



Equity TRAVEL

Safety Management System

Contents

	INTRODUCTION
	PLANNING AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT (BOOKLET)
1.0	EQUITY SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT
2.0	SMS (SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM) MONITORING & REVIEW
3.0	ORGANISATION
3.1	Management Responsibility
4.0	ACCOMMODATION
4.1	Accommodation Contract & Certification
4.2.1	SMS Standard Accommodation Audit
4.2.2	SMS Supplementary Accommodation Audit
4.3	Management of SMS Accommodation Inspector Safety Audit
4.4	Equity owned or leased accommodation
4.5	Accommodation booked through an Agent
4.6	Accommodation requested directly by a Client
5.0	BRITISH COACHES
5.1	SMS British Coach Safety Audit
5.2	Frequency of British Coach Safety Audit
5.3	Seat Belts
5.4	Drivers hours regulations
5.5	Breakdown
5.6	Sub Contracting
5.7	Safety information talk
5.8	Coach company requested by a client
5.9	Overseas coach companies
6.0	PUBLIC TRANSPORT
7.0	FERRIES/EUROTUNNEL
8.0	AIRLINES
9.0	RAIL TRANSPORTATION (INCLUDING EUROSTAR)
10.0	ITINERARY/EXCURSION RISK ASSESSMENT
10.1	Preparation of Itineraries
10.2	Tour Reports
11.0	SELECTION OF TOUR REPRESENTATIVES
12.0	PRE-TOUR INFORMATION
13.0	EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
14.0	SERIOUS INCIDENTS
15.0	INSPECTION VISITS

Introduction

This document has been compiled with the purpose of defining the Safety Systems which are currently in practice within Equity Travel.

The Safety Management System is undertaken to pro-actively enable all Equity personnel involved in the provision of an Equity tour to act with due care and diligence towards all aspects of safety.

Equity Travel Limited are fully bonded members of ABTA, ABTA no. V5376 and are subject to the ABTA code of conduct. Our air holidays and flights are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2680. We are also IATA licensed No. 91274956.

Equity have public liability insurance of up to £10,000,000 arranged with Royal Sun Alliance.





School Travel Forum

Equity is a Full Member of the School Travel Forum

The School Travel Forum is a group of leading school tour operators who promote good practice and safety in school travel.

All Full Members of the STF adhere to a rigorous Code of Practice and Safety Management Standards which meet the requirements of DfES guidelines and are externally verified each year by suitably qualified independent Health and Safety professionals.

During the course of developing the STF Code of Practice, and in addition to liaising with the DfES, advice has been sought from all leading educational Unions and Associations.

The STF initiative has the support of the SHA, NAHT, ATL, PAT and is welcomed by the Outdoor Education Advisors' Panel. The principles on which it is based have the support of the NUT and the NASUWT advises members wishing to organise school trips to use the companies that have this type of scheme.

Details of the School Travel Forum Code of Practice are available from our office or online at: www.schooltravelforum.com

NAHT
National Association of Head Teachers



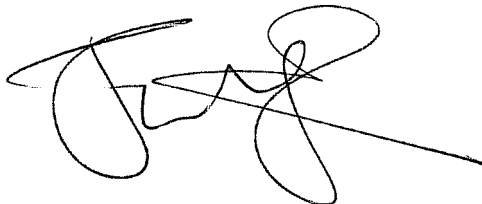
1.0 Equity Safety Policy Statement

The safety of our groups is the single most important responsibility of Equity.

Equity is 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 and at all times.

- Equity will provide the resources both financial and human to implement the safety policy.
- Equity will proactively undertake all possible measures to minimise the risk of an accident occurring.
- Equity will ensure our products and services (in relation to hotels, coach companies and activities) comply where applicable with the current local/national standards as a minimum requirement and maintain this in the relevant Equity supplier files
- Equity personnel training (in-house and by professional bodies) will be sufficient to enable them to carry out appropriate supplier audits
- Equity personnel training will enable staff to competently apply the safety policy
- Equity personnel will be trained effectively to respond quickly and efficiently in the event of any emergency
- Equity will establish and maintain effective systems of communication with our clients
- Equity will keep up to date with safety requirements and practices applicable to the provision of educational tours
- Equity will regularly review and update the safety policy as and when appropriate

Safety improvements and monitoring is everyone at Equity's responsibility and management will assist to ensure that the safety aspects of all our tours are of the highest importance.



Signed for and on behalf of Equity by Director Mrs Julie Craig

2.0 SMS (Safety Management System) Monitoring and Review

As outlined in section 1 of this policy document, we at Equity are totally committed to all aspects of safety on our school tours.

The SMS will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Directors who will oversee the management of the system.

Relevant Equity personnel will receive training in the objectives of the Safety Management System.

All SMS and records of SMS staff training will be held in one central file for reference use of company employees.

Equity personnel should comply with the requirements of the SMS and carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the training provided and within the principles of the SMS.

Equity personnel should notify their line Manager of any situation that has the potential for serious danger to clients and also any noted weaknesses in the SMS.

Managers to report to executive management on a regular basis regarding general implementation of the SMS and monitoring its activities ie; audits.

The Equity Safety Management Standards will be independently assessed and verified by an approved external Health & Safety Consultant.

3.0 Organisation

3.1 Management Responsibility

The Equity Director is responsible for the Equity Safety Management System.

The Equity Product Manager and Equity Health and Safety Manager are responsible for the implementation of the Safety Management System.

The contents of the Safety Management System and their importance will be communicated to all members of staff in the company by a minimum annual training session.

4.0 Accommodation

4.1 ACCOMMODATION CONTRACT AND CERTIFICATION

For each hotel/centre which is contracted directly (including leased or owned properties) Equity will ensure an accommodation contract is signed confirming that the accommodation conforms to local and national fire safety and hygiene standards and additionally a set of specific safety standards aimed at further improving client safety.

Equity will endeavor to obtain a copy of the current fire certificate or local equivalent and the suppliers current insurance. Equity will endeavour to obtain a copy of the current hygiene certificate or local equivalent.

4.2.1 SMS STANDARD ACCOMMODATION AUDIT

This is a report which undertakes to thoroughly audit every area of fire safety, security, hygiene and facilities in general.

All accommodation used or featured in our brochure will be subject to a Standard Audit prior to first use and thereafter at a maximum of three year intervals.

The Standard Audit will be completed by an Equity staff member, hotelier, or agent.

The results will be assessed by our Health and Safety Manager and scored (see 4.3.) Any areas of concern will initiate the appropriate action and in some cases a Supplementary Audit will be used (see 4.2.2.)

To ensure appropriate practices are being followed, Equity shall complete random sample spot checks of Standard Audits annually. The results of this will be analysed by a trained auditor and where significant discrepancies are identified suitable corrective action will be undertaken before accepting any further audits from source. Records of these checks will be maintained.

4.2.2 SMS SUPPLEMENTARY ACCOMMODATION AUDIT

In addition to the above Standard Audit, Equity will carry out a Supplementary Audit on all accommodation used for five groups or more in any one year. This audit will be completed within 12 months of the 'frequent use' criteria being established.

Results will be recorded and recommendations will be made with hotel management where we feel improvements could be made.

The accommodation audit will be re-audited to supplementary audit standards at least every three years or as long as it remains 'frequent use.'

The Supplementary Audit report is similar to the Standard Audit with the main difference being that the Supplementary Audit will only be carried out by a suitably trained auditor.

4.3 MANAGEMENT OF SMS ACCOMMODATION INSPECTOR SAFETY AUDITS

A rating will be awarded to each accommodation audit as outlined in the following:-

Rating 3 CONFORMS

This exceeds all local and national requirements and safety is excellent. No improvements are presently required at all.

Rating 2 CONFORMS

Is in conformance with all local and national requirements and safety is good. Safety levels could only be improved slightly and we will advise the accommodation accordingly.

Rating 1 MINOR NON CONFORMITIES

Is in conformance with all local and national requirements and safety is adequate. Safety levels could be improved and we will advise the accommodation accordingly.

Rating 0 UNSAFE

Regardless of conformance with all local and national requirements, we deem this to fall below the required Equity Safety standard and would strongly recommend clients not to use this accommodation.

Where a SMS Accommodation Safety Audit visit is deemed unsatisfactory in standard, scoring a **Rating 0 (Unsafe)** contact with the manager or acting agent will be made for immediate discussion. If no immediate action is taken to improve the standard prior to the visit of our clients the unit will automatically be withdrawn from the programme.

Following the completion of a safety audit, observations will be recorded and recommendations made (even where a unit is deemed satisfactory against our standard of inspection) where we feel further improvements concerning the level of safety could and should be made.

If there were any structural changes to any accommodation units within the three-year inspection period, the supplier is asked to inform Equity immediately. If required, a subsequent audit would be carried out.

If a complaint is received via a client concerning a given accommodation's safety aspects, Equity would undertake to contact the agent or supplier direct within 14 days of receiving the correspondence and respond to the client within 28 days.

4.4 EQUITY OWNED OR LEASED ACCOMMODATION

The policies and procedures will apply here in exactly the same format as that of the system as a whole.

The SMS Accommodation Safety Audit of a given unit is available to anyone who should confirm a booking with Equity.

4.5 ACCOMMODATION BOOKED THROUGH AN AGENT

Equity will ensure we have an Agents Contract confirming that hotels which our agents have provided have a current fire certificate or local equivalent, appropriate insurance cover and endeavour to obtain a hygiene certificate or local equivalent and furthermore that they conform to a set of specific safety standards aimed at further improving client safety.

We have been and will continue to pro-actively advise and educate our agents of the high importance of safety in all the accommodation units they provide for us. This is communicated via face-to-face meetings during visits, telephone, letter, facsimile and e-mail.

4.6 ACCOMMODATION REQUESTED DIRECTLY BY A CLIENT

No accommodation will be provided if it has been audited by Equity and has a Rating 0 (unsafe) (see section 4.4). If the requested accommodation has never been used before, Equity would undertake to obtain a fire certificate and other such safety/security information via the agent or ourselves to enable all concerned to make an informed decision.

5.0 British Coaches

- Equity or our appointed agent will hire coaches from well established reliable companies. Equity will endeavour to select coach operators who belong to recognised industry bodies such as the confederation of passenger Transport CPT, Guild of British Coach Operators or are coach marque accredited operators.
- All coach companies used will sign a contract in which they confirm that they comply with all national, local, trade and other laws. The contract will also stipulate a set of safety standards regarding driver's providing clients with a safety pre-departure talk, driver's hours, driver vetting (ensuring drivers have no criminal record or detrimental employment record), insurance cover and vehicle age.

5.1 SMS BRITISH COACH SAFETY AUDIT

Our audits will request that coach companies supply information under the following headings:

- Operating license
 - Maintenance regimes and records
 - Enforcement records
 - Records of drivers qualifications
 - Systems for monitoring drivers competence and license
 - Vetting of drivers for suitability of working with children ie; CRB
 - System for ensuring drivers are fully aware of drivers' hours regulations.
 - Drivers' health check records
 - Contingency plans in the event of coach breakdown
-

5.2 FREQUENCY OF BRITISH COACH SAFETY AUDIT

For companies on the **Equity main operator list (used more than 5 times in a year)** an audit will take place at least once every three years. The company or our agent will hold on record a copy of their operating license, motor vehicle and public liability insurance.

A schedule of the audit status of coach operators will be maintained and reviewed on an annual basis.

If a company is used on an **occasional basis, (less than 5 times a year)**, where possible an audit will be completed. If this is not possible, Equity or our agent will request the company to complete an audit on a "self-declaration" basis and forward copies of their operating license, motor vehicle and public liability insurance.

Senior Management will be responsible for ensuring that coach operators are audited. The audit will be completed for the company and not for all the vehicles within the company's fleet.

5.3 SEAT BELTS

Seat belts will be available for all pupils on British coaches. The regulation regarding seat belts is a British regulation, this does not apply to foreign coaches although efforts are made to ensure European Coaches are also fitted with seat belts.

5.4 DRIVERS HOURS REGULATIONS

All Equity itineraries are completed taking into consideration EU drivers' hours regulations.

5.5 BREAKDOWN

In the event of a mechanical breakdown the priority will be to move clients to a place of safety. Coach operators have agreements with overseas repair services who will be called to diagnose and complete the repair. If a delay is to be protracted then an alternative vehicle will be supplied. Equity will provide assistance where necessary. Please note it is possible this vehicle will not be supplied from an audited company in view of the extenuating circumstances. Where a continental vehicle is used it may not have seat belts as the regulation regarding seat belts is a British regulation.

5.6 SUB CONTRACTING

It is part of the contractual agreement with our coach companies that they do not sub contract to other companies unless there has been an agreement in advance to this arrangement.

5.7 SAFETY INFORMATION TALK

Equity will instruct all coach companies with whom we work to request that all drivers give a safety talk indicating emergency exits and giving general safety information prior to departure.

5.8 COACH COMPANY REQUESTED BY A CLIENT

If a client requests a specific coach company this can only be provided if the coach company provides information of an acceptable standard to Equity or our agent ie.; completes a self-declaration audit and provides copies of documents of their operating license and public liability insurance.

5.9 OVERSEAS COACH COMPANIES

Equity will hire coaches from established reliable companies many of whom we have worked with for many years.

A contract will be signed with the operator in which they confirm that the company complies with all applicable national, local, trade or other laws, regulations, rules and codes of practice.

Overseas coach companies that are contracted directly which will be used more than 10 times in any one year will

- Be audited every three years
- Equity will obtain on an annual basis and keep on record a copy of the operating license, motor vehicle and public liability insurance

It must be noted that seat belts are not a legal requirement for foreign coaches.

6.0 Public Transport

Public transport is regulated by the appropriate authority in each country.

7.0 Ferries/EuroTunnel

The cross channel operators we work with comply with independently set safety standards, which, because of their technical nature, it is not possible for us to audit.

We do, however, liaise very closely with all our operators to try to improve our clients safety during their channel crossing Our pre-tour guide gives information on how to minimise risks as well as a transcript of specimen safety announcement.

8.0 Airlines

Airlines comply with independently set safety standards which, because of their technical nature, it is not possible for us to audit.

9.0 Rail Transportation (including EuroStar)

Rail transport complies with the independently set safety standards of the countries through which the train travels. It is, therefore, not possible for Equity to audit rail transport.

10.0 Itinerary/Excursion Risk Assessment

Equity have commenced a programme of establishing Risk Assessment forms for the main itinerary venues featured in our brochure.

The Risk Assessments will be completed either by members of our own staff or by party leaders who have already completed a visit with their party.

Risk Assessments are available on request and will incur an administrative charge.

We would, whenever possible, encourage group leaders to complete their own Risk Assessment, and Inspection Visits are offered to facilitate this process (see section 9).

Equity requests Health and Safety and Insurance Information to be provided by all suppliers of excursions/attractions featured in our brochure.

10.1 PREPARATION OF ITINERARIES

Itineraries are prepared by Equity Tour Co-ordinators who all have a basic understanding of drivers' hours regulations.

All itineraries are checked by a Senior personnel.

A Management system is in place to ensure itineraries are sent to clients in good time.

If there are any queries relating to drivers' hours, itineraries are submitted to the coach company for checking prior to dispatch to clients.

10.2 TOUR REPORTS

All clients are provided with Tour Report forms which we request are completed and returned to Equity. All Tour Reports are reviewed by a Company Director. If clients highlight areas of concern regarding Health and Safety these are investigated immediately and appropriate action is taken. Tour Report trends are reviewed, as a minimum, on an annual basis.

11.0 Selection of Overseas Tour Representatives

Where tour representatives are available in resorts employed by Equity, the following criteria will be applied:

- The representative will be employed by our Recruitment Manager.
- Equity` will hold on file a self-declaration form completed by the employee relating to criminal record and health matters.
- The representative will be given information about emergency procedures and emergency contacts.
- The representative may be asked to complete risk assessments on behalf of the company and will receive training in this matter.
- The representative will report back to head office regarding any areas of concern relating to safety issues.

12.0 Pre-Tour Information

The group leader also has a part to play in heightening pupils' awareness of safety issues before the start of the tour. Equity produces a Pre-Tour Guide, which provides an outline of the key points of the Safety Management System and which highlights various safety points that should be brought to pupils attention.

13.0 Emergency Information

Equity provide party leaders with a 24 hour emergency contact number to be used when groups are on tour, which is stated in our information sheet "Party Leaders Important Notes" and appears on the cover sheet of each itinerary. The number reaches an operator who will contact our duty officer by radio pager. A Senior Manager or Director is also available to assist the duty officer on a 24 hour basis.

14.0 Serious Incidents

To ensure that we deal with any serious incidents in the most efficient and professional manner possible, we have formalised our emergency procedures into a manual for internal office use which sets out clearly all actions to be taken in the event of a serious incident.

The manual defines the roles of responsibility for staff members if such an incident should occur.

Records are kept of all serious incidents. Incidents are investigated immediately and appropriate action is taken.

15.0 Inspection visits

Inspection visits are available to group leaders who have a confirmed booking with Equity.

Group Inspection Visits Accompanied By Equity Staff.

Individual Equity Inspection Visits

For tour destinations not covered by group Inspection Visits, Equity offers group leaders with a confirmed booking an opportunity to visit their selected destinations and Equity will pay for 1 night bed and breakfast accommodation for two people in a twin room.
