

Summit Adventures - Trekking & Mountaineering Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

1. Introduction

At **Summit Adventures**, we are not just a trekking and mountaineering company — **we are mountain lovers, explorers, and stewards of the Himalayas**. With decades of hands-on experience and an unwavering passion for these majestic peaks, **we are committed to delivering safe, unforgettable, and environmentally conscious adventures**.

We take immense pride in operating with the highest standards of safety, professionalism, sustainability, and community involvement. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) guide everything **we do** — from planning a single trek to leading a multi-week mountaineering expedition.

We strictly adhere to the latest guidelines issued by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), Himachal Pradesh Forest Department, and the Himachal Pradesh Ecotourism Society and Himachal Pradesh Tourism Department ensuring every expedition reflects responsible tourism values.

2. Pre-Trek Planning

- **Permits:** We obtain all necessary forest, wildlife, and mountaineering permits in advance.
 - **Group Size:** We maintain an ideal group size of **15–20 trekkers** to reduce environmental impact and enhance group management.
 - **Pre-Trek Briefing:** We conduct thorough briefings covering:
 - Safety procedures and emergency protocols
 - Trek route and altitude profile
 - Expected weather conditions
 - Environmental ethics and Leave No Trace principles
 - **Local Support:** We believe in empowering local communities. We hire local guides, porters, cooks, and mules for every trek.
 - **Eco-Kit Issuance:** Every guest receives an eco-kit with a reusable cloth bag, refillable water bottle, biodegradable soap, and a guide on eco-ethics.
 - **Documentation:** We collect ID proof, fitness declarations, and medical history forms from all participants.
 - **Route Assessment:** Before each trek, we conduct a reconnaissance to evaluate terrain risks, campsite suitability, and water quality.
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3. On-Trek Responsibilities

A. Trail Discipline

- We follow designated trails — no off-path hiking.
- We never cut trees, pick plants, or disturb wildlife.
- We maintain a respectful **50-meter distance from wildlife**.

- We respect all **local customs, beliefs, and sacred places**.
- Take photographs of local people only after their permission.
- No photographs/selfies while walking on the trail. Stop at safe place to take photos and breaks.
- We avoid trekking during animal migration and in ecologically sensitive zones.

B. Campsite Ethics

- We camp only in **approved areas** to avoid ecological disruption.
 - We use **LPG** for cooking and discourage bonfires.
 - We use **portable toilets** or dig pit toilets **at least 100m away from water bodies**.
 - We use **solar lights** instead of candles or open flames.
 - We observe **quiet hours from 9 PM to 6 AM**.
 - **Single-use plastics are banned**. Reusable bottles and eco-gear are encouraged.
 - We ensure **washing happens 100m away from water sources** to prevent contamination.
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4. Waste Management

- **Carry-In, Carry-Out Rule:** We ensure everything we carry in is taken back.
 - **Waste Segregation:**
 - Dry waste: Brought back for proper disposal.
 - Wet waste: Composted where feasible.
 - We use **cloth trash bags** — plastic is banned.
 - We encourage guests to participate in **trail clean-up drives**.
 - Our guides submit a **waste audit post-trek**.
 - **Burning of waste is strictly prohibited**.
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5. Guest Safety & First Aid

- We carry a **comprehensive first aid kit**, portable oxygen cylinders, pulse oximeter, and emergency contact list.
 - We **monitor guests daily** for signs of AMS, dehydration, or fatigue.
 - We report emergencies to our base team **immediately**.
 - We establish and communicate a clear **evacuation plan**.
 - Our guides are **certified in First Aid** (WFR or equivalent).
 - We maintain a **guide-to-guest ratio of 1:6**.
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6. Environmental Awareness & Education

- We conduct **daily eco-talks** at campsites covering:
 - Local flora and fauna
 - Leave No Trace ethics
 - Cultural sensitivity and community interaction
- We share eco-success stories via **blogs, social media, and newsletters**.
- We distribute **handouts/posters** with Himachal-specific eco-regulations.

7. Post-Trek Procedures

- We collect:
 - Guest feedback and testimonials.
 - Self-assessment on eco-behavior
 - We submit:
 - Detailed trek report with before/after campsite photos
 - Equipment and inventory checklist
 - We encourage guests to contribute to **tree plantation or local conservation projects**.
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8. Mountaineering SOP

A. Guide & Staff Qualifications

- All our lead guides are **certified by reputed mountaineering institutes** (NIM, HMI, ABVIMAS).
- All our assistant guides have at least a **Basic Mountaineering Course certification** or trekking guide Course.
- Our every expedition includes at least one **Wilderness First Responder (WFR)**.
- All our porters and high-altitude staff are trained in **equipment use and emergency response**.

B. Pre-Expedition Planning

- We conduct a **reconnaissance mission** for new routes.
- We obtain permissions from:
 - Himachal Pradesh Forest Department
 - Local Gram Panchayats
 - IMF (for restricted zones or peaks above 6000m)
- We prepare **detailed route maps** with alternative evacuation options.
- **Fitness assessments** are mandatory.
- We share an **acclimatization plan** one week prior.

C. Equipment Standards

- We use gear that meets **UIAA, CE, or ISI safety certifications**.
- Our equipment includes:
 - Ropes, harnesses, helmets, carabiners, ice axes, crampons
 - Avalanche safety gear (transceivers, probes, shovels)
 - Cold-weather apparel (-20°C rated)
 - 4-season tents and high-altitude medical kits
- We inspect all gear **before and after expeditions** and maintain logs.

D. Risk Mitigation & Emergency Protocols

- Each team carries:
 - Walkie Takies
 - Portable oxygen and oximeters

- We establish **base camp communication protocols** with twice-daily check-ins.
- Emergency plans address:
 - AMS, HAPE, HACE
 - Avalanche
 - Hypothermia
 - Equipment failure
- We install **safety markers** on glaciers and steep terrain.
- **Evacuation routes** are known to all.

E. Campsite & Leave No Trace Ethics

- We camp only in **pre-approved flat zones**.
 - Snow is not contaminated with soap, food, or waste.
 - We use **eco-friendly toilet tents** with pack-out systems.
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9. Code of Conduct (Guides & Staff)

- We wear official Summit Adventures uniforms and carry valid ID.
 - We prohibit **alcohol, smoking, and music** on treks.
 - We treat all guests, locals, and nature with **respect and mindfulness**.
 - We practice and promote **inclusive and responsible tourism**.
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10. Our Commitment to the Environment

At **Summit Adventures**, protecting the Himalayas is not just a policy — it's a passion.

- We leave campsites **cleaner than we find them**.
- We minimize our carbon footprint with **solar lights, reusable gear, and local sourcing**.
- We engage guests in **eco-volunteering, trail clean-ups, and forest awareness**.
- We actively support **reforestation, eco-tourism, and environmental education programs** in Himachal Pradesh.