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**Adventure tourism — Hiking and  
trekking activities — Requirements  
and recommendations**

*Tourisme d'aventure — Activités de randonnée et de trekking —  
Exigences et recommandations*

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW  
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ISO 3021:2023

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# Contents

	Page
Foreword.....	v
Introduction.....	vi
<b>1 Scope.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4 Service requirements.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5 Leadership.....</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 Leader qualifications and quantities.....	5
5.2 Assistant competencies.....	5
<b>6 Participants.....</b>	<b>6</b>
6.1 Profile collection.....	6
6.2 Information analysis.....	6
<b>7 Equipment.....</b>	<b>7</b>
7.1 Equipment availability and quantities.....	7
7.1.1 General.....	7
7.1.2 Collective equipment.....	7
7.1.3 Individual equipment.....	7
7.2 Equipment maintenance, cleaning and sanitizing.....	8
<b>8 Participant preparation.....</b>	<b>9</b>
8.1 Information for participants.....	9
8.1.1 General.....	9
8.1.2 Knowledge of risks and responsibilities.....	9
8.2 Participant instruction.....	10
<b>9 Safety and insurance requirements.....</b>	<b>10</b>
9.1 General.....	10
9.2 Prevention of risks and safety measures.....	10
9.3 Communication.....	11
9.4 Specific requirements for self-guided routes.....	11
<b>10 Risk management.....</b>	<b>12</b>
10.1 Risk analysis and assessment.....	12
10.2 Hazard and risk inventory.....	12
10.3 Risk treatment.....	13
10.4 Emergency preparedness and response.....	13
<b>11 Service completion.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>12 Service control.....</b>	<b>14</b>
12.1 General requirements.....	14
12.2 Records.....	15
12.2.1 Maintaining a registration system.....	15
12.2.2 Suggestion and critical records.....	15
12.2.3 Incident recording, including accidents.....	15
12.3 Procedures.....	16
12.4 Critical service review.....	16
<b>13 Social and environmental mitigation and conservation.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>14 Route classification.....</b>	<b>17</b>
14.1 General requirements.....	17
14.2 Classification criteria.....	17
14.3 Classification procedures.....	17
14.3.1 General.....	17

14.3.2	Severity of the environment	18
14.3.3	Route navigation orientation	19
14.3.4	Terrain conditions	19
14.3.5	Physical exertion	20
14.4	Classification communication	23
<b>Annex A (informative) Hiking and trekking route classification reference table</b>		<b>25</b>
<b>Annex B (informative) Hiking and trekking route classification form</b>		<b>26</b>
<b>Annex C (informative) Example of hiking and trekking route classification</b>		<b>28</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>29</b>

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

### 0.1 Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism is a global industry that is growing in importance. Whether provided on a commercial, not-for-profit or charitable basis, adventure tourism activities involve an accepted, inherent element of risk and challenge. Taking risks brings rewards but also brings dangers. In order to maximize the rewards, adventure tourism activity providers should operate as safely as practicable.

ISO 20611, ISO 21101, ISO 21102 and ISO 21103 provide a basis for adventure tourism activity providers to plan, deliver and inform people about adventure tourism activities as safely as practicable.

Effective implementation of these documents will help consumers and other participants make informed choices about activities and providers.

### 0.2 Adventure tourism standards

The purpose of these four documents is to establish the minimum requirements for safety management systems and information for participants.

The documents are independent entities since they apply to different aspects of adventure tourism:

- ISO 20611: provides requirements and recommendations for good practices for sustainability (environmental, social and economic aspects) for adventure tourism activities;
- ISO 21101: specifies how the adventure tourism activity provider manages its operations in terms of safety;

NOTE *ISO 21101 – Adventure tourism – Safety management systems – A practical guide for SMEs* is a handbook that offers step-by-step guidance and examples to help small and medium-sized adventure tourism operators to develop, implement and continually improve a safety management system following the requirements of ISO 21101.

- ISO 21102: specifies the minimum requirements and recommendations for competencies and the related expected results of competencies for adventure tourism activity leaders common to any adventure tourism activity;
- ISO 21103: specifies the minimum information that shall be communicated to participant and potential participant before, during and after the activity.

### 0.3 Purpose of this document

This document specifies service requirements and route classifications in adventure tourism involving hiking and trekking activities, with the purpose of facilitating the safe delivery of these activities.

# Adventure tourism — Hiking and trekking activities — Requirements and recommendations

## 1 Scope

This document establishes requirements for adventure tourism involving hiking and trekking activities, relating to the safety of participants, leaders and assistants.

This document also establishes criteria relating to characteristics and difficulty level for hiking and trekking route classification.

This document applies to hiking and trekking activities that are offered as tourism products. Tourism product design involves a product planning and development phase that is not subject to this document. Some tourism products include hiking and/or trekking activities together with other tourism services (e.g. transfers, meals, lodging), but this document applies only to hiking and trekking activities, the additional tourism services being excluded from the scope.

This document is applicable to any kind of adventure tourism activity provider that offers tourism products consisting of hiking and/or trekking activities.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 21101, *Adventure tourism — Safety management systems — Requirements*

ISO 21102, *Adventure tourism — Leaders — Personnel competence*

ISO 21103, *Adventure tourism — Information for participants*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### adventure tourism activity

adventure activity for tourism purposes that involves a degree of instruction or leadership, safety management and an accepted inherent *risk* (3.15)

Note 1 to entry: An accepted inherent risk means that the *participant* (3.14) has a reasonable understanding about the risk involved.

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.35, modified]

**3.2  
adventure tourism activity provider**

individual or organization having overall responsibility for all aspects of the provision of *adventure tourism activities* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: Adventure tourism activities can be provided free of charge or in return for payment.

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.36]

**3.3  
altimetric variation**

altitude variation between two waypoints

**3.4  
assistant**

competent person who is able to assist and support the *leader* (3.13)

**3.5  
difficulty level**

rating or degree of physical and psychological exertion expected to be encountered while participating in an *adventure tourism activity* (3.1), based on factors such as required technical capacity, terrain, altitude or climate

Note 1 to entry: [Annex A](#) includes criteria indicating difficult levels of the activity

**3.6  
exertion index in hiking and trekking**

<in adventure tourism routes> estimate of the exertion required by a person to complete a journey

**3.7  
emergency**

serious situation requiring immediate action [ISO 3021:2023](#)

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.43] <https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/b630e06e-0a87-4573-94ba-7a4c5c704aa8/iso-3021-2023>

**3.8  
first aid**

*emergency* (3.7) procedures aimed at maintaining vital functions while ensuring that the condition of a casualty who is injured or unconscious or whose life is in danger is not aggravated, until he or she receives more qualified assistance for further treatment

[SOURCE: ISO 21102:2020, 3.7, modified]

**3.9  
hiking**

*adventure tourism activity* (3.1) where the main element is walking and is less arduous than *trekking* (3.24)

**3.10  
interested party**

person or organization that can affect, be affected by or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

**3.11  
itinerary**

description of the component parts involved in the *adventure tourism activity* (3.1), listing times, locations and activities



### 3.12 leader

competent person who takes responsibility for people, and is able to lead, guide and supervise an assigned activity

Note 1 to entry: A leader can also be referred to as a 'guide', 'monitor' or similar.

[SOURCE: ISO 21102:2020, 3.8, modified]

### 3.13 participant

person taking part in the *adventure tourism activity* (3.1) but not a member of the leadership team

Note 1 to entry: A participant can also be referred to as a 'client', 'customer' or similar.

Note 2 to entry: A leadership team comprises several *leaders* (3.12).

[SOURCE: ISO 21101:2014, 3.37, modified]

### 3.14 risk

effect of uncertainty on objectives

Note 1 to entry: An effect is a deviation from the expected. It can be positive, negative or both, and can address, create or result in opportunities and threats.

Note 2 to entry: Objectives can have different aspects and categories and can be applied at different levels.

Note 3 to entry: Risk is usually expressed in terms of risk sources, potential events, their consequences and their likelihood.

[SOURCE: ISO 31000:2018, 3.1]

### 3.15 route

course from the beginning of the *adventure tourism activity* (3.1) to its end

Note 1 to entry: In some routes, the start and end points are the same.

### 3.16 self-rescue

specific techniques implemented by a person on his or her own to manage adverse situations without external intervention

Note 1 to entry: In some situations, there can be more than one person engaged in self-rescue.

### 3.17 self-belay system self-connection system

safety device system, connected to the harness fixing point and connected to a safety point, made of ropes or another connection

Note 1 to entry: The self-belay system can have the capacity to absorb impact forces.

Note 2 to entry: A safety point can be a leash, a sling or a lanyard.

### 3.18 single-track trail

*trail* (3.23) where only one person or bicycle can pass at a time

### 3.19 stakeholder

individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization

### 3.20

#### **support vehicle**

<trekking> vehicle intended for logistical support during the course of the journey, except for the removal of an injured person

### 3.21

#### **sustainability**

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The environmental, social and economic aspects interact, are interdependent and are often referred to as the three dimensions of sustainability.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainability is the goal of sustainable development.

[SOURCE: ISO Guide 82:2019, 3.1]

### 3.22

#### **third-party provider**

external organization or individual that provides services to the *adventure tourism activity provider* (3.2)

### 3.23

#### **trail**

narrow road, track or pathway, usually unpaved, in natural surroundings

### 3.24

#### **trekking**

*adventure tourism activity* (3.1) in a natural environment, on *trails* (3.23), which is self-sufficient for survival, includes an overnight stay and is more arduous than *hiking* (3.9)

Note 1 to entry: Trekking activities can include an overnight stay of one or more nights.

Note 2 to entry: Overnight stays can be in, for example, campsites or camp grounds, farms, hostels, lodges or bivouacs.

## 4 Service requirements

The hiking and trekking tourism product shall be designed and provided in such a way that the safety of the participants, leader and personnel involved in providing the product is ensured and the inherent risk is communicated to all stakeholders or interested parties.

The adventure tourism activity provider responsible for the operation shall:

- a) ensure that leaders meet the qualification requirements set out in this document;
- b) maintain records of the leaders' continual development of competencies;
- c) ensure that any service contracted to third-party providers that affects the quality and safety of the tourism product meets the requirements of this document and any others that the adventure tourism activity provider establishes;
- d) ensure there are plans and procedures for safety checks of the equipment, gear and supplies necessary for use during the adventure tourism activities; these safety checks shall be conducted prior to the activities and the results recorded and made available for review;
- e) adhere to the existing stipulations of use for the visited environment;
- f) adopt the use plans or ecological area plans available when the attraction is in a conservation area or in an area with some environmental restrictions;

- g) introduce measures to implement and improve hygiene care, to prevent contamination to workers, participants and the visited communities and to enhance health conditions in the adventure tourism destination;
- h) ensure that weather forecasts and any hazardous conditions are taken into account before starting the activities.

It is important to monitor available information from pertinent institutions regarding hazard conditions (see [10.1](#)).

According to the characteristics of the place of operation and the offered tourism product, the establishment of a maximum number of participants per activity shall be considered. When planning and operating the hiking and trekking activities, the organization shall adopt responsible environmental and social practices, such as the recommendations for conscious conduct in a natural environment (see ISO 20611). The adventure tourism activity provider shall consider official health recommendations regarding sanitary measures at the time to define a safe number of participants.

When planning the hiking and trekking product, the organization shall consider the carrying capacity of the tourist attraction where the activity takes place. This can include reduction of the number of participants, considering the characteristics of each specific route, defining protocols for the flow path of participants and the use of common spaces.

For tourism products with hiking and trekking activities, the minimum age of the participants is determined by regulatory authorities. If the adventure tourism activity provider offers tourism products to children under the minimum age or to participants with disabilities, this product shall be subject to planning that considers the characteristics, procedures and equipment necessary to ensure the safety of those specific participants. These products can require professionals, equipment and specific conditions other than those provided in this document.

The measures adopted shall be validated, technically justified and documented.

The route shall have been previously established and the itinerary shall be documented.

Hiking or trekking routes should be classified. Classification shall be in accordance with [Clause 14](#) and shall be known to the leader, participants (and assistants, if applicable) and other stakeholders or interested parties involved in the operation.

## 5 Leadership

### 5.1 Leader qualifications and quantities

The operating team, except in the case of self-guided routes, which are dealt with in [9.3](#), shall be composed of leaders who meet the requirements of ISO 21102.

The hiking or trekking adventure tourism activity provider shall determine the minimum number of leaders and assistants to ensure the safety of the group. These quantities of assistants (if applicable), participants and leaders shall be documented, based on the implementation of ISO 21101.

Environmental concerns, including sanitary considerations, can require reducing the maximum number of participants per group. If they exist, minimum impact practices should be taken into account.

### 5.2 Assistant competencies

The assistant shall have knowledge in order to act as support to the leader. At a minimum, this shall include knowledge of the region, main route and alternative routes.

The assistant shall be able to:

- a) instruct participants about hiking or trekking techniques and the use of equipment;

- b) ensure the smooth progress, pace and cohesion of the group, including controlling participant well-being;
- c) support the leader in emergency situations;
- d) use different communication systems [e.g. satellite phones, global positioning system (GPS), radio];
- e) instruct participants about technical, hygiene and sanitary measures to improve safety throughout all operations.

## 6 Participants

### 6.1 Profile collection

The adventure tourism activity provider shall obtain at least the following information from each participant:

- a) name;
- b) telephone number;
- c) document number (ID or passport);
- d) emergency contact;
- e) specific health or medical conditions, such as those related to allergies, surgery, diabetes, epilepsy, cardiovascular disease, joints, bones, muscles, respiratory illness, depression, phobias, euphoria or pregnancy;
- f) medicines used;
- g) age;
- h) previous experience with the activity;
- i) insurance coverage applicable to the activity and location, including rescue operations;
- j) fitness level for the activity;
- k) parental or responsible person consent letter, if applicable;
- l) disabilities (if any) relevant to the activity.

In routes where there is the possibility of submersion, information about the participant's swimming skills shall be requested.

Participants shall be advised to have an optional insurance appropriate to the adventure tourism activity.

The adventure tourism activity provider shall encourage participants to provide detailed information to facilitate responses to potential emergencies.

The adventure tourism activity provider shall ensure the confidentiality of participant information, except under emergency response circumstances.

### 6.2 Information analysis

The adventure tourism activity provider shall do the following:

- a) Define criteria for handling the minimum information of participants. The criteria shall be technically justified.