

Introduction

What is this document?

This advisory guidance supports the 4 main areas of the British Llama Society and British Alpaca Society Trekking Code (Part 1) and explains each one in terms of examples of good practice. It has been produced jointly by the British Llama Society and the British Alpaca Society.

Who is it for?

Anyone running Alpaca or Llama Trekking/Walking - It is acknowledged all businesses are different in size and constitution.

What is its purpose?

The guidance allows each business to consider how to address the different areas of the 'Code' and requirements within their own environment /operation and apply accordingly, as appropriate, for their farm or operation.

This guidance is not mandatory in any form, but serves as an example of good practice when operating llama and alpaca trekking /walking, either commercially or non-commercially.

Important Note: Information and links to documents are believed correct to our understanding at the time of publication – however it is your responsibility to ensure you are using the correct guidance : If you believe the guidance has changed etc. we would be obliged if you share that information with us so we can update accordingly at the next review. Links to this information may also be found on the societies websites.

This link <http://www.farmattractions.net/nfan-resources/code-practice> will take you to the current guidance endorsed by the HSE and is now the current enforcement guidance that covers ALL animal related business where the public are invited to stroke, pet, experience and interact with animals. We believe this applies to ALL llama / alpaca walking and trekking etc.

Advisory Guidance

General Good Practice

1. To abide by current Health & Safety legislation in relation to clients and the public.
2. Where appropriate for the size of business, liaise with the Local Authority (LA) in compliance with public safety.
3. To hold valid Public Liability Insurance, relevant to the size of business.
4. To hold Employers Liability, if appropriate, (including volunteers).
5. To hold any other appropriate insurances' relevant to your operation, i.e. if providing/serving food, you should comply with all food safety and insurance regulations and requirements.
6. Any biosecurity arrangements/instructions applicable to the holding / farm should be made clear to clients before arrival where appropriate or prior to the walk or trek. Consider giving these when a booking is made.
7. Consider signage to be clearly displayed advising clients to wash with water and soap after contact with the animals. Be aware of the appropriate HSE regulations and the risk of e-coli 0157 when operating an animal business. An example of acceptable signage can be provided upon request. A link to HSE guidelines for Farm Parks and similar attractions is included above – [See Important Note - Page 1 above](#).
8. If there are age limits and restrictions for children, these should be clear on advertising material.
9. A minimum number of adults to appropriate number of children should be carefully thought through along with the age of children that are accepted to trek without a responsible adult accompanying them.
10. Always respect and abide by the Countryside Code.

Route Good Practice

11. To seek relevant permissions from landowners prior to any trek taking place. Know the law as to where you can or cannot trek.
12. Consideration to be given to the suitability of the terrain and accessibility for clients and animals. Consider the safety implications for public & client, plus welfare of the animals in conjunction with other livestock and biosecurity.
13. Each route should be Risk Assessed for safety purposes on a basis applicable to the amount of times the route is used.
14. Full consideration should be given to land owners, horse riders, dog owners, walkers and farmers conducting their everyday business.
15. On treks where children are allowed, routes should be appropriate in terms of terrain & accessibility. Consideration should be given to any additional equipment accompanying the trek, ie push chairs.
16. Routes should be assessed for vegetation which is fatal or damaging to the animals and their health. If the threat cannot be removed, a note should be made of the location as to where such vegetation is present so it can be avoided.

17. Consideration should be given on all routes to appropriate resting points for animals, access to shade, grazing and fresh drinking water. The resting point should not be near any threatening vegetation to the animals.
18. If trekking along roads, full consideration for traffic should be given and extra care and vigilant taken at all times.

Public / Client / Llama & Alpaca Health & Safety

19. Clients should be advised & encouraged to wear suitable footwear and clothing relevant to the environment of the trek and time of year.
20. The area where clients interact with the animals, should be clean and inviting, safe for clients to walk and view / interact with the animals.
21. Handling and interaction advice should be provided to clients before they engage directly with the animals. It is essential that handling and leading instruction be provided to all participants prior to departing on a trek. Along with information about the particular animal's nature and behaviour.
22. If you intend to allow hand feeding of your animals, consideration needs to be given to the structure of how this is done. Be aware of the implications of cross contamination for your clients and the implications of animal behaviour in respect of your client's safety.
23. Treks should be accompanied /supervised by the appropriate number of trained supervisors to ratio of animals/clients.
24. At least one supervisor should hold a valid First Aid at Work Certificate.
25. It is advisable to risk assess your operations fully considering the safety of your clients first. Considerations should be given to the accessibility of first aid kits either at your base or carrying them out on a trek or walk. Any first aid kits should be clearly marked and the contents in date.
26. Consider the need to carry either a mobile phone and /or two way radio's dependant on the route in question and distance of the route away from base. Ensure the operators are competent in their use.
27. Supervisors of treks should be trained in llama and or alpaca welfare and be familiar with each animal's nature & behaviour. Supervisors should be competent to be able to address any issues with the client / animal/member of the public to prevent incident or detect any concerning welfare issue with an animal.
28. Consider the need for high visibility attire being worn by supervisors when trekking along a road or route with high volume of walking traffic.
29. In cases of adverse weather, consideration should be given to the safety of clients and the animals, alterations to route or cancellations made as necessary.
30. Your LA should be able to guide you on effective hygiene regulations, appropriate for your business, however some LA's are not always up to date and are usually under resourced so you should be aware of the appropriate HSE regulations yourself and consider contacting the HSE executive if you are not sure. [See Important Note - Page 1 above.](#)
31. Consideration should be given to hand washing facilities, consisting of water and soap, being accessible at close vicinity to where clients

- interact with the animals. For any other form of hand washing/cleansing read the HSE guidance above. [See Important Note - Page 1 above.](#)
32. If providing food to clients whilst out on a trek your LA will advise you on this aspect. It is to be noted some LA's don't allow food to be carried on treks. Should they accept then they will stipulate any conditions you should follow in reference to hygiene.

Llama and Alpaca Welfare Requirements for Trekking / Walking

33. Animals used for trekking purposes should be of suitable temperament, health, confirmation, age, condition & strength for their purpose. Animals should have received adequate training for the treks they are to undertake and be familiar with routes and the environment they are expected to trek.
34. An appropriate training programme should be in place to ensure each animal has been familiarised with every aspect of the trek routes and that they are happy with that environment. Training programmes should be relevant to their age, temperament, physical and mental health. All training should be adapted to the pace of the individual animal's ability to learn and interpret new information.
35. Distance of trek should be relevant to the age and health of the animal, young animals should only be asked to walk or trek short distances, (llamas should not carry weight until they are mature plus physically and mentally ready to do so, recommended age of 4yrs).
36. Being herd animals, llamas and alpacas should only trek in the company of one another, the minimum being 2 llamas or 2 alpacas or a mix of both. The maximum number of animals on any one walk/trek needs to be relevant to size of business and the routes. Welfare being priority over revenue.
37. Animals should not be over worked. Their work should be scheduled in line with their age, health, nature and suitability. A rota ideally should be in place and their welfare should always come above income.
38. Treks and walks should not be booked to full capacity for the number of animals available, always have some animals in reserve in case you have an animal presenting unwell on the day.
39. Animals should be identified for their strengths and weaknesses with reference to their favoured position within the trekking or walking group. Lead animals should be animals which enjoy the responsibility and rear animals confident and not particularly fazed by environmental changes. Positions on the trek should take into account gender/age/pace and compatibility within the team. Above all every animal should enjoy their trek and position within the group.
40. Animals and clients should be of a suitable match for one another so both animal and human relax and enjoy one another's companionship.
41. A feeding regime should be in place for trekking animals, according to time of year and work capacity, age and general condition. Paying

- particular attention to vitamin increases, during the autumn and winter months.
42. Regular teeth and toe nail checks should be carried out on a quarterly basis for all animals and appropriate action taken where necessary.
 43. Fleeces on trekking llamas should be assessed and considered every spring, relevant to their age, health, workload, their fleece density/condition, your environment and weather. If required to carry a pack then hand shearing along backs or electric shearing a barrel clip (or more), should be the minimum consideration for that llama.
 44. Fleeces on alpacas require assessment each spring and consideration of full shearing/part shearing where required in accordance with the weather.
 45. No animal should be asked to walk/trek if in full fleece on hot days - be aware of the signs of heat stress and be aware heat stress can kill very quickly.
 46. Regular conditioning of health should be on a scheduled basis applicable to that business. All necessary records retained in terms of vaccination, worming, additional vitamins, minerals administered, along with any other medical treatments for each individual llama, should be maintained and accessible by all who care for the animals.
 47. Every working animal should be Body Condition Scored at a minimum of once a quarter and appropriate records kept.
 48. General overall health should be monitored on a daily basis. Appropriate action taken on any animal showing health concerns and withdrawn from trekking until investigated, treated and returned to acceptable health.
 49. Any animal subject to scour should be withdrawn from client use and the case investigated accordingly. The animal should not be reintroduced to work until given a clear bill of health and there is satisfaction that they present no threat to public health.
 50. Gender and age of animal should be carefully considered if mixing males and females on treks.
 51. Where using entire males, consideration should be given to the route and if you are walking/trekking past females. Where using females to trek equal consideration needs to be addressed if walking past entire males. You should assess these implications in terms of your animals' behaviour and uses throughout the year. Above consider implications on your client's safety.
 52. Pregnant females should be given their own consideration in terms of how long a distance they would trek and how far into the pregnancy they would be expected to work. Taking into account the female's health and the trek route/environment.
 53. Females with cria at foot should not be used for trekking and post weaning, allowed to re-gain full health & wellbeing before being introduced back to trekking.
 54. Llamas carrying packs should be adequately trained and of suitable strength and age. No llama should be asked to carry more than 25 kilos/one sixth of its body weight and the weight should be evenly distributed, using scales where necessary.

55. Pack systems should be of a suitable nature for the individual llama and the environment concerned and kept in good condition.
56. A first aid kit for animals should accompany every walk or trek, along with spare equipment such as halters/ lead ropes, pocket safety knife.
57. Relevant vets contact details should always be accessible at all times.
58. In the event of an animal becoming unwell, lame or stressed a 'plan B' should always be in place, i.e. access to transport the llama back to base if necessary.
59. In the event of a client becoming unwell, you should also have a back-up plan in place as it may be necessary to transport a client back to base if required.
60. The weather conditions should be suitable and appropriate to the route and distance, alterations to the route or cancellations made where necessary if the welfare of the animals would be affected.
61. Suitable stopping points should be designated along the route to allow the animals to rest graze and also, on the longer routes, have access to fresh drinking water. These considerations need to be in proportion to the distance the route covers and must not be near to trees or other vegetation that pose a risk to the animals if eaten. Be aware of what vegetation your animal should not eat or have access to.

Additional

- Always endeavour to uphold the good name of the British Llama and British Alpaca Societies.
- Maintain the goodwill of National Parks, The Forestry Authority, Local Authorities and all local organisations that allow trekking and walking to take place.
- Be aware of the implication of media and publicity and act responsibly towards your animals in terms of media recognition.

Above all:

Promote the friendly, therapeutic and brilliance of llamas and alpacas!

Should you have any comments or concerns regarding either Part 1 or Part 2 of the BAS/BLS Trekking Code & Guidance you can email either society and your comments will be taken into account when the documents are due for review.

New Section : Frequently Asked Questions.

This section addresses questions raised which may or may not result in changes to the code/guidance with explanations.

Q. Why are limits (duration/distance) not stated?

A. This was discussed and it was decided that due to the many variations in delivery of treks/walks (different farms/settings, terrain, llamas/alpacas etc.) it would be wrong to try to impose limits. For example 5 miles would perhaps be fine for a llama but less so for an alpaca; likewise doing frequent loops around a small area may be worse than a longer out and return. Grazing / toileting opportunities / access to water etc. are all important aspects esp for walks of longer duration or distances. It is therefore down to the operator to decide what is best for their animals in their specific scenario and importantly to adjust/change if this is detrimental to the wellbeing of the animals.

Q. Why are age limits (of animals) not placed on activities?

A. Again it very much depends on the animals and the specific activity. Young animals may not be sufficiently confident to undertake some activities and operators need to be aware of the risks to the wellbeing and future behavioural characteristics if animals are frightened or poorly handled esp at a young age. Older animals should not be used for walking if they have issues and the frequency and distance of walks needs to be continually assessed as an ongoing part of the duty of care operators have.

Q. Why are age limits not placed on children being allowed to walk animals?

A. Operators need to assess the suitability themselves owing to the differences in the activities and nature of the animals – some animals are more able to cope with small children than others; and some children may not be suitable for certain activities. Operators should be the best placed to make such judgments for the welfare of their animals and safety of customers.

Q. Why not have specific ratios of staff to animals/customers?

A. Operators need to be comfortable that they can manage the numbers for the specific activity; Ultimately they will need to justify that to Health and Safety or the local council responsible for licencing.

Change LOG / Control Sheet:

Change	date	page line	Reason	by who
Minor	24/07/2019	7	Added Change Log	Doug Steen
Minor	24/07/2019	all	version number	DS
Minor	24/07/2019	1	last line corrected comment	DS
Review	28/07/2024		General review + Added Q&A section	DS