

**DRAFT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
(SOP) FOR BOAT SNORKELLING ACTIVITY IN
A&N ISLANDS**

Snorkeling is an activity which involves the use of a mask, fins and a snorkel to explore the underwater environment. This activity is mainly operated through shore or boat in waters where corals & varieties of aquatic life are found.

1. Objective:

This SOP is primarily applicable to 'Boat Snorkeling' and is to ensure the safety, enjoyment, and environmental responsibility of participants engaging in boat snorkeling activities.

2. SOP is applicable to:

- a. Snorkeling Business owner/ operator,
- b. Snorkeling Supervisor,
- c. Snorkeling guide,
- d. Boat operator and Crew
- e. Rescue boat operator and Crew
- f. Snorkeler lookout
- g. Snorkelers (Guest & Tourist)

3. Registration/Renewal of Snorkel Guide

- a. The individual certified snorkel guide/firm/owner/operator, desiring to operate Boat Snorkeling in A&N Islands shall submit their application online/ offline forms (whichever is available) in the prescribed format (**Annexure-I**) along with the non-refundable application fee of Rs. 5,000/- (Five Thousand only) (for each snorkel guide) or as prescribed by the Directorate of Tourism, A&N Islands, from time to time in the form of demand draft/pay order in favor of Sr. Accounts officer (IP&T) to the Director (Tourism), Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Sri Vijaya Puram, Pin code - 744101 (Andaman Island) India, before the commencement of operations.
- b. The firm/owner/operator, desiring to operate Boat Snorkeling in A&N Islands shall submit their application online/ offline forms (whichever is available) in the prescribed format (**Annexure -I**) along with the non-refundable application fee of Rs 5,000/- (Five Thousand only) (for each snorkel guide) per year or as prescribed by the Directorate of Tourism, A&N Islands, from time to time in the form of demand draft/pay order in favor of Sr. Accounts officer (IP&T), to the Director (Tourism),

Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Sri Vijaya Puram, Pin code - 744101 (Andaman Island) India, before the commencement of operations.

- c. The application for annual renewal must be submitted to the Director IP&T, along with the required documents.

4. Guideline for Snorkeling Business Owner/ Operator:

- a. The snorkeling business operator shall register the company/ firm/individual certified snorkel guide with Directorate of IP&T.
- b. Shall have permission to operate 'Boat Snorkeling' activity
- c. Shall have trained and certified employees
- d. Shall have high quality and certified equipment's & gears
- e. The ferry boat and rescue boat shall comply with all guidelines notified by the competent authorities.
- f. Shall maintain record of guest / tourists undergoing snorkeling activity at their respective centre.
- g. Activity be permitted only in the specified area as authorized by competent authority.
- h. Must comply with all orders/instructions issued by the concerned departments (Forest, Police, Tourism, PMB, NIWS etc.) time to time.
- i. Shall have a third-party group insurance policy for maximum no. of tourists/ guest they can accommodate at a time which shall also include the snorkeling staff.
- j. Shall formulate and get approved by the competent person an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for emergencies which can occur during the activity or post activity.
- k. An emergency vehicle shall be placed standby at boat launching/ recovery area during the activity.
- l. Cheating or malpractice or misbehavior with the tourist shall be punishable as per the provisions of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 and will be blacklisted from conduct of any kind of Tourism activities in A & N Islands.
- m. Registration of Boat Snorkeling activity is subject to compliance of all other applicable existing rules/regulations/supreme court orders/administrative orders/policies.

5. Guidelines for Boat ferrying snorkeler's:

- a. Boat shall be registered under Inland Vessels Act or Merchant Shipping Rules.
- b. Boat shall have permission from competent authority for ferrying at the designated area allotted by Port Management Board/ District Administration/ IP&T.
- c. The boat shall be manned as per IV Rules/ MS Rules under which the

boat is registered.

- d. The vessel should have valid seaworthy certificate issued by competent authority under which the vessel is registered.
- e. If the Snorkeling spot is beyond IV limit, then the vessel used for ferrying passengers shall be registered under MS Class and the manning should be as per applicable rules for the registered vessel.

6. Guidelines for Rescue Boat:

- a. Every demarcated snorkeling area shall have 01 rescue boat in full, seaworthy condition.
- b. The Rescue Boat to be registered under IV Act/ MS Act as applicable.
- c. The Rescue Boat to be equipped with all safety equipment as prescribed under IV Act or MS Act then LSA/FFA should be as prescribed in the LSA/FFA Rules specified under the relevant Act under which the vessel is registered. Additionally the rescue boat should also be equipped with :
 - i. 30mtr Polypropylene rope of 8mm thickness.
 - ii. Spine board with 4 straps, head support and stiff neck collar brace.
 - iii. Marine First Aid kit (cotton bandages, splinters, Slings, Icepack, clinical spirit etc).
 - iv. Minimum 9kg Portable oxygen cylinder with pocket mask.

7. Gears and Equipment to be used during Boat Snorkeling:

- a. Boat for ferrying Snorkeler's.
- b. Fully equipped Rescue boat.
- c. Full face Snorkeler Mask or separate mask & snorkeler.
- d. Personal Floatation Device (PFD) Type-III.
- e. Lifebuoy
- f. Area Demarcation marker buoys.
- g. Flag 'A' on the boat.
- h. Diver down flag attached with marker buoy in snorkeling area.

8. Boat Snorkeling Staff and their pre-requisite:

| Ser | Staff | Nos. | Qualification/Certification |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| 1. | Snorkeling Supervisor | 01 | a. Lifesaving Techniques b. Boat Snorkeling Guide Certified from NIWS or any recognized Govt. institute |

| | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 2. | Snorkeling guide | 01 each guest/ tourist | a. Lifesaving Techniques b. Boat Snorkeling Guide certified from NIWS or any recognized Govt. institute |
| 3. | Snorkeling Boat operator (the rescue boat operator should have appropriate qualification under which the vessel is registered with all its valid certificates) | 01 | As Prescribed In Notified IV Rules/ MS Act |
| 4. | Rescue boat operator (the rescue boat operator should have appropriate qualification under which the vessel is registered with all its valid certificates) | 01 | As Prescribed In Notified IV Rules/ MS Act |
| 5. | Snorkeling Boat Crew (the rescue boat operator should have appropriate qualification under which the vessel is registered with all its valid certificates) | Min. 01 | As Prescribed In Notified IV Rules/ MS Act |
| 6. | Rescue Boat Crew (the rescue boat operator should have appropriate qualification under which the vessel is registered with all its valid certificates) | Min. 01 | As Prescribed In Notified IV Rules/ MS Act |
| 7. | Snorkeler lookout | 01 | Lifesaving Techniques Certified from NIWS or any recognized Govt. institute |

9. Identifying Risk: The Snorkeling Supervisor or Snorkeling Guide shall identify risk prior commencement of the activity as follows:

- a. Unfavorable Weather condition, tide or current
- b. Dangerous marine life such as Jelly Fish, Crocodile, Stingray, Shark etc.
- c. Underwater rocks and corals
- d. Identify people at risk such as –
 - i. People with medical condition – cardiac disease, lung disorder, asthma, epilepsies etc.
 - ii. Older person
 - iii. Overweight person
 - iv. Non-swimmers

- v. In influence of alcohol
- vi. Heavy smoker
- vii. Guest Snorkeler doing breathe hold diving

10. Preparation and Pre-Trip Briefing

10.1. Crew and Equipment Check

- Ensure the boat is in good condition and stocked with safety equipment, including:
 - i. Approved life jacket for all participants
 - ii. Marine First aid kit
 - iii. Snorkeling gear (mask, snorkel, fins) in proper working condition
 - iv. Floatation devices or buoyancy aids
 - v. Communications equipment (VHF Radio/Walkie-Talkie & Mobile Phone)
 - vi. Anchor and Rope
 - vii. Drinking water

10.2. Participant Check

- The age limit for tourist undertaking snorkeling activities is above the age of 12 years. The children between the ages of 12 to 18 years shall have written parental consent/ declaration to undertake the activity.

The tourists above the age of 60 years shall be considered only on the basis of Medical Certificate from a Registered Medical Practitioner to do the activity.

- Verify the health and swimming capability of each participant. Ensure there are no medical conditions that could impair their safety (e.g., asthma, heart conditions).
- Check the size and fit of the snorkeling gear for each participant.
- Conduct a headcount before departure.

10.3. Weather Conditions Check

- Verify weather conditions, tides, currents, and water visibility.
- Cancel or delay the activity if conditions are unsafe.
- The snorkel operator should comply with the day standing order issued by PMB / District Administration/ local authorities before taking up the activity of the day.

10.4. Safety and Environmental Briefing

- Conduct a comprehensive briefing covering:
 - i. Proper use of snorkeling equipment
 - ii. Safety protocols (buddy system, emergency signals)
 - iii. No-touch and no-take policy regarding marine life and coral reefs
 - iv. Respect for marine protected areas
 - v. Overview of the snorkeling site, including potential hazards (e.g., sharp corals, jellyfish, strong currents)

11. Snorkeling Procedure

11.1. Snorkel Plan: The snorkel operators are directed to strictly adhere with the daily snorkel plan for Boat Snorkeling activity as prescribed at **Annexure -III.**

11.2. Boarding and Departing the Boat

- Assist participants in boarding the boat.
- Conduct a final headcount before departure.
- Ensure all participants are wearing life vests until arrival at the snorkeling site.

11.3. Arrival at Snorkeling Site

- Drop anchor in designated, safe areas, away from coral reefs to avoid damage.
- Ensure a crew member is on the boat at all times while others are snorkeling.

11.4. Entry into the Water

- Provide guidance on entering the water safely:
 - Use a ladder or designated entry point.
 - Avoid jumping near coral or others.
- Ensure the buddy system is in place, where participants pair up to monitor each other's safety.

11.5. Supervision in the Water

- At least one trained crew member or guide should be in the water with the group.
- One Supervisor or lookout on the boat
- Designate a boundary area for snorkeling.
- Continuously monitor participants, checking for signs of fatigue or distress.

11.6. Emergency Procedures

- In case of an emergency (e.g., cramp, panic, or injury), follow the emergency protocols:
 - i. Provide immediate assistance.
 - ii. Use floatation devices to assist swimmers.
 - iii. If necessary, signal for help using the agreed-upon distress signal.
 - iv. Evacuate participants from the water if required.

12. Post-Snorkeling Procedure

12.1. Exiting the Water

- Assist participants while exiting the water via the boat's ladder or other exit methods.
- Conduct a headcount to ensure all participants are accounted for.
- Provide fresh water for rinsing off saltwater.
- Encourage hydration by offering drinking water.

12.2. Debriefing

- Brief participants on marine conservation efforts and the impact of human activity on the environment.
- Provide feedback on snorkeling performance and safety compliance.
- Address any concerns or issues raised by participants.

12.3. Gear Maintenance

- Collect and inspect all snorkeling gear for damage.
- Rinse and dry equipment properly.
- Store gear in designated areas to prevent damage and promote longevity.

12.4. After each trip, conduct an internal review with the crew/ staff to assess the effectiveness of the SOP.

13. Emergency Action Plan

13.1. Common Emergencies

- **Shallow Water Blackout:** Immediately provide flotation, perform CPR if needed, and seek medical attention.
- **Marine Stings or Bites:** Apply first aid, rinse the area with seawater (if applicable), and seek medical assistance.
- **Hypothermia:** Wrap the person in blankets and provide warm drinks. Get them to a warm environment as soon as possible.

13.2. Reporting and Documentation

- Report any incidents or injuries to the appropriate authorities.
- Document the incident and actions taken in an incident log.

14. Roles and Responsibilities:

| Ser | Role | Responsibilities |
|------|---------------------------------|--|
| 14.1 | Snorkeling Supervisor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Oversee all activities on the boat, ii. ensure safety compliance, iii. supervise crew iv. responsible for the safe conduct of the snorkeling activity v. provide briefings and identify any at risk snorkelers vi. check environmental and sea condition for any risk vii. snorkeling supervisor can help snorkelers to select and fit their equipment and safely enter the water viii. take action if participants are seen deliberately disobeying safety advice or showing off and taking part in dangerous behavior. |
| 14.2 | Snorkeling Lookout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. wear brightly colored or distinctive clothing so that they are easily recognized ii. scan using patterns and zones to cover the whole site at least once every 60 seconds iii. detecting those in difficulty or distress iv. initiating emergency responses v. take breaks and rotate duties—lookouts should have a break after a maximum of 60 minutes vi. ensure have effective UV protection while scanning |
| 14.3 | Snorkeling Guide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Snorkeling guide provide in-water supervision ii. Ensure safety of participants, iii. Conduct briefings, iv. Monitor in-water activity. v. Assessment of the risks-Annexure -II vi. Enter the water first and exit last |
| 14.4 | Snorkeling Boat Operator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Responsible to prepare the boat and engine ii. Assess the weather, tide and current iii. Shall act on warning or information or instructions received from competent authority iv. Check all the personnel boarding the |

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | <p>boat are wearing snugly fitted PFD</p> <p>v. Count the no. of personnel boarding the boat</p> <p>vi. Safely do launching, anchoring and recovery of the boat</p> |
| 14.5 | Rescue Boat Operator | <p>i. Responsible to prepare the boat and engine</p> <p>ii. Assess the weather, tide and current</p> <p>iii. Shall act on warning or information or instructions received from competent authority</p> <p>iv. Communicate with Snorkeling Supervisor and Snorkeling Lookout for situation report</p> <p>v. Act promptly during emergency call</p> <p>vi. Shall able to perform Man-overboard procedure</p> <p>vii. Recovery of victim and safely approaching to the shore</p> |
| 14.6 | Snorkeling Boat Crew | <p>i. Assist in equipment setup</p> <p>ii. Assist during boat launch and recovery</p> <p>iii. Assist during boat anchoring and recovery</p> |
| | | <p>iv. Assist participant for water entry and exit</p> <p>v. Participant supervision during snorkeling</p> <p>vi. Assist in emergency procedures</p> |
| 14.7 | Rescue Boat Crew | <p>i. Assist in equipment setup</p> <p>ii. Assist during boat launch and recovery</p> <p>iii. Assist during boat anchoring and recovery</p> <p>iv. Participant supervision during snorkeling</p> <p>v. Assist in emergency procedures (rescue & patient recovery)</p> <p>vi. Able to perform CPR, Basic First Aid and administer Oxygen to the patient</p> |
| 14.8 | Participants | <p>i. Follow safety instructions</p> <p>ii. Notify snorkeling staff if having any medical condition/ history</p> <p>iii. Wear PFD</p> <p>iv. Do not do breathe hold and dive underwater</p> <p>v. stay within designated snorkeling area</p> |

**ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM
SRI VIJAYA PURAM**

**APPLICATION FORM FOR REGISTRATION OF
BOAT SNORKELING ACTIVITY**

Affix recent
passport size
photograph/s

General Documents

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the Owner(s) (individual/company/organization etc) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aadhar card no. (copy to be enclosed) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present address | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact no. | |
| 2. | Registration and Renewal of Boat Snorkeling activity | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration Fee/ Renewal Fee: Rs 5000/- | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DD no. and date, Bank & Branch Name | |
| 3. | Boat Registration Details | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered under IV Rules of A&N Islands /MS Act (documents to be enclosed) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid sea worthy certificate issued by competent authority under which the vessel is registered. | |
| 4. | Details of Rescue Boat | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered under IV Rules of A&N Islands /MS Act (documents to be enclosed) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid sea worthy certificate issued by competent authority under which the vessel is registered. | |
| 5. | Man power (certified & licensed) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snorkel supervisor, Snorkeling lookout, Snorkeling Guide | |
| 6. | Emergency Action Plan to be enclosed | |
| 7. | Area of operation | |

Signature of Owner/Operator of the Boat Snorkeling activity
Name and address.....
Contact Number.....
Date.....

Annexure-II

SNORLELLER ASSESSMENT

Name _____ Age _____
 Address _____
 Emergency contact name, phone number and address _____

Please rate your current level of fitness and Snorkeling experience (please tick)

Swimming ability: POOR / AVERAGE/ GOOD
 Snorkeling ability: POOR / AVERAGE / GOOD
 Fitness: POOR / AVERAGE / GOOD

| Questions to be answered Snorkeler | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Are you nervous about snorkeling today? | | |
| Have you snorkeled in similar sea conditions? | | |
| Are you suffering from any medical condition/s that may be made worse by exertion? For example, heart conditions, asthma, some lung diseases. If yes, please list: | | |
| Are you suffering from any condition that may affect your consciousness? Example include epilepsy and diabetes. If yes, please list: | | |
| Are you suffering from asthma that can be brought on by cold water or salt water mist? | | |
| Are you taking any prescribed medications (other than oral contraceptives)? If yes, please list | | |
| Do you smoke? | | |
| Are you overweight? | | |

To be completed by Snorkeling supervision:

- List other risk factors displayed by participant (nervousness, obesity etc).....
- Is the participant able to understand information and advice provided?. Yes / No
- Is the snorkeler 'at risk'? (If yes, highlight risk factor from list above) Yes / No
- Specific risks and control explained to snorkeler and recorded on snorkel plan?.
..... Yes / No

Tick relevant controls:

- Identification of snorkeler Guided tour Others
- Buddy Staying close to supervision
- Flootation

Annexure-III**DAILY SNORKEL PLAN**

- To be completed by the snorkeling supervisor,
- The Document shall remain at the snorkeling site and then be returned for review and archiving to the business premises.

1. **Organization:** _____
2. **Locations and vessel** _____
3. **Snorkeling Supervisor** _____
4. **Snorkel guide/s** _____
5. **Lookout/s** _____
6. **Snorkel Boat Operator & Crew** _____
7. **Rescue Boat Operator & Crew** _____

A. Snorkeler Assessment: Have all snorkelers been assessed?

| At risk snorkeler name | Risk factor/s | Additional control measures |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

B. Environmental conditions and assessment

| Conditions | Site 1 | Site 2 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Water depth (m) | | |
| Temperature (C) | | |
| Surface conditions | | |
| Currents (Strength and direction) | | |
| Hazardous marine creatures | | |
| Other vessels | | |
| Other hazards | | |

| Environmental Hazard | Specific risk factor | Additional control measure/s |
|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Eg. Current | Moderate SE current | Deploy mermaid lines from vessel. All snorkelers in guided groups. |
| | | |
| | | |

C. Preparation checklist

| Checklist | Yes | No | Comments |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Clean and serviceable snorkeling equipment checked (with appropriate sizes and spares)? | | | |
| Necessary documentation such as waivers, incident reports, standard operating procedures and emergency plans on hand ? | | | |
| Rescue equipment, first aid kit, oxygen equipment, communication and emergency plans checked? | | | |
| Advise and instruction giver to all snorkelers? | | | |
| Non English speakers identified and given appropriate advice? | | | |

D. Count of all persons on board

| Stage | Count 1 | Count 2 | Initials | Verifying signature |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Initial departure | | | | |
| Departure – Site 1 | | | | |
| Departure – Site 2 | | | | |

E. On site Checklist (tick when complete, add comments)

| Checklist | Complete | Comments |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Emergency equipment (rescue and first aid) ready for immediate use? | | |
| Communication system working? | | |
| The lookout is in position and equipped to scan the snorkel site effectively | | |
| Ongoing assessment of snorkelers for water skills, health issues, nervousness, inappropriate behavior and breath-hold diving | | |
| Entry and exit points are safe to use | | |
| Rescue tender, markers, 'A' Flag, lines and floats deployed | | |
| Lookout duties rotated when required | | |
| Snorkel tours conducted | | |

F. Post snorkel (tick when complete, add comments)

| Checklist | Complete | Comments |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Counts of all persons on board complete | | |
| Monitor snorkelers for any illness or injuries | | |
| All equipment checked and returned as required | | |
| Records completed and returned as required | | |
| Additional hazards noted or control measures not adequate | | |

This snorkel plan has been completed by _____(snorkeling supervisor) on
