

WAITOMO ADVENTURES - Safety Information

Please ensure you read this carefully prior to your trip. Our caving, abseiling and blackwater rafting adventures are governed by strict procedures to ensure your safety. However they are not without risk. They are some of the most adventurous activities available in New Zealand. Caving is complicated by the fact that any incident or problem under the ground is more difficult to deal with than a similar issue above ground. Rescue underground is a very slow and difficult process. You cannot fly a rescue helicopter into a cave. Neither do mobile phones work underground. Our caves may look like they are something designed by Disney but they are not. They are wild, isolated and potentially dangerous places. Having said that, all our activities have passed independent audits and carry both Outdoorsmark and Qualmark endorsement.

AGES - Minimum age and weight requirements apply for children

POLICY - FITNESS HEALTH & SAFETY

Our safety objective is zero serious harm to clients. We have been operating since Oct 1987 (over 35 years) and within our sector, our safety record is exemplary. In that time over 500,000 visitors have enjoyed our activities. We strive at all times to keep it like that.

We are not a faceless corporate. We are a boutique family-based business with the owner and founder still working in the company. We embrace both the moral and legal requirement to actively manage our risks with care. Since our adventures include some of the most physical activities available in New Zealand, we therefore require that participants should have a moderate level of fitness – if you can bush-walk or ski for a day, you should be fine.

A weight limit applies for ALL adventure trips.

Clients should not suffer from serious health problems such as heart conditions or significant back/neck complaints.

FITNESS TEST

Clients must have basic physical fitness. If our staff, on the day of departure, have any doubt about a client's physical fitness they may ask them to prove it by completing one or more fitness tests.

Test 1

A quick and simple test we may use is "to step up and down a 20 cm (8 inches) step not less than 45 times in 60 seconds"

Test 2

Be able to climb onto a 900mm high flat bench with no hand holds and unassisted.

Test 3

Be able to go bush walking or skiing for a day – please do not book an adventure activity with us if you cannot do this. We can't test this at check-in but list this requirement so that clients have an idea of how fit they should be.

Test 4

No drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping are permitted.

Clients may be required to submit to breath-testing for alcohol or other drugs.

What happens if a person can't pass the above tests? The operator may at their sole discretion cancel a departure or remove an unsuitable client from a trip for any safety related reason.

It may result in their removal from the trip and their forfeiture of ticket price.

We therefore strongly recommend that all clients complete these tests prior to booking and again immediately prior to traveling

MEDICAL DECLARATION

All medical issues must be declared to both our booking staff and activity guides prior to the commencement of your adventure. In most cases, minor medical issues will not preclude participation. Where a client is not suitable for a particular activity we will do our best to indicate a more appropriate alternative.

PREGNANCY

We do not recommend abseiling (rappelling) during the 1st and 3rd trimester due to the need to wear a tight fitting harness across your waist during the abseil. All pregnant clients wishing to participate in one of our adventure options must provide a medical certificate from their General Medical Practitioner confirming that they are fit for abseiling (rappelling) and caving. This policy is required for us to comply with the NZ Adventure Safety Regulations.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Our company does not offer any insurance to clients. In New Zealand, under our "ACC" laws, overseas nationals may be eligible for limited medical support in the event of an accident. Nevertheless we highly recommend that clients carry their own travel insurance including medical insurance before engaging in any of our activities.

EYE GLASSES & CONTACT LENSES

We recommend that our clients do not wear eye-glasses during our action activities – unless your impaired vision will compromise your safety (glasses may be scratched, broken or become lost). It is however possible to wear them, provided appropriate care is taken. It is also possible to wear contact lenses. These can sometimes become lost – especially when under a waterfall. We therefore recommend the use of disposable contact lenses.

If you choose to wear your glasses, you must ensure they are secured to you at all times. You are required to accept full responsibility for them. We strongly recommend that customers carry their own insurance for losses of this kind. Waitomo Adventures Ltd and staff may not be held liable for any damage to or loss of eye glasses or contacts.

FLOODING

Both Blackwater Rafting - TTT and the Lost World Epic are sometimes closed by flooding. Other activities are almost never closed. In the event that your chosen option is flooded we will do our best to either offer you an acceptable alternative or support a refund of the ticket.

We are fortunate that we manage a number of different cave systems which allows us to usually (but not always) offer a good alternative that is not flooded.

EQUIPMENT

We will supply all of your equipment; including helmets, lights, any vertical gear - as required, and overalls/wetsuits (as appropriate) and PVC boots. All our safety equipment is amongst the best available, often especially manufactured for the purpose.

GUIDES

Our guides are trained to the highest industry standards for this type of work in New Zealand. Trainee Guides are always under immediate and close supervision by a qualified instructor.