel operator at all times.

6.8 Jet Skiing

- 6.8.1 All Jet skis shall be licensed as per the Belize Port Authority Regulations.
- 6.8.2 Jet Skiing shall only take place in designated areas and is prohibited in restricted areas including marine reserves, ports, and no-wake zones.

NOTE 1: Except when proceeding directly to or from the designated area of operation, jet skis shall not be operated within designated swimming areas or within 100 ft of any shoreline, nor within 25 ft of any overwater structure.

NOTE 2: Jet skiers shall maintain a 200 meter (600 ft) radius from all persons engaged in water activities.

6.8.3 In addition to the safety briefing elements covered under 4.1.27 above, the points below shall also be explained to the participant:

- a) designated area;
- b) procedure to get on and off the jet-ski
- c) technique for getting back on the jetski after a fall;
- d) how to start a jetski and re-start it after a fall;
- e) basic steering and throttle control;
- f) rules of the road; and
- g) use of the “kill cord”.

6.8.4 All users shall be allowed time to familiarize themselves with the craft under supervised instruction.

6.8.5 All jet skis are to have their name and registration number visible at all times as per the Belize Port Authority regulations.

6.8.6 Operators shall not rent jet skis when waves are 1 m (3 ft) or more within the area of operation.

6.9 Personal Watercrafts (PWC) – Wind powered

6.9.1 The rental and tutelage programmes for personal wind powered water crafts shall be conducted by a suitably trained and qualified watersports attendant.

6.9.2 Sailors shall be informed of the limits of the sailing area.

6.9.3 Sailors shall be given relevant safety briefing prior to the activity and sign a liability release.

6.9.4 A suitable buoyancy aid shall be provided and correctly fitted to the sailor prior to entering the water.

6.9.5 ‘Recall Signals’ shall be clearly demonstrated to all users prior to sailing.

6.9.6 Participants shall be advised to stay in close range of the facility.

6.9.7 Operators shall ensure that there is a reliable observer on the beach at all times while sailors are on the water.

6.9.8 A dedicated rescue safety craft shall be available for immediate use whilst facilities are in operation.

6.10 Paddle boarding

6.10.1 Two (2) members of staff shall be present with participant(s) at all times while the activity is being conducted.

NOTE: the 2 persons should be a tour guide and a spotter

6.10.2 In addition to the safety briefing elements in the general requirements, the paddle boarding safety briefing shall also include:

- a) information on paddling and steering;
- b) techniques to minimize the risk of a hazardous fall into shallow waters, mangroves, coral patches, boats, docks, other participants etc.;
- c) suitable entry and exit points for this activity shall be established by the operator;
- d) information on how to deal with rough waters and/or strong winds; and
- e) information on capsize and wet exit techniques and deep-water re-entry methods.

6.10.3 All participants shall be given a personal flotation device (PFD).

6.11 Kayaking/Canoeing

6.11.1 All equipment used shall be of a design and material suitable for the activity and conditions.

6.11.2 In addition to the safety briefing elements in the general requirements, the kayaking/canoeing safety briefing shall also include:

- a) information on paddling and steering;
- b) entry and exit points;
- c) information on how to deal with rough waters and strong currents/winds;
- d) information on capsize and wet exit techniques and deep-water re-entry methods;
- e) information on local hazards such as reefs and vessel traffic; and
- f) instructions on how to use, fit or adjust kayaks and equipment such as spray deck, rudder pedals and buoyancy aid.

6.11.3 Equipment required for a tour guide to take when conducting kayaking/canoeing tours are:

- a) headlamp if applicable;
- b) extra batteries;

- c) whistle;
- d) towline (improvised or manufactured);
- e) rescue knife; and
- f) first aid kit (s);

6.11.4 If a spray skirt/deck is to be used in a closed cockpit kayak or a canoe, the participant must have attempted a wet exit.

6.11.5 All kayaks and canoes shall stay afloat when flooded.

6.12 River Kayaking/Canoeing

6.12.1 In addition to the requirements in kayaking/canoeing above, considerations shall also be made for the below when kayaking/canoeing in Grade/Class 2 or above rivers:

- a) the tour guide taking participants for this activity shall be adequately trained and familiar with the respective river;
- b) any tour guide taking participants for this activity shall have Swift Water Rescue certification;
- c) kayaking helmets are to be worn on all rapids grade 2 and over;
- d) the safety briefing shall also include river hazards; and
- e) a throw bag shall be taken by the tour guide when undertaking this activity;

6.13 Sports Fishing and Recreational Fishing

6.13.1 All operators engaged in Sports Fishing/Recreational fishing shall adhere to the relevant laws and regulations.

6.13.2 Sports fishing and Recreational fishing shall take place with a licensed tour operator.

6.13.3 Operators shall adhere to catch-and-release fishing as per the Belize species designation and protection regulations.

6.13.4 Operators shall ensure that all fishing lines, fishing gear or vessel garbage are not discarded into the marine environment; and are not disposed of indiscriminately.

6.13.5 Sports fishing and Recreational Fishing vessels shall maintain a safe distance of a minimum of 100 ft. from all Water Sports participants.

6.14 Glass-Bottom Boats

- 6.14.1 Glass-bottom boat operators shall follow established rules, regulations and guidelines for the particular area in which they are operating.
- 6.14.2 Captain and crew of the glass-bottomed boat shall maintain a proper lookout and safe speed at all times during operation.
- 6.14.3 Operators shall ensure adequate supervision of guests while conducting their activities.
- 6.14.4 All glass-bottomed boats and equipment shall be maintained in good order for safe and effective operation.

6.15 Flyboarding/Water Jetpacking

- 6.15.1 All Jet Skis used for this activity shall operate with a license as per 4.1.3 above.
- 6.15.2 This activity shall take place only in designated areas.
- 6.15.3 Two (2) members of staff shall be present with participant(s) at all times while the activity is being conducted:

NOTE: the 2 persons should be a jet-ski operator and a spotter

- 6.15.4 In addition to the safety briefing elements required in the general requirements, participants shall be briefed on:
 - (a) standing and landing techniques; and
 - (b) mechanical failure procedure.
- 6.15.5 A physical demonstration of basic techniques shall be carried out prior to the participants' engaging in the activity including verbal instruction on basic techniques.
- 6.15.6 To avoid collision, the activity shall cease temporarily in the event of a breach of the designated area by any approaching vessel.
- 6.15.7 Suitable entry and exit points for this activity shall be established by the operator.

NOTE: To avoid injury, entry and exit shall not be done from raised docks;

6.16 River Tubing

- 6.16.1 Tour guides shall use a technique based on the river conditions at the time to float their guests through the river.

NOTE: Techniques used may include linked or free floating

6.16.2 A tour guide taking participants river tubing shall have relevant site-specific experience.

NOTE 1: A tour guide must have traversed the river a minimum of five (5) times with a mentor in various conditions.

NOTE 2: River tubing should not be conducted on rivers higher than Grade/Class 2.

6.16.3 Any tour guide taking participants for this activity shall have Swift Water Rescue certification.

6.16.4 Equipment required to participate in any river tubing tour shall include:

- a) Personal Flotation Device (PFD);
- b) a tube;
- c) headlight if applicable; and
- d) suitable footwear.

6.16.5 Additional equipment required for a tour guide to take when conducting river tubing tours:

- a) extra batteries;
- b) whistle;
- c) throwbag;
- d) rescue knife; and
- e) first aid kit (s);

6.16.6 In addition to elements covered in the safety briefing in 4.1.27 above, the safety briefing shall also include river hazards;

6.17 Surface Supply Diving (Snuba Diving, Sea Trek, Hookah Diving)

6.17.1 In addition to safety procedures as per 4.1.27, Surface Supply Diving participants shall be briefed on, but not limited to:

- a) how to enter and exit the water;
- b) equalizing procedures;
- c) underwater signals;
- d) equipment use;
- e) mask clearing;
- f) out of air situation;
- g) pressure injuries (never hold your breath);
- h) weight belt removal if applicable;
- i) duration of the activity.

6.17.2 The Operator shall have emergency oxygen available at the dive site.

6.17.3 The Operator shall ensure that in-water supervision adheres to a ratio of 1 guide per every 4 participants.

6.17.4 The Operator shall ensure that surface supervision adheres to a ratio of 1 guide per every 8 participants.

6.17.5 During the participant's Surface Supply Diving experience, there shall be a minimum of one (1) crew member in the vessel.

6.17.6 The Operator shall only conduct Sea Trek activities in respective authorized and designated areas for this activity.

6 REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL SAFETY

- 7.1 When spare petrol is carried on board in portable containers for any purpose, the containers shall be clearly marked and shall be stored where they can be readily jettisoned.
- 7.2 Unless needed for the machinery, combustible materials shall not be stored in the machinery space.
- 7.3 Machinery containing oil shall be provided with a readily accessible galvanized steel drip tray or other suitable means to collect leakages.
- 7.4 The machinery space shall be kept clean and tidy.
- 7.5 Insulating materials fitted in the machinery space of vessels shall be non-combustible.
- 7.6 Machinery and fuel tank spaces shall be separated from accommodation spaces by boundaries, which prevent the passage of vapors.
- 7.7 In areas assigned for cooking the following shall apply:
 - a) the structural fire protection device(s) fitted shall be in accordance with the potential fire hazard associated with cooking appliances;
 - b) cooking appliances such as deep-fat fryers, or other appliances that pose an equally high fire hazard, shall not be used in the vessel unless there is a fixed fire extinguishing system;
 - c) there shall be suitable fire retardant barriers built around cooking and heating appliances; and
 - d) cooking ranges and exhaust hoods shall be fitted with grease trap.
- 7.8 In case of emergency the coast guard shall be contacted.

Annex A (Informative) Risk Assessment Template

Name of Tour Operator: _____
 Activity/Tour undertaken: _____ (Examples include Snorkeling, Parasailing, Equipment Rental)
 Date of the assessment: _____
 Date of review: _____

Activity	Hazards Identified	Mitigation steps	Risk Assessment Grade	Risk Acceptable (Yes/No)

Risk Assessment Grading Matrix

		Consequence – What is the Maximum consequence of Risk				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood of Occurrence	Almost certain	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme (unacceptable)	Extreme (unacceptable)
	Likely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme (unacceptable)
	Possible	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

Name of Assessor: _____ Signature: _____

NOTE:

1. Activities that warrant an Extreme score shall not be conducted.
2. Risk Assessments should be reviewed annually or when current situations change to affect the validity of the Risk Assessment.
3. Risk assessments can be activity/tour specific such as Sea Kayaking or Snorkeling etc. In the event they are tour specific, each activity within that tour can be risk assessed on the same risk assessment form.

EXAMPLE BELOW

Activity	Hazards Identified	Mitigation steps	Risk Assessment Grade	Risk Acceptable (Yes/No)
Sea Kayaking	Upper limb injuries, dislocation, trauma, impact injuries from impact with boat, paddle, personnel or surroundings.	All personnel taking part should be fit, able and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. All skills will be introduced by the guides in a controlled, progressive manner. Guides will always be aware of boat proximity and local surroundings Guides First Aid	Possible Over Moderate Risk Medium	Yes

		trained and carry First Aid equipment. Instructor ratios are not to exceed 1-8		
Sea Kayaking	Injuries from lifting and carrying equipment	Correct lifting techniques taught. Guide control on and off the water.	Possible over Moderate Risk Medium	Yes
Sea Kayaking	Hypothermia. Cold illness	Guide should observe the group for signs and symptoms and remove from environment if early signs appear. Limit emersion times in cold conditions.	Rare over Major Risk Low	Yes
Sea Kayaking	Hyperthermia Heat Illnesses.	Guides are to encourage the application of sun block and wearing of hats. Group to take breaks at suitable times to allow for re-hydration.	Unlikely over Major Risk Medium	Yes
Sea Kayaking	Entrapment.	Ensure kayak fitted correctly. Capsize/wet exit drills are explained and demonstrated at the earliest opportunity. Instructor to ensure tight class control. Pair guests off when appropriate.	Rare over Catastrophic Risk Medium	Yes
Sea Kayaking	Drowning	All to wear activity specific buoyancy aids which are checked prior to use and inspected periodically. The guides gives a safety brief prior to activities. All participants questioned on swimming ability week swimmers given special attention	Rare over Catastrophic Risk Medium	Yes
Sea Kayaking	Lost or unforeseen incident	All Guides are very familiar with the route, they book in and out with the office. Guides carry copy of evacuation plan and Local charts and route cards as applicable. All guides teams carry at least two independent forms of communications which have been tested in the areas used.	Possible over Moderate Risk Medium	Yes

Name of Assessor: _____

Signature: _____

Annex B
Code of Conduct and Ethics for Watersports Operators
(Normative Annex)

B.1 Watersports operators shall ensure staff:

- a) practice good personal hygiene and proper grooming;
- b) Wears appropriate and professional attire while conducting tours;
- c) not be under the influence of any illicit drug/substance, alcohol and any form of intoxicating substance while on duty;
- d) has a valid method of identification such as a valid picture identification badge or uniform issued by the watersports operator;
- e) delivers the activity(ies) in an efficient manner;
- f) not smoke where a hazard can occur or while conducting an activity;
- g) immediately hand over any property that was accidentally left by a participant to either the watersports operator or the relevant agency (hotel, cruise ship and port and tourism authority);
- h) do not engage in harassment, which may include but is not limited to, character insults, imposing sale(s) of a product or service, derogatory comments or slurs and lewd propositions, assault, impeding or blocking movement, unwelcome touch or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults;
- i) not carry weapons;

B.2 Persons operating a vessel shall:

- a) respect the rights of all users of recreational waterways, both on public waters and adjacent property;
- b) to be considerate of other users at the launch ramps and docks;
- c) follow the navigational rules of the road around all other craft or vessels; including minimizing wake and its effect on other users;
- d) give all anchored or drifting vessels adequate room;
- e) be especially aware of swimmers, divers and all other craft at all times;
- f) not disturb wildlife and shall comply with rules and regulations of protected areas;
- g) not litter;
- h) follow the rules and regulations for the use and disposal of fuel or oil;

- i) render assistance in case of emergency; and
- j) relevant vessels shall carry a valid Sea Worthiness certificate, and display registration as per the Belize Port Authority regulations.

END OF DOCUMENT

Draft Belize Code of Practice for Water Sports Activities _ Nov 2019