



**POLAR  
TOURISM**  
Guides Association

guiding guiding

## POLAR QUALIFICATION

# Lead a Dog Sled Journey

2020 Edition

### DEFINITIONS:

- Scope:** Outlines who the Test is for.
- Element:** Outlines the overall **skill set** to be Tested.
- Range:** The **specific skills** to be examined. An examination **may or may not** include all of the range items. It is at the discretion of the assessor if the assessee shows confidence and ease in other range items as to whether they examine them or not.

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**SCOPE:** Lead a Dog Sled Journey is for guides who may be in charge of leading dog sled journeys in terrain that may include, sea ice, established roads and trails, mountains and passes. It may include areas where sea ice cracks and crevasses are present. It is a **minimum** requirement for longer journeys outside a town or village.

- PREREQUISITES:**
- Logged experience >10 dog sledding trips.
  - PQ Communications for Polar Operations.
  - PQ Navigation Skills for Polar Operations and Advanced Terrestrial Navigation Endorsement.
  - PQ Interpretation Skills for Polar Guides.
  - Crevasse Awareness and Management.
  - Operations in Polar Bear Environments if operating in these environments.

**CROSS CREDIT:** Some Elements from PQ Lead a Hike in Non-Technical Terrain may be cross credited if a guide has that award and has been assessed. See Cross Credit Matrix for Elements common to the two awards.

## ELEMENTS & PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:

### Element 1 – Plan and Prepare for a Dog Sled Journey.

**1.1 Deliver a written plan for a dog-sled journey (duration >2hours) that is suitable for polar tourism.** (This is a paper exercise for assessment purposes only. It is aimed at testing planning concepts.)

*Range:* Aims, objectives and purpose of the trip, estimated distances and, times emergency and alternative routes, risk/hazard identification and management strategies, any consent or access issues, weather information, intentions, communications and emergency procedures.

**1.2 Personally prepare for a dog-sled journey.**

*Range:* Suitable attire for the conditions, spare crucial clothing for self and clients, navigation device or strategy, knowledge of expected conditions on that particular route on that day, sunscreen, radio or communications carried in a suitable manner, first aid kit suitable for the purpose.

**1.3 Prepare sled for a sled journey.**

*Range:* Knowledge of suitable set up with lines for the sled, spare tug & neck lines, spare dog harnesses, spare hooks, check sled condition and sled bag, check the brakes, make sure anchor(s) are secured correctly, appropriate equipment and maintenance supplies carried relative to the length of journey.

**1.4 Prepare dogs for a sled journey.**

*Range:* Consideration of which dogs run better together, ensure dogs are in a good state for running, demonstrate efficient and calm handling of the dogs, check collars and harnesses, harnessing the dogs, dogs out on sled lines in the advanced set up teams, consideration and knowledge of dog socks.

### Element 2 – Lead and safely manage a group in a given polar environment.

**2.1 Brief clients on an intended trip.**

*Range:* Introduction, appropriate voice, language and body language, teaching/visual aids, demonstrations, learning moments, evaluation of learning, engaging clients in positive experience which encourages enthusiasm and interest.

**2.2 Effective management of the dogs and sled.**

*Range:* Commands, rest stops, assisting the dogs, sled handling and balance.

**2.3 Effective management of the group.**

*Range:* Rest stops, cold management, disclosure and explanation of potential dangers, route selection with regards to geography and movement around wildlife, keeping a group together, a system for accounting for everyone, establishing rapport, use of a leadership style appropriate to the group and support staff accompanying, situational management of hazards and wildlife encounters.

**2.4 Efficient and confident personal movement in a range of dog sledding terrain.**

*Range:* Soft snow, ice, trails, roads uphill and downhill travel in control.

**2.5 Demonstrate the use of, and can describe the advantages and limitations of different methods of communication suitable for use on a dog sled journey.**

*Range:* Radio, cellphone, GPS tracker, PLB and SAT phone, intentions form.

**2.6 Demonstrate the use and/or construction of an emergency shelter.**

*Range:* Suitable for surviving a night in adverse weather conditions (wind and rain), group shelter, snow cave, wind wall.

**2.7 Demonstrate strategies to collect local condition information.**

*Range:* Real-time weather information for a given area, snow and/or avalanche conditions, crack and crevasse status, tide conditions.

**2.8 Demonstrate knowledge of, and role model, accepted tour operator practices.**

*Range:* IAATO/AECO site guidelines, local area rules and laws including access issues and protocols, Leave No Trace.

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7/1/19  
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REVIEWERS:  
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Qualification Review Meeting