



**ADVENTURE
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION**

Technical Skills Guideline: Adventure Motorcycles (Off-Road Riding) Operation

Approval page

The signatories hereof, being duly authorised thereto, by their signatures hereto authorise the execution of the work detailed herein, or confirm their acceptance of the contents hereof and authorise the implementation/adoption thereof, as the case may be, for and on behalf of the parties represented by them.

Author



SA AIA Skills & Ratification Committee
Member: Luca Brice

8 April 2026

Date

Recommended

Date

Approved



SA AIA Executive Director:
J Sunkel

8 April 2026

Date



SA AIA Offroad & Overlanding Chapter
Chairman: Johan du Plooy

8 April 2026

Date

Amendment history

Document revision	Date effective	Reason for update
A	2 April 2026	New document
1	8 April 2026	Document published

Table of contents

1	Introduction	6
2	Scope of Practice	6
3	Required Technical Skills.....	7
3.1	Level 1: Introduction to Techniques	7
3.2	Level 2: Basic Techniques.....	8
3.3	Level 3: Advanced Techniques.....	8
4	Minimum Safety Standards.....	9
5	Environmental Considerations.....	9
6	Assessment Criteria.....	10
6.1	Trainee Competency Standards	10
6.1.1	Level 1: Introduction to Techniques	10
6.1.2	Level 2: Basic Techniques.....	10
6.1.3	Level 3: Advanced Techniques.....	10
6.1.4	Performance Benchmarks (All Levels).....	11
6.2	Trainer / Instructor Guidelines.....	11
7	Legal and Regulatory Notes	12
8	Applicable Roles.....	12
9	Annexures	13
9.1	Annexure A: referenced and applicable documents.....	13
9.1.1	Referenced documents	13
9.1.2	Applicable documents	13
9.2	Nondisclosure	13
9.3	Annexure B: abbreviations.....	13
10	Version Control and Review	13

This page is intentionally left blank.

1 Introduction

This Skills Guideline forms part of the official South African Adventure Industry Association (SA AIA) Technical Skills Framework.

It defines the minimum competencies, responsibilities, and environmental standards for instructors, trainers, facilitators, assessors and guides conducting adventure motorcycle off-road training and/or guided riding experiences in South Africa.

This guideline aligns with the SA AIA Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter curriculum for Operating Adventure Motorcycles in Off-road Conditions – Courses Curriculum (Revision 1) and must be read together with that curriculum and the Chapter's accreditation requirements.

Applicable Skills/Categories (Linked Activities):

- a. Adventure motorcycle off-road riding skills development
- b. Adventure motorcycle preparation, setup and load management
- c. Riding technique progression (introductory, basic, advanced)
- d. Emergency repair / recovery principles for adventure motorcycles
- e. Guided adventure motorcycle riding (recreational/commercial contexts)

2 Scope of Practice

Equipment / platform:

Adventure motorcycles used in off-road conditions (with course delivery adapted to the motorcycle type and configuration).

Terrain and Environmental Setting:

Unsurfaced roads, trails, and natural terrain including gravel, sand, riverbeds, mud, snow, rock, and other natural terrain.

Duration:

Single-day or multi-day learning and riding activities, including theory and practical riding components (as per course durations in the curriculum).

Recommended supervision Ratios:

- a. Training activities - 1 trainer: 6-8 learners (maximum) (*select ratio based on terrain, risk level, and learner ability*)
- b. Guided recreational experiences – 1 guide: 6 clients (maximum) (*or lower for technical terrain*)

(This mirrors the approach used in the 4WD guideline, adapted for the increased exposure and consequence in motorcycle riding.)

Typical Group Profile:

Recreational and commercial learners, including riders with limited prior off-road riding experience, as well as intermediate riders seeking structured progression.

Limitations (out of scope unless risk assessed and explicitly covered):

- a. Competitive motorsport riding.
- b. Advanced terrain/riding tasks beyond achieved competence level.
- c. Unsupervised riding in high-risk terrain.
- d. Night operations unless risk assessed, permitted, and appropriately equipped.
- e. Riding of unroadworthy motorcycles or use outside legal licensing requirements.

3 Required Technical Skills

The SA AIA Adventure Motorcycles pathway consists of three progressive levels aligned to the SA AIA curriculum:

- a. Introduction to adventure motorcycle riding in off-road conditions
- b. Basic adventure motorcycle riding in off-road conditions
- c. Advanced adventure motorcycle riding in off-road conditions

3.1 Level 1: Introduction to Techniques

Purpose: Establish foundational awareness of safe off-road riding principles, legal context, equipment, and basic control in introductory terrain.

Technical Competencies Summary:

- a. Identify what off-roading is and the key legal/licensing considerations relevant to off-road riding.
- b. Identify riding gear requirements and demonstrate understanding of safety standards and appropriate use.
- c. Identify major motorcycle components and basic mechanical/functional understanding relevant to off-road riding.
- d. Identify safe packing and load strategies and the impact of weight on stability and control.
- e. Identify basic tyre pressure principles and adapt pressures for terrain and load (as introduced).
- f. Demonstrate correct basic rider posture/positioning (seated/standing) and safe negotiation of basic obstacles (intro terrain).

- g. Identify basic emergency repair/recovery equipment and the principle of preparedness.

3.2 Level 2: Basic Techniques

Purpose: Develop operational competence for moderate terrain, improve control, introduce environmental responsibility, and apply recovery and self-help principles.

Technical Competencies Summary:

- a. Identify and use motorcycle configurations and off-road aids (e.g., riding modes, traction control/ABS modes where applicable) and when to apply them.
- b. Conduct inspections before/during/after riding off-road and identify readiness issues.
- c. Demonstrate different riding approaches on-road, gravel and off-road, including safe descending on failed climbs (as specified in curriculum).
- d. Identify and minimise environmental impact of off-road riding; demonstrate responsible behaviour in eco-sensitive areas.
- e. Demonstrate weight distribution awareness and basic braking control appropriate to terrain.
- f. Identify safe recovery principles and demonstrate safe self-help recovery preparation (within scope of training environment).

3.3 Level 3: Advanced Techniques

Purpose: Build advanced proficiency for challenging terrain and higher consequence riding contexts, including advanced obstacle lines, stopping distances across surfaces, and robust recovery principles.

Technical Competencies Summary:

- a. Demonstrate stopping distances and control across varying surfaces (gravel, mud, sand, snow, etc.).
- b. Demonstrate correct lines through advanced obstacles (including grade 3 trail contexts and relevant terrain types as specified).
- c. Demonstrate advanced weight transfer and braking sequences while maintaining front wheel control.
- d. Demonstrate recovery safety procedures, forces/dangers, communication during recoveries, and use of safety equipment.
- e. Demonstrate practical puncture repair principles (tubed vs tubeless), and self-recovery methods (e.g., sand, uphill, logs, rocks), within safe training design.

4 Minimum Safety Standards

Table 1: Minimum Safety Standards

Aspect	Minimum Standard
Guide-to-Client Ratio	1: 6-8 (training) / 1: 6 (tours), adjusted down for technical terrain.
Motorcycle Condition	Roadworthy, trail-ready, suitable tyres, controls functional, no known critical defects.
Personal Protective Equipment	Approved helmet, boots, gloves, eye protection; body protection recommended; hydration carried.
Briefing and Consent	Safety briefing, signals / communications, emergency plan, and participant acknowledgement.
Minimum First Aid Level	Appropriate first aid cover for site remoteness (minimum BLS recommended; higher levels for remote contexts).
Communication	Confirmed comms plan (radios/cell coverage), emergency contact and evacuation plan.
Weather Criteria	Training/rides suspended under lightning, flooding risk, extreme wind, or severe conditions.

Facilitators and guides must comply with the SA AIA Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter's venue requirements (Table 7 and 8 in the Accreditation Document).

5 Environmental Considerations

Activities must uphold the SA AIA environmental principles and responsible off-road riding practice, including minimising impact, staying on designated routes where required, respecting landowner and protected-area rules, and preventing/containing fuel or oil spills.

Adventure motorcycle riders must specifically be aware that irresponsible behaviour in eco-sensitive areas can jeopardise future access and sustainability of the activity.

6 Assessment Criteria

SA AIA's assessment framework distinguishes between *trainee competency standards* and *trainer facilitation responsibilities*.

Both are aligned with the SA AIA Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter's Operating Adventure Motorcycles in Off-Road Conditions Courses Curriculum.

6.1 Trainee Competency Standards

Trainees must demonstrate safe, responsible performance in simulated and real-world conditions appropriate to the level.

6.1.1 Level 1: Introduction Techniques

Practical Competence Summary

- a. Demonstrate appropriate riding gear selection and safety rationale.
- b. Demonstrate basic seated and standing position and safe negotiation of introductory obstacles.
- c. Demonstrate basic tyre pressure awareness and adjustments (intro-level).

Knowledge Competence Summary

- a. Identify relevant licensing / legal considerations and insurance / medical implications as introduced.
- b. Identify key motorcycle components and limitations (angles/ground clearance, etc., as applicable).

6.1.2 Level 2: Basic Techniques

Practical Competence Summary

- a. Demonstrate correct riding approaches across on-road/gravel/off-road and controlled descents on failed climbs.
- b. Demonstrate inspections before/during/after off-road riding.
- c. Demonstrate foundational braking and weight distribution control appropriate to terrain.

Knowledge Competence Summary

- a. Identify environmental impacts and how to minimise them.
- b. Identify safe recovery preparation principles and basic equipment familiarity.

6.1.3 Level 3: Advanced Techniques

Practical Competence Summary

- a. Demonstrate stopping distances and controlled riding across varied surfaces.
- b. Demonstrate advanced obstacle line choice and execution in appropriate terrain contexts.
- c. Demonstrate recovery communication and safety procedures during recoveries.
- d. Demonstrate puncture repair principles (tubed vs tubeless) and selected self-recovery methods safely.

6.1.4 Performance Benchmarks (All Levels)

- a. Minimum 80% pass for theory / oral questioning.
- b. Practical tasks completed without unsafe practices or damage.
- c. Environmental and safety protocols observed throughout.
- d. Professional communication and teamwork demonstrated.

Learners who achieve all requirements are recognised as **Competent** for the applicable Adventure Motorcycle course level.

6.2 Trainer / Instructor Guidelines

Accredited SA AIA Instructors or Assessors must:

- a. **Plan:** Structure training according to the official SA AIA curriculum modules and ensure all outcomes are covered (knowledge, skills, and attitude).
- b. **Demonstrate:** Model correct techniques before asking learners to perform them.
- c. **Supervise:** Maintain constant line-of-sight supervision during practical recovery activities.
- d. **Assess:** Use observation checklists, verbal questioning, and debriefing to collect evidence.
- e. **Document:** Record attendance, competence decisions, and any corrective feedback.
- f. **Report:** Provide SA AIA with course results, learner evaluation summaries, and any incidents.
- g. **Re-mediate:** Provide additional instruction where learners are "Not Yet Competent (NYC)" and reassess before certification.
- h. **Certify:** Issue learner certificates only after competence is confirmed, following SA AIA's certificate template and numbering rules.

Instructors must hold a valid **SA AIA Instructor Accreditation Number**, and training may only occur through an accredited **Skills Development Part (SDP)** venue approved under the SA AIA Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter requirements.

7 Legal and Regulatory Notes

- a. Tourism Act (2014):** Adventure Tourist Guides must be registered with their provincial registrar.
- b. Occupational Health and Safety Act (1993):** All participants must adhere to risk management and incident reporting protocols.
- c. National Road Traffic Act (1996):** All vehicles must be licensed and compliant for public road use.
- d. Protected Areas and Permit Regulations:** Access to conservation areas requires appropriate permits and compliance with landowner policies.
- e. Acceptable Legal Business Practices:** SDPs and tour operators must maintain legal business practices.
- f. Insurance and Liability:** SDPs, tour operators, instructors and guides must maintain personal and public liability insurance and obtain client indemnities.
- g. SA AIA Accreditation Requirements:** All Skills Development Partners and Instructors must be accredited in accordance with the Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter Accreditation Requirements document (latest revision).

8 Applicable Roles

Table 2: Applicable Roles

Role	Description	Supervision Level
Assistant Instructor/Guide	Supports an accredited instructor or certified guide during training or guided activities	Works under direct supervision of an accredited Instructor or Certified Guide.
Certified Site-Specific Guide (Adventure Motorcycle)	Leads an adventure motorcycle activity within defined scope on trails. Manages clients and safety on site.	Works independently under organisational policies.
Independent Guide	Plans and manages multi-day adventure motorcycle journeys including route planning, camp	Works autonomously within legal and SA AIA standards.

	setup, and client safety.	
Instructor / Trainer	Designs, delivers and assesses SA AIA-accredited Adventure Motorcycle training programmes and mentors development of new guides.	Accredited under SA AIA Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter.

9 Annexures

9.1 Annexure A: referenced and applicable documents

9.1.1 Referenced documents

–None.

9.1.2 Applicable documents

- SA AIA Operating Adventure Motorcycles in Off-road Conditions Courses Curriculum (latest revision).
- SA AIA Skills Development Partner and Facilitator Accreditation Requirements (latest revision).

9.2 Nondisclosure

SA AIA will not disclose any information contained in the accreditation documentation to third parties. The information will only be used internally for the purposes of accreditation, as specified in this document.

9.3 Annexure B: abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
SA AIA	South African Adventure Industry Association
SDP	skills development partner

10 Version Control and Review

Item	Details
Date of Publication	April 2026
Version Number	1
Review Cycle	Biannual (every 2 years) or upon curriculum revision
Responsible SA AIA Subcommittee	Off-Road and Overlanding Chapter / Skills and Ratification Committee