

ACSKG Standards FAQs

Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides

March 26, 2016

Why is the ACSKG requesting a review of standards for Pacific Rim National Park Reserve?

The ACSKG believes the operating standards currently approved by Pacific Rim National Park Reserve increase the potential for another incident similar to British Columbia's 1993 guided kayak tour fatality.

The ACSKG believes it is appropriate for licensed tour operators in Canada's National Parks to operate using the highest relevant industry standards.

There has not been a recent incident, why do this now?

The ACSKG believes the best time to review and raise standards is before another incident.

The fact that there has not yet been a fatality on a guided kayak trip in the Broken Group Islands does not mean the operating standards are appropriate.

For example: Some people prefer to drive without wearing a seat belt. If they drive for years without an accident, is their preference appropriate?

Does the ACSKG realize that two guides per trip is not financially viable?

We understand that appropriate risk management requires investment.

Kayak tour operators in Gwaii Haanas and elsewhere have demonstrated for more than twenty years that two certified guides per trip is financially viable over the long-term.

The second guide is typically a certified assistant guide, who earns considerably less than the lead guide. After a few seasons of assisting, many assistant guides are ready to become lead guides. Training and advancement benefits occur as a result of two guides working each trip. These benefits can provide financial gain as well.

Why would the ACSKG approve similar standards for the Broken Group Islands and Haida Gwaii?

ACSKG water classifications for the *East* coast of Moresby Island are the same as our classifications for portions of the *West* coast of Vancouver Island, including the Broken Group Islands. We compare east and west coasts in this case.

Additionally, the water temperatures are nearly identical. Cold water immersion can quickly kill.

Why require two guides when the ability to access a quick-response rescue vessel is so much better in the Broken Group Islands?

Perhaps if it were possible to consistently guarantee a rescue vessel will arrive within 15 minutes, the ACSKG would then consider different standards for the Broken Group Islands. We don't believe this rapid response time is currently realistically achievable in a consistent and reliable fashion for multi-day kayak tours in the Broken Group Islands.

Two guides working together can significantly reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring, as well as more effectively and successfully manage incidents when they do occur.

A public record of letters from the Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada is available online: www.acskg.ca/prnpr