



SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY

2024



Hammock Expeditions, LLC
51 Hillcrest Way
Bluffton, SC, 29909 USA
P: 984.223.9866
www.STEMstudytours.com
www.HammockExpeditions.com



Table of Contents

	Page Number
Policy Statement	3
1 – Background	4
2 – Statement of Company Safety Policy	4
3 – Identification of Responsibilities	4
4 – Statement of Company Safety Objectives	5
4.1 – General Properties	5
4.2 – Transport	5
4.3 – Accommodation / Lodging Properties	6
4.4 – Lessons and Instruction	6
4.5 – Equipment	6
5 – Emergency Procedures	7
6 – Validation and Quality Control	7
7 – Tour Ambassadors and General Staff Training	7
8 – Pre-Tour Safety Information	7
9 – Code of Conduct	8
10 – Glossary of Terms	9

Hammock Expeditions, LLC

Policy Statement

The Senior Management Team of Hammock Expeditions is committed to its legal and moral obligations to provide and maintain arrangements to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all its clients, employees, contractors and others who may be affected by the operations and activities of Hammock Expeditions.

It is the aim of Hammock Expeditions to:

- Effectively control risks and prevent harm to people
- Set a clear direction for the business to follow by its policy, supported by the most senior level within the business
- Ensure a planned and systematic approach to the management of health and safety
- Interpret and establish best health and safety practices
- Protect the assets, earning and reputation of Hammock Expeditions
- Promote a positive health and safety culture

In order to achieve the above aims, Hammock Expeditions will ensure:

- Travel related risks faced by clients, employees and contractors are adequately assessed
- Effective arrangements are in place for planning, organizing, controlling, monitoring and reviewing preventative and protective measures
- That competent persons are available to help in undertaking the measures needed to fulfil legal and other health and safety obligations
- That clients, employees and contractors are provided with information on the risks they may face and the preventative and protective measures that are there to control these risks

Signed:

Michele Hammock

Michele Hammock, President & Founder
Hammock Expeditions

1. Background

Hammock Expeditions, LLC was established in July of 2020. Prior to this, our team was comprised of the Executive International Operations Department for an international tour operator based in the United Kingdom. Our focus is educational tourism, and our clients include middle and high schools, colleges and universities, associations and families. Our main focus is STEM-based (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), however we also serve history, arts, sports, adventure and culture education trips.

The safety of our groups is the single most important responsibility of Hammock Expeditions. We are committed to ensuring that all precautions are taken, and all regulations are complied with, as far as reasonably possible, to provide our customers with the highest possible safety standards throughout our product range and at all times.

2. Statement of Company Safety Policy – Staff & Customers

Hammock Expeditions recognizes its legal and moral responsibility that the highest possible standards of health and safety apply to all contracted accommodation and related activities in all destinations under its control.

The Directors have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the company safety policy; thereafter the responsibility is delegated to their designated Health & Safety Manager.

All those responsible for contracting and operation of the tour products, both domestically and internationally, have a clear duty of care to carry out duties in such a way as to ensure the standards of health and safety are regularly monitored and improved where appropriate. These duties should be carried out in accordance with procedures set out in the Ambassador Service Protocols.

3. Identification of Responsibilities

Policy Making is the responsibility of the Board of Directors who will ensure that:

- 3.1 Competent persons are appointed to implement the requirements of the SMS (Safety Management System).
- 3.2 Adequate resources are provided to implement the requirements of the SMS.

Planning is the responsibility of the Board of Directors who will ensure that:

- 3.3 The participation of appropriate personnel in the development and implementation of the SMS procedures.
- 3.4 Personnel are trained and competent in the requirements of the SMS.
- 3.5 Performance of the SMS and staff implementing the processes are monitored and feedback is provided to the Directors.
- 3.6 Trends identified by the monitoring activities contained in the SMS are examined.
- 3.7 The company keeps up to date with safety requirements and best practices applicable to tours.

Implementation is the responsibility of Board of Directors who will ensure:

- 3.8 All staff are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the SMS and have undertaken sufficient training.
- 3.9 All staff carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the training and procedures set out in the SMS.

- 3.10 Staff are aware that they should report any weakness or failure in the SMS procedure to the Health & Safety designee.

Review of the SMS is the responsibility of the Board of Directors who will ensure that:

- 3.11 The company will carry out a review of the Safety Management System every 12 months.
- 3.12 Any new developments, which would later improve the standards of the SMS, are considered.
- 3.13 Previous objectives set are successfully implemented where practicable.
- 3.14 Any accidents, incidents or near misses are investigated and action taken where necessary.

4. Statement of Company Safety Objectives

4.1 General Properties – Hotels, Activity Locations

- 4.1.1 All properties must be in possession of a current and valid Fire Certificate or equivalent documentation, issued by the appropriate licensing authority. Properties should also have documentary evidence that all fire-fighting equipment, fire alarms, extinguishers and/or hoses, emergency lighting systems are in good working order and that they have been regularly serviced, tested and maintained.
- 4.1.2 All properties should be in possession of a valid Certificate of Occupancy including an Electrical Certificate or equivalent documentation stating that the electrical installation conforms to International and local wiring standards, and is in good safe working order.
- 4.1.3 All properties to be in possession of valid indemnity and public liability insurance.
- 4.1.4 All activities featured in our programs should have an appropriate operating license, suitable levels of Public Liability Insurance, and conform to Hammock Expeditions preferred codes of practice. Furthermore, compliance with the standards set out by the appropriate national governing body or licensing authority will be required as the appropriate minimum safety standard.

4.2 Transport

All **ground transportation** contracted should conform to Hammock Expeditions preferred standards as set forth in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the United States Department of Transportation. Hammock Expeditions use coach operators that:

- 4.2.1 Hold appropriate licenses for the carriage of passengers and are established, experienced companies who wherever possible, have experience of operating successful school tours.
- 4.2.2 Employ drivers who are background-checked or equivalent-checked by owners outside the USA.
- 4.2.3 Operate a fleet of quality vehicles, complying fully with all local transport and safety requirements and regulations, have 24-hour emergency cover, mobile communication and comprehensive breakdown cover. Seatbelts are fitted as standard whenever possible.
- 4.2.4 Follow a series of best practice guidelines, including pre-tour inspection, safety talks, driver presentation, itinerary monitoring, stopping en-route and customer awareness.

All **air transportation** contracted should conform to Hammock Expeditions preferred standards:

- 4.2.5 Use of airlines that are regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration or the appropriate aviation authority of their home country and comply fully with international passenger requirements.

All **sea and rail transportation** contracted should conform to Hammock Expeditions preferred standards:

- 4.2.6 All rail and sea transportation provided as part of a tour should comply with regulations set down by the appropriate Maritime and Coast Guard agency of equivalent regulatory body.

Other:

4.2.7 Use of public transport by parties or individuals during a tour is outside of the control of Hammock Expeditions, however, steps will be taken to ensure that it is appropriate for requirements.

4.3 Accommodations / Lodging Properties

4.3.1 For every hotel contracted directly by Hammock Expeditions we will ensure the accommodation is audited prior to group arrival and the accommodation conforms to local and national fire safety and hygiene standards. Hammock Expeditions will endeavor to view a copy of the current fire certificate or local equivalent and the supplier's current insurance and will endeavor to verify a copy of their current hygiene certificate or local equivalent. This audit will be completed by a Hammock Expeditions staff member, contractor or agent.

4.3.2 A listing of all accommodations indicating their audit status will be maintained. Results will be recorded, and recommendations will be made with hotel management where we feel improvements could be made.

4.3.3 Agent Supplied Units: Where the company uses a unit supplied by an agent, it may not be possible to carry out a supplier assessment directly on the unit. Often, these units are only confirmed a short time prior to departure and furthermore, agents are used to assist in this process as they would have verified the safety of the property previously in accordance with local legislation and guidelines. We make every attempt to ensure agent contracted units are treated no differently than our directly contracted units.

4.3.4 Each agent with whom we work can provide written confirmation that all properties provided for our companies will confirm to local standards in relation to fire safety, hygiene and general safety or where no local standards exist, that the hotelier has made every effort to ensure the safety of Hammock Expeditions customers. In addition, the agent will confirm that the property has Public Liability Insurance and an Operator's License.

4.3.5 Host Family Accommodation. Hammock Expeditions will not use Host Family situations which cannot be controlled and managed.

4.3.6 Clients with Special Needs: Where properties 'do not' or 'may not be able to' meet the requirements of customers who have special needs, Hammock Expeditions will endeavor to identify the lack of facilities in advance of the booking. (The customer is obligated to bring this to the attention of Hammock Expeditions any special requirements at the time of the initial booking.)

4.3.7 ADA Compliance: Hammock Expeditions will always comply with ADA regulations and benchmarks for success in working with disabled persons.

4.4 Lessons & Instruction

4.4.1 Lessons are provided by instructors who hold valid local/regional/internationally recognized qualifications and who have basic first aid training.

4.4.2 Lessons will be delivered in English unless a foreign language element is requested.

4.4.3 Ski & Board: Ski Lessons will be delivered to no more than 12 people in a specific ability-level group. Wherever possible we do not mix schools within ski groups.

4.4.4 Scuba Dive: Dive lessons will be delivered to no more than 4 people in a group if a beginning diver, or up to 8 people in a group for certified divers. Wherever possible we do not mix schools within dive groups.

4.5 Equipment

4.5.1 For all groups we use rental equipment from quality, local, retail operators. This includes snorkel and dive equipment, ski equipment, laboratory equipment and other types of equipment used for instructional classes and outdoor experiences.

- 4.5.2 Local operators are responsible for checking equipment after each use to ensure it is always in good working condition and suitable for student use.
- 4.5.3 In case of defect, equipment may be easily exchanged to provide full service.
- 4.5.4 In instances where helmets are suggested as a safety measure, these will be incorporated into the rental equipment package.

5. Emergency Procedures

- 5.1 Hammock Expeditions provide trip leaders with a 24-hour Emergency contact number to be used when groups are on tour. A Director is also available to assist the Duty Officer on a 24-hour basis.
- 5.2 The company follows a policy of on-going training, updating and implementation of a crisis management strategy. Each Ambassador assigned to a group is trained in emergency protocol with documented procedures for access at all times.
- 5.3 Reporting is completed in real time, on an online system, so reports can be assessed by management directly. In case a severe emergency during off-hours, a telephone reporting tree is in place. In a severe situation, management from Head Office will be dispatched to assist with the local situation.
- 5.4 At no time will any staff member other than a corporate officer or someone specifically delegated to speak, address the press on any matter.
- 5.5 Each Ambassador will be issued a Destination Guide with all contacts relative to the suppliers they are working with in case of urgent need.
- 5.6 Emergency systems are in place by our suppliers and include documented action plans.

6. Validation and Quality Control

Regular reviews of systems and procedures employed in the management of health and safety will be undertaken by an appointed review board. The board will be comprised of appropriate company Directors, Senior Managers, the Health & Safety Manager plus any relevant expert consultants.

7. Tour Ambassadors and General Staff Training

Where Tour Ambassadors are employed by Hammock Expeditions in destinations, the following criteria will be applied:

- 7.1 Hammock Expeditions will hold on file a self-declaration form completed by the employee relating to criminal record and health matters.
- 7.2 The Ambassador will be given information about emergency procedures and emergency contacts.
- 7.3 The Ambassador will report back to their supervisor regarding any areas of concern relating to safety issues.
- 7.4 Hammock Expeditions Ambassadors are required to complete a Health & Safety Inspection Audit prior to group arrival. In any instance where health and safety features are not in full compliance, all specific items are required to be rectified to meet Head Office approval prior to group check-in.
- 7.5 Hammock Expeditions will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and are equipped to carry out tasks assigned to them in implementing the Safety Management System and general safety policies.

8. Pre-Tour Safety Information

Prior to departure, clients will be provided with safety information outlining practical safety measures to be taken during this tour. This is encompassed in our manual, "The Teacher's Guide for Educational Travel".

9. Code of Conduct

- 9.1 The trip leader and accompanying staff are responsible for the members of their group and at all times remain *in loco parentis*. Hammock Expeditions employees and contractors are unable to take any responsibility for students and students' actions as by law only qualified teachers are allowed to act *in loco parentis*.
- 9.2 At least one member of staff must accompany the group members on all programmed activities including evening activities run by company employees/contractors.
- 9.3 In the case of activity sessions or lessons run by qualified instructors, a member of staff need not be with the group if this is agreed with the instructor beforehand, and if the relevant Education Authority permits this. In this case, the instructor should be advised how a member of staff can be contacted in case of difficulty and a member of staff must be present at the start and finish of the activity to liaise with the instructor.
- 9.4 Company employees/contractors can at no time be left alone with a minor.
- 9.5 The trip leader and staff should liaise with the coach driver (where applicable) and must heed his or her advice regarding driver's hour's regulations and safety precautions.
- 9.6 The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that all members of the party have a valid passport/identification and satisfy all visa/entry requirements when traveling internationally.
- 9.7 The trip leader should provide Hammock Expeditions with an emergency contact number in their home location who can be reached in case of delay or incident. In addition, the trip leader should have emergency contact details for the parents/care givers/guardians of all members of the party, including partners and/or next of kin for their staff.
- 9.8 All members of the group should be adequately insured; travel protection is mandatory for every passenger.
- 9.9 The Trip Leader and staff are responsible for maintaining discipline among the group in every situation including during hotel accommodation, daily activities, lessons, meal times and evening activities. If any instructor or activity provider is concerned about the behavior of any party member, he or she may make a decision in conjunction with a member of staff, to withdraw that member from the activity.
- 9.10 If a member of the Staff/Chaperone party is concerned about the safety or behavior of a member of the group, they should withdraw the member from the activity, informing the instructor where applicable.
- 9.11 All members of the group must obey the rules and/or guidelines of the accommodation where they are staying and must respect the needs of other guests and the hotel's employees. Any damage to the hotel property is the responsibility of the group members and must be settled while in the destination, unless a written guarantee of payment is received from the school head or deputy head. If payment cannot be made or guaranteed it may be necessary to involve the local police to resolve the issue.
- 9.12 Absolutely no foul language or poor attitudes will be tolerated. Shouting or aggressive actions to any staff member or activity provider, via student or adult, is grounds for immediate removal from a trip.
- 9.13 All trip members inclusive of students, teaching staff, chaperones and others must consent to a detailed Code of Conduct dealing with behavioral issues and repercussions of same if behavior is not rectified or of a severe nature. This is reviewed and consent given when signing up for any trip as part of the registration process.
- 9.14 All members of the group must respect regulations and code of conduct which are in force at any excursion location (such as museums, churches, nature reserves) and during all activities.
- 9.15 All group members should be adequately clothed, looking respectable, especially when visiting other countries and cultures.

10. Glossary of Terms

SMS Safety Management System
Company Hammock Expeditions, LLC and affiliates

Companies managed by this Safety Management System are:

Hammock Expeditions / STEM Study Tours

Updated December 31st, 2023
Contact: Michele Hammock
President & Founder
michele@STEMstudytours.com
(01) 984.223.9866