



Sliding Activities

Good Practice Guide

Version 1
2018

Sliding Activities

Sliding activities covered in this GPG include activities where a participant is deliberately sliding on a natural or constructed surface, is not using any steering or braking mechanisms, and is only propelled by the force of gravity. This GPG includes a wide range of activities that includes; water slides, mudslides, grass slides, sand dune sliding, and snow tobogganing/ tubing.

Not included in this GPG are inflatable slides that are hired (refer to WorkSafe's Amusement Devices Regulations), rock slides done as part of a canyoning activity (refer to the Canyoning Activity Safety Guideline) or mud runs, although organisers of mud runs that have a slide component may find part of this GPG helpful.

The environmental scope includes constructed slides and sliding on natural surfaces.

This GPG covers situations where participants are being directly supervised by a designated leader, guide or instructor and does not cover the hire or rental of equipment for unsupervised use.

This guidance is specific to **sliding** activities and is designed to be used in conjunction with the **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities** and the **Sliding Planning Template**.

Potential value of activity

LUGE AND SLIDES ACTIVITIES CAN PROVIDE:

- Opportunity to try new activities and have new experiences.
- Fun and an adrenaline buzz!
- Overcoming fears.
- Adventure and challenge.
- Physical fitness – running up hill to do repeated laps.
- Social interaction.

*Jesus is still up in Heaven, thumbing through his Bible,
going 'Where did I say build a water slide?'*

Sam Kinison

Planning Considerations

See the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#)

Participants

Guidance on:

How to ensure the activities match the participants' abilities and needs.

In addition to the generic participant considerations (see [General Guidance for Organized Outdoor Activities](#)) organisers of sliding activities should consider:

- Choosing a slide that suits the physical ability of the participants. Things to consider if a slide is suitable – length, height, speed and if the slide involves ending in deep water.
- Assessing participant's ability and confidence before doing the activity by asking questions about their knowledge and prior experience.
- Sequencing sliding activities so there is a progression of slides i.e. starting on a smaller slide before progressing to a larger slide or starting at a halfway point on a larger slide first. Sequencing is about setting challenges and choosing activities at an appropriate level for each participant. It involves progressively building on a participant's skills.
- If going into water assessing participants' aquatic competence.
- Consider ways to limit speed for less confident participants i.e. wearing shorts and T-shirts to increase friction on a water slide.



Supervision

Guidance on:

The level and style of supervision would typically be required for this activity.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION STRUCTURE FOR SLIDING ACTIVITIES:

- There is no one 'ratio' of leaders or supervisors to participants for any given activity. Supervision needs vary according to age and ability of the participants, the activity, the location and environmental conditions, and the skill and experience of the leaders and supervisors.

- A supervisor at top/start of the slide and person at the bottom is the minimum recommended supervision for slides ending in water. The supervisor at the bottom needs to be confident in the water and able to get to someone in the water who needs immediate assistance.
- The supervisor at the top controls when a slider begins sliding and the supervisor at the bottom checks the landing or run out zone is clear and ready for another slider and communicates this to the supervisor at the top.
- Consider a communication system using visual stop/go signals or for slides where the top and bottom supervisors are not in visual contact, using radios.
- Additional supervisors placed along slides may be useful for long slides, where parts of the slide are not visible from the top and bottom positions, or where more than one starting point is being used.
- Consideration also needs to be given to the supervision of non-participants (waiting their turn). Strategies would include having a clear area for non-participants to wait.
- Supervisors should be aware of other activities in the area e.g. kayakers paddling into the landing zone, skiers at a ski field.
- Supervision needs will change if participants have any special needs, behavioral or medical needs.

Sliding procedure

- First consideration is if it is a single person slide or suitable for multiple sliders linked together. It is likely that the number of injuries will significantly increase if sliders are in a train and the train breaks up.
- If choosing to have multiple sliders, it is recommended the slide is designed so that multiple sliders can sit linked side by side, parallel to each other.

Head first or feet first?

- The three most commonly used sliding positions are:
 - Head first on stomach (Superman style).
 - Feet first sitting.
 - Feet first lying on your back.
- Key considerations in determining if participants should slide head first (Superman style) or feet first are:
 - Speed.
 - Landing Zone.
 - Equipment used.
 - Condition and type of slide.
 - Age and experience of the participants.
- It is recommended that the initial (or default) sliding position should be sitting up feet first, and other positions should be tested and used as deemed appropriate when considering the points above.
- Positions such as standing, kneeling or lying on back and head first are not recommended.
- To avoid friction burns it is recommended arms are tucked in when sliding and participants are briefed not to try and stop or slow themselves by gripping the slide.

Assessing an activity provider's competence

IN THE SITUATION WHERE AN EXTERNAL OPERATOR IS BEING CONTRACTED TO PROVIDE THE ACTIVITY, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO ASK FOR EVIDENCE OF:

- The safety management system the operator has for the activities being provided e.g. standard operating procedures (SOPs), risk assessment, staff training records, and gear and equipment maintenance records.

Land-borne inflatable devices, such as bouncy castles, inflatable slides etc, and water-borne inflatable devices, such as inflatable islands and platforms are commonly available for hire. When hiring inflatable slides the hirers rules for operation should be followed.

WorkSafe have published two bulletins which guidance on the use of both land-borne and water-borne inflatable devices:

www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/amusement-devices



Leader competence

The experience and knowledge required by those running the activity, both for normal operation and for managing emergencies. What competence other assistant leaders need should also be considered (e.g. where parents or other adults are helping the person running the activity).

Skills and knowledge

The simplest way to evaluate competence is to look at the qualifications they hold. Asking questions of potential leaders and having them provide examples of training or experience as part of their answer allows you to assess their experience and knowledge. It is also appropriate to ask for references to confirm the information they provide.

SPECIFIC LEADER COMPETENCIES RELEVANT TO THE ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS COVERED IN THIS GPG INCLUDE:

- Appreciation of the seriousness of, and understanding the risks involved in sliding activities.
- Knowledge about the type and characteristics of the slide or sliding activity being undertaken including:
 - How the slide or sliding area might change during the session (i.e. temperature changing the sliding characteristics of a slide or the surrounding areas becoming more slippery as the session progresses).
 - The equipment being used.
 - Recommended sliding positions.
 - Any rules or procedures that are to be followed.
- Confident and able to be assertive with participants.
- Effective management of the group including non-participants or participants waiting.
- Knowledge of how to get assistance in an emergency situation.
- For water-based slides, aquatic competence/ confident in the water environment the activity is being held in.

IF USING ASSISTANT LEADERS, THE MINIMUM COMPETENCIES FOR THESE WOULD BE:

- Ability to assist the Leader in the management of the group and activity.

Relevant qualifications

The following qualifications may be relevant for the activity (including but not limited to):

- A First Aid certificate
- A life-saving qualification such as the Bronze Star or Bronze Medallion for water-based slides.

“Competent leaders are one of the mainstays of ensuring safety”



Resources and equipment

Consider what equipment and resources are required to run the activity safely. The participants may be required to bring this, or it may be provided to them.

Participant

What each participant would need to bring to the activity.

- Appropriate clothing and footwear, i.e. swimming togs for water slides, footwear should be considered if there are rocks on the bottom of a pool or are required for walk to the top of the slide, gloves for snow tobogganing.
- Consider clothing that covers skin with mud or grass slides to help avoid friction burns.
- Wetsuits for cold conditions. Some organisations also require wetsuits to be worn for feet first slides to avoid high pressure water entering the body via the anus or vagina.
- The type of clothing worn by participants will also influence their sliding speed, so clothing can be used as a strategy to control speed.
- Sunhat, sunscreen, and sun protective clothing when appropriate.
- Jewellery off, covered or taped if likely to cause injury.
- Consider if is appropriate for participants to slide while using filming devices such as Go Pros.

Group

Equipment that will be provided to the participants for the activity. All equipment should be in good condition and suitable for the intended use.

- Sliding mats, boogie boards, toboggans, inflatable tubes etc.
- PFDs – made available or compulsory depending on slide.
- Helmets would be appropriate for some situations, such as when sliding on hard surfaces i.e. snow tobogganing.

Leader

Equipment that should be carried by the leader or that the leader should have easy access to.

- First aid kit and any personal medication of participants.
- Communications device to get assistance with minimal delay and emergency contact list.
- Rescue throw-rope or throw-bag for slides ending in deep water.



Slide design

When setting up a slide the following points should be considered:

- Permanent or built slides should be designed and constructed with consideration of the speed and forces a participant would experience. This may involve the services of a structural or mechanical engineer. Reference should be made to the NZ Standard 5828:2015: Playground equipment and surfacing.
- Impromptu or improvised slides are non-permanent slides, usually set up on grassy banks using a plastic type surface to slide on. Old conveyer belts or large canvas billboards can be used but check if there is an integrated material inside such as wire, that will become exposed overtime.
- Refer to www.2lp.co.nz/products/water-slides for a good source of suitable material.
- Holes in plastic material present a hazard when sliding in that participants can catch (and injure) toes and fingers.

- The slide needs to be adequately anchored at the top, sides and bottom. Ensure the method used to anchor the slide cannot cause injury.
- Smooth undersurface – the absence of rocks, tree roots etc. under the slide.
- Ongoing monitoring of ground conditions and the sliding surface as the session progresses.
- Safe entry onto the slide and safe run out and exit off the slide. Ideally these are both a non-slippery surface such as turf or carpet.
- Runout is a critical consideration with site selection of any impromptu or improvised slide. The runout should be free from obstacles and allow participants to gradually slow their sliding speed.
- Consider the environmental impact of any detergents or used. These should not go into rivers/ waterways or any storm water system.

Further support

Places to gain more information from, e.g. specialist websites, industry bodies or clubs.

www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/amusement-devices

www.2lp.co.nz/products/water-slides

Sliding Activities Planning Template

Overarching Risk Management Guidance