



## RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY POLICY

(Security and emergency care)

At Off the Wall trekking we place a high emphasis on Risk Assessment not only focusing on the sustainable tourism environmental aspect of trekking but also on the risk of not meeting client expectations.

If we at Off the Wall trekking do not fully understand client expectations there is a great risk that the clients will not get all they expect out of a visit to Nepal.

Off the Wall trekking has used, as a base line, the British Standard 8848 for its Risk Assessment standard but then interpreted it to fit the Nepal situation. The BS8848 standard requires participants to be given clear information so that they can make informed decisions about risks that a trek in Nepal might impact on their own safety.

During the pre-trek discussions clients will be fully informed on what their trek involves and of their responsibilities of accepting personal accountability.

**A single provider** – one clearly identified person, or organization, will take overall responsibility for the whole venture. In Nepal a foreign agent can't legally operate unless it is registered in Nepal. Off the Wall trekking is registered in Nepal through with appropriate and legal organisations. Off the Wall trekking is the responsible partner and will have the ultimate responsibility for Risk Assessment and Safety issues of clients while on Nepalese soil.

**Informed choice** – clients will be given clear information about the venture, itinerary and potential risks, before they book a trek. Off the Wall trekking will undertake extensive discussion with the organization, group or individual concerned to ensure all options are explained and fully understood before the booking is accepted.

**Capable staff** – all ventures will be run by competent and experienced and qualified staff. Off the Wall trekking uses legally certified Nepalese trekking guides who are experienced and have previous knowledge of the trekking areas. All staff will be provided with the appropriate equipment/clothing for the activity to which they might be attached. If more technical objectives are included in the

itinerary then an IFMGA guide might also be involved in leading the party. Keeping this in mind a guide is employed to serve as a guide and safety officer and therefore his/her assessment of any situation will be discussed fully with the clients if that is considered to be a safety issue. However, if the group also has a foreign leader he or she will be included in discussing the situation.

**Good preparation and planning** – policies and procedures are put in place to identify and manage risk at every stage of the venture. Off the Wall trekking undertakes regular assessment of all trekking routes and staff qualifications to meet the challenges involved in safely leading a trekking group in Nepal.

**Assign clear roles and responsibilities** – Off the Wall trekking provides a clear guideline as to what the company will include within the cost of the trek/expedition and what is excluded (although these points are negotiable) It will also provide a guideline of the daily routine and what role the clients should play in accepting the inherent risk of mountain adventure. There will have been a full briefing of the guides prior to the group arriving and there will be regular group briefings during their stay in Nepal.

**Safety Management** - Off the Wall trekking works to the Nepal government guidelines of safety management and rescue protocol but it also includes specific issues that each individual trek might raise. With both Ian and Sarita being experienced mountain leaders and trainers European safety protocols are also followed.

The Off the Wall Booking Form specifically asks for any medical and diet information that, if not made aware of might jeopardise the clients' expectations, it also requests information of specific trek related insurance covers.

Off the Wall trekking specifically implements –

Reviews of associated trekking routes, the environmental situation and objective dangers that might occur as a result of natural geological or weather related impacts.

Off the Wall trekking does operate an open booking system thus extensive discussions take place to fully understand the clients' requirements and expectations before bookings are accepted.

A satellite phone is provided to all groups going into remote areas and on

camping expeditions, however, this is not available for personal use with an additional cost to the client.

Off the Wall trekking ensures that a client's expectations are appropriate for the trek chosen (experience, fitness and health) to ensure the trip is a reasonable objective.

Guides keep in regular contact with the office to ensure that up to date information is provided for weather patterns that might develop during the course of the trek or expedition and effect the trek outcome.

**Emergency plans** – Off the Wall trekking provides each guide with a written 'incident and emergency response' plan should things go wrong. All Off the Wall trekking staff hold current first aid certificates which cover high altitude issues, all groups carry an extensive first aid kit, walkie-talkie radios and in remote area a gammo bag and satellite phone. Off the Wall trekking is authorised to organise helicopter evacuations if required, however these are subject to the clients insurance cover (this topic has been discussed with the client/group)

Off the Wall trekking has always taken the safety aspect of its activities very seriously, however, the mountains are inherently dangerous and of course Nepal is on a major Himalayan fault line.

**NB - Nepal Government advice on Work Procedure for tourist search, rescue, medical treatment and monitoring**

4th Sep, 2018

- This work procedure is implemented with the goal of making the search and rescue of mountain tourists in the case of natural disaster systematic and efficient.
- This protocol requires that the mountain tourism agency (Off the Wall trekking) has to immediately carry out search and rescue for any tourist or their assistant workers in an emergency situation whether hit by natural disasters or any other causes in the course of adventure tourism activities. It is also the responsibility of the agency and the tourist guide concerned to take and bring back the tourist to the destination in a

safe manner.

- This protocol stipulates that it would also be the responsibility of the agency concerned to conduct or to have other related expert bodies conduct search and rescue work and to employ helicopters in case the on-site ground search and evacuation of tourist is not possible or time limited.
- If the agency itself cannot carry out the search and rescue operation, it should notify the Tourist Police and the Department of Tourism at the earliest informing the authorities of the name, nationality, passport number and other details of the tourist.
- Similarly, the tourism agency concerned is required to take appropriate measures for reducing the risk by assessing the possibility of accidents or risks that might take place in course of the adventure tourism activities.
- It is also stated in the work procedure that the agency should make arrangements for first aid kit and wholesome food and potable water as well as suitable accommodation keeping in view the convenience of the tourists.
- This protocol also has the provision for the agency to provide, primary health care and treatment by the IFMGA guide or, trekking guide as per the need of the situation.
- The casualty should be taken to the nearest hospital or health institution which appropriately well-equipped facilities in case advanced treatment is necessary.
- The work procedure also has a provision which bars any agents of foreign insurance companies based in Nepal from being involved in any activities related to search, rescue and treatment of tourists caught up in disaster.

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