

QUALMARK ENDORSEMENT

Qualmark is New Zealand tourism's official quality assurance agency. It is owned by Tourism New Zealand and the New Zealand Automobile Association and backed by leading industry organisations.

It is a licensing system for tourism's official quality mark and signals that a tourism business is professional and trustworthy.

Qualmark operates on a not-for-profit basis and is a service to the tourism industry, assisting tourism businesses to be the best and helping visitors buy the best New Zealand has to offer.

All Qualmark® endorsed tourism operators have undergone a rigorous, independent on-site assessment by a fully trained assessor. The criteria encompasses key New Zealand compliance legislation and support 'best practice' guidelines in all aspects of the business.

Activity operators are assessed against a number of quality standards which include:

- A written Health and Safety management plan in place to allow for:
- Significant hazards
- Safety equipment
- Staffing requirements
- Incident and accident reporting and investigation
- Accident and emergency procedures

All operators are checked to ensure they comply with statutory obligations, for example current legislation required by the Maritime Safety Authority, Civil Aviation Authority, the Department of Conservation and other relevant agencies.

In addition to the above standards, Adventure Activity operators are subject to a review of their health and safety plan which looks more closely at their on site practices including procedures covering:

- The customers or clients
 - Pre-activity
 - During Activity
 - Post Activity
- A formal review of the safety systems annually

Actual processes are reviewed at each stage of the activity to ensure that staff are adequately briefing customers regarding the risk involved, different aspects of the trip and understanding competence levels, age requirements etc. All processes are also assessed, for example equipment checks, hazard updates, staffing ratios, customer safety talks etc.

The Qualmark assessment system examines over 160 individual criteria, including health and safety. This means that only business that maintain high standards both in equipment and procedures carry the Qualmark®. The criteria cover customer service, business operations, facilities, health and safety requirements, environmental and cultural responsibility amongst others.