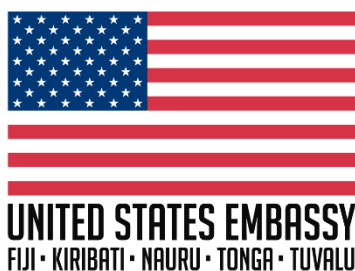




PACIFIC TOURISM
ORGANISATION



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SPTO SME Recovery Toolkit

Chapter 3: Health, Safety and Security

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Tools used for this chapter:

3.0	Checklist: Safety of Transfers
3.1	Checklist: Safety of facilities and equipment
3.2	Checklist: Safety of accommodation
3.3	Checklist: Child Safe Tourism
3.4	Checklist: Food Hygiene
3.5	Checklist & Templates: Health and Safety Management

Chapter 3: Health, Safety and Security



The last chapter of the handbook helped with creating the concept for adapting or developing your product offer.



In this chapter you will find essential information about international standards for health, safety and security, as well as information on health and safety guidelines for Covid-19 safe operations.

A practical guide and step-by-step process will help you to **identify, assess and minimise risks in your operations**. This will help you to build on your product design and may require further adaptations to be made.

How to use this chapter of the handbook:

There are many factors to consider when designing or adapting your product. As you read through each health and safety topic it is recommended that you **use the checklists** provided and **create a health and safety folder** for all the important documents if you haven't already done so.

By the end of this chapter, you should have a good understanding of how to meet **international standards** for health, safety and security and **be able to implement** the necessary procedures for ensuring safe operations.

Credit: David Kirkland & SPTO



Why is health & safety so important?

National and International Laws and Protocols

In the top source market countries health and safety is taken very seriously. As a service provider to tourists from these countries you must pay particular attention to it.

What matters most?



National laws and protocols

Contact the relevant authority in your country to access information about the health and safety laws and protocols that apply to your business.

International Law and Industry Standards

International Tour Operators will generally be members of trade associations that exist to support outbound travel providers. They will therefore follow the guidelines and recommended best practices set by the associations. Here are some examples:

Australia	CATO: Council for Australian tour Operators
New Zealand	TAANZ: The Travel Agents' Association of New Zealand
USA	USTOA: United states Tour Operators Association
UK	ABTA: Association of British Travel Agents
Europe-wide	ETOA: European Tourism Association

How does it work?

The way the guidelines are interpreted and enforced depends on the tour operator: the bigger the tour operator, the less flexible it will be.

Large tour operators will usually ask the ground handler or a company specialising in H&S audits to **run safety checks on suppliers** and **ensure compliance with their standards**. Audit documents represent proof that they have shown duty of care.

What do tour operators want?

Tour operators need to be sure that suppliers understand HOW to take care of tourists. They need to see that you have considered the potential dangers that could occur on the premises. All tourism service providers should ensure they meet the following requirements:

Meet National Legislation

- Adhere to local tourism laws, hold relevant licenses / certificates

Have a Safety Management System

- Conduct regular risk assessments
- Conduct regular audits to check that procedures and practices are in place and being followed

Safety does not happen by accident!

Insurance

You need to have Public Liability Insurance to protect yourself against claims related to potential risks (e.g. someone gets food poisoning, hurts themselves). Many tour operators will not work with you unless you have that insurance. For guidance on this you can contact **ground agents**, the relevant **Ministry of Commerce** in your country or via the **National Tourism Authority**.

Where excursion or accommodation providers ask their customers to sign disclaimers or waivers, bear in mind that in some jurisdictions, the courts may not honour such liability waivers if they conflict with the law or the public interest or if they represent an unequal bargaining power. Even with a liability waiver, you may still have the burden of proof to show that you were operating safely.

Health and Safety Protocols for Covid-19 Safe Operations

Following the advent of the new Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the declaration of a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020, many countries and organizations have implemented health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of the disease.

Pacific Island Countries are at different stages in developing protocols. You should contact the relevant authority in your country to access guidance and follow the protocols set. If there aren't any available for your country, familiarise with other country protocols. For examples of guidance already produced at the time of writing see below.

- [Guidelines](#) produced by The Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association under the Care Fiji Commitment¹ can be freely downloaded.
- The Tourism Authority of Kiribati have developed a series of protocols and comprehensive toolkit² for tourism businesses.

If you intend to work with tour operators, they will share their protocols for covid safe operations with their suppliers.



Source: Tourism Authority Kiribati



Source: MCTTT - Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism & Transport, Fiji

Recover with confidence

As travel returns, tour operators and tourists will want to ensure that suppliers are also meeting **enhanced health and safety practices**. Make sure you are complying with local guidelines, health rules and Covid-19 protocols. The following guidelines are provided by Treksoft, a leading booking platform software provider.

Health & Safety Customer Demands

- For travellers that are considering activities, attractions and tours, their top health and safety priority is a clear and thorough hygiene and cleaning plan.
- About a third say they want to see **strict capacity controls, staff health checks** and other physical changes at the facility to **ensure distancing**.

Travel Trend Report 2020/2021 Published by Trekk Soft and Arrival



SanSee Systems³, a **hygiene company serving the tours and attractions industry** recommends that tourism operators will need **to recover confidence in order to bring back business**. Below are tips written for tourism businesses, apply these as they relate to you.

1. Implement

- **Research and familiarise with the most relevant health and safety guidelines and Covid-19 protocols.** Ensure you implement them before accepting tourists.
- **Contact the source market tour operators and ground handlers** who are selling your product to get their guidelines and protocols which you also need to implement.
- **Put systems in place to monitor all health and safety measures** that you have implemented.

1. Train

- **Conduct awareness and sensitization training** for your staff to familiarize them with the health and safety guidelines and Covid-19 protocols which you have implemented.
- **Staff should also be trained to communicate** the health and safety measures to your guests and assist them to adhere to it.

1. Communicate

- **Effectively communicate the steps you are taking** to minimize the risk to your guests.
- **Communicate your expectations** of your guests.

1. Analyse?

Identify **every area of interaction** in the guest and staff journey and assess the risk:

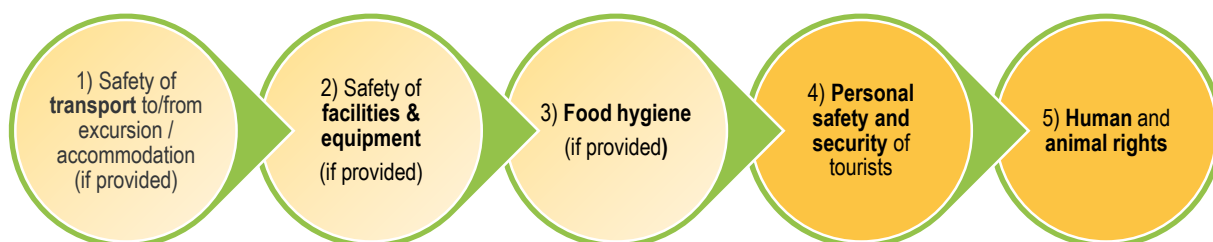
- **Human interaction:** trace every step of your guests and employees, door to door.
- **Material interactions:** what items are used? How are they handled, cleaned, and stored?

“...there is a tremendous pent-up demand for consumer experiences right now, but travelers are deeply concerned about their safety.”

Jon Peahl, President of SanSee Systems³

Safety of activities and experiences

Source market tour operators are sometimes reluctant to contract small excursion and attraction entrepreneurs due to concerns over health & safety standards. Demonstrating health and safety awareness and good practice really increases the chances to sell your product to the international tourism industry.



Health and safety covers 5 aspects of the tourism experience:-

These aspects are in **addition** to Covid-19 protocols.

For the first 3 topics refer to the tools that relate to your type of business:



[Tool 3.0](#)

Safety of transfers

[Tool 3.1](#) & [Tool 3.2](#)

Safety of building, facilities and equipment, Safety of accommodation

[Tool 3.4](#)

Food hygiene



Credit: Talanoa Treks

Personal safety and security of tourists

The Pacific Islands are safer travel destinations than many places in the world. However, some tourists will still be cautious when leaving their hotels because they are not sure about levels of crime. Therefore, it is important to reassure tourists that you take their safety and security seriously. Specifically when they are in your care ensure the following:

- ✓ People who tourists come into contact with are welcoming so that they feel safe.
- ✓ Tourists are not pressurised into buying souvenirs or made to feel guilty for not buying anything.

Medical Care

All attractions and activity providers should have a clear procedure for dealing with medical incidents and emergencies. This includes:

- ✓ Having a first aid kit and someone trained to give first aid.
- ✓ Emergency contact details clearly displayed throughout the attraction, including emergency services, local Doctor and hospital.

Crimes

Whilst tourists are visiting an attraction or taking part in an activity it is important that they are not victims of any criminal activities. They should have provision for storing personal belongings and advice on how to keep their belongings safe.



Human Rights

Tourists expect to see that people working for and with attractions and operators are treated with respect and care.

UK tour operators are particularly concerned with children's rights and will be **very alarmed if school age children are working** as part of the attraction instead of being at school.

Similarly, where local communities and other groups are involved in the activities, care must be taken to ensure that they are treated fairly and respectfully.

It is important that as a services provider you can demonstrate that you have considered potential risks and have taken action to mitigate them.



"Human rights are the basic entitlement of individuals to lead a dignified life, free from fear or want, and able to express independent beliefs. TUI is committed to protect, respect and remedy human rights throughout our worldwide operations in line with applicable laws, conventions and regulations."



Useful Resources

Referencing the following documents in your health and safety policy will demonstrate that you are aware of international standards for human rights. The resources are practical guides to the considerations and actions to take.



A Child Safe Tourism Checklist has been created for the Pacific region¹. (A full copy of this resource is included in [Tool 3.3](#) appendix) The checklist provides useful tips for embedding these processes effectively into your business.

In short, the main actions to complete include the following:

Conduct a risk assessment to identify and assess where there maybe risks to children throughout your operations

- ✓ Develop a policy or operating procedures
- ✓ Develop a Child Safe Code of Conduct for staff
- ✓ Set up reporting processes for reporting concerns
- ✓ Obtain feedback from communities
- ✓ Brief tourists on your policy and appropriate conduct



Human Rights Tool for small and medium-sized tour operators

The Roundtable Human Rights inTourism for Tour Operators² is a non-profit association under German law. The Roundtable has produced a tool primarily for outbound tour operators, however the tool is freely available online and provides useful advice for activity providers.

¹ <https://pacific.childsafevolunteering.com/resources/>

² <https://www.humanrights-in-tourism.net/>

Animal Welfare

Animals may be part of an attraction as a means of transport e.g. horse rides or as part of activities e.g. swimming with stingrays or animal viewing.

Many tourists are concerned about animal welfare and will complain to tour operators if they observe any malpractice. Note that the European market, in particular, might have different ideas to other markets on what level of animal welfare they feel is acceptable. For example, many European tourists do not like to see wild animals in cages, even if animal welfare standards are being met. ABTA⁴ have produced animal welfare guidelines that Tour Operator members follow. It is advised to familiarise with the relevant guidelines.



“At TUI, we are strongly committed to animal welfare and work very closely with other organisations and industry associations such as ABTA to make sure our suppliers meet the best possible standards regarding the health and well-being of animals. If we did not, our holidaymakers would be very unhappy and disappointed with their holiday”



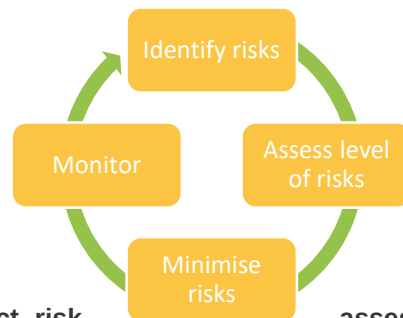
If your attraction includes animals, consult experts (e.g. animal charities, conservation agencies) to ensure that your experience is safe for animals as well as tourists. Also obtain a copy of any guidelines from the tour operators that sell your product.

Particular activities to avoid

- **Touching and holding wild animals** including marine species should be avoided. Human contact can cause harm to animals through transmission of disease, distress and physical harm.
- **Sea turtle hatchings and nesting sites** are extremely fragile and any tourist experiences should follow international best practice guidelines

Health and Safety Management

Managing risks is all about assessing the dangers and taking precautions to eliminate or minimise them. The following chapter of the manual sets out the processes for risk management.



Businesses must conduct risk assessments

Most tour operators and ground handlers will have their own forms but will be greatly encouraged to see that a supplier has this process in place.

Risk management is an **ongoing process** and so all businesses should regularly reassess and check that any measures that have been put in place are effective.



Refer to [Tool 3.5](#) for risk assessment and safety management templates. These follow the steps below.

Step 1: →

Identify the risks throughout the entire customer experience, the facilities and for each activity. Complete a risk assessment form to record all of the risks identified.

Example: A tourist slipping over during a visit to a traditional village.

Step 2: →

Assess the risks. The matrix below illustrates how businesses can determine the grade of risks. Risks are graded as high, medium or low according to:-

- How **likely** they are to happen.
- The **level** of injury they generate.

	Level of Harm		
Likelihood of occurrence	Serious	Moderate	Minor
Very likely	High	High	Medium
Quite likely	High	Medium	Low
Unlikely	Medium	Low	Low

Example: A risk that is **quite likely** to happen and cause a **minor level of harm** would rate as **low risk**.

Step 3: ➡

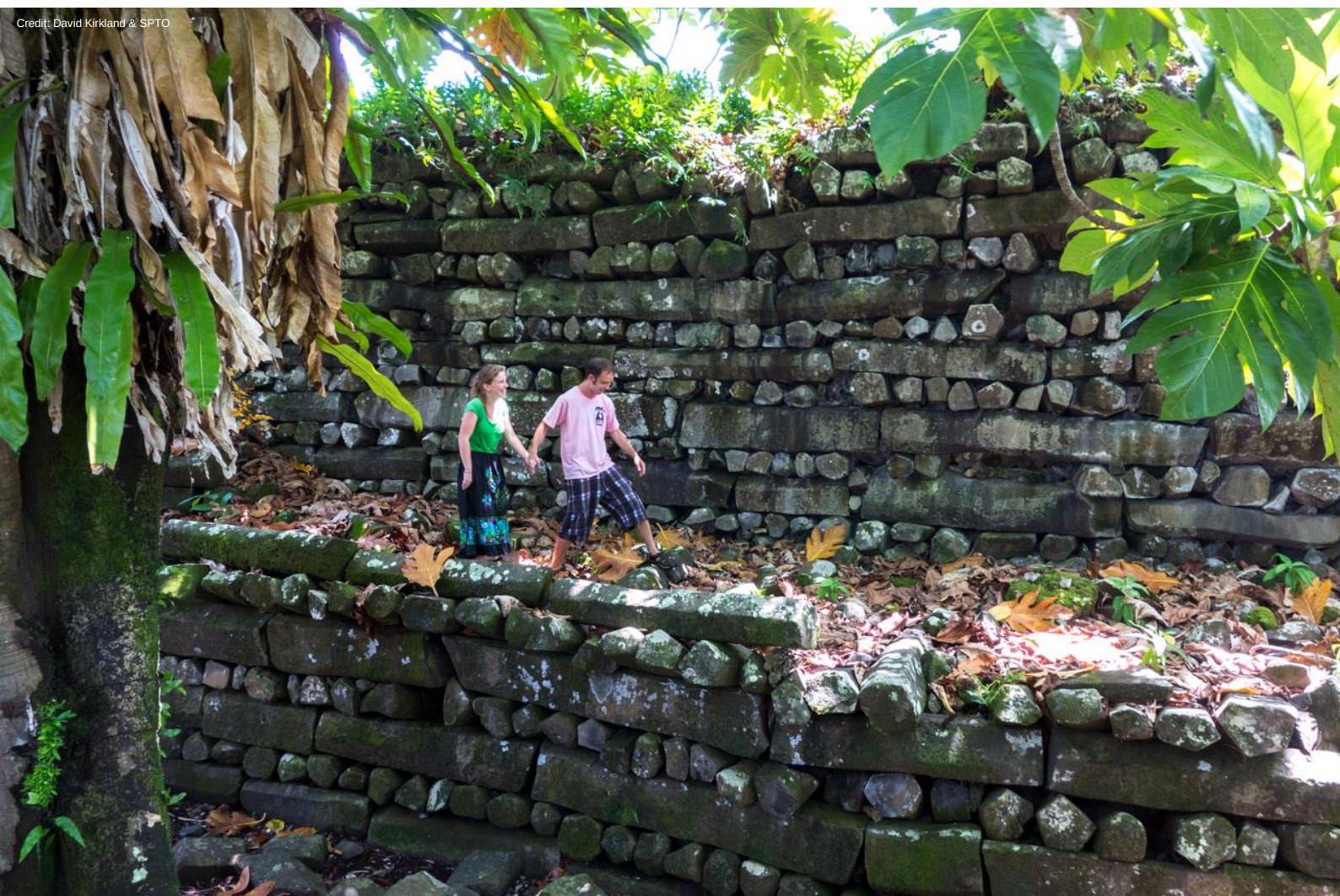
Determine the best course of action to **remove** or **minimise** the risk.

- ✓ Remove completely
- ✓ Provide equipment
- ✓ Train employees
- ✓ Brief customers
- ✓ Use signage
- ✓ Smaller group sizes / higher ratio of staff: customer

Example: **Briefing tourists** about uneven ground or **providing a handrail** would help to minimise the risk of slipping over.

Step 4: ➡

Monitoring should be done on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that the precautions taken are effective and that the **risk levels remain low**.





Chapter 3: Key Takeaways

Take health and safety seriously.

Health and safety continue to be very important to both customers and tour operators. Attractions and accommodations must ensure that they are maintaining the highest levels of safety for the experiences and activities on offer to customers. Safety also covers buildings, facilities, transportation and equipment, which must meet local safety laws and tour operator requirements for customer safety. Human rights and animal welfare are important aspects of health and safety and there are resources available to help businesses with following good practices.

Public liability insurance and risk assessments are vital.

Public Liability Insurance must be in place if working with international tour operators. However refer to your national / local authority for guidance. Businesses are well advised to ensure that they carry out periodic risk assessments and put measures in place to mitigate or eliminate any risks identified.

Make sure you are complying with COVID-19 protocols.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has served to heighten customers' expectations of health and safety protocols. As a tourism business, it is important that you make an effort to communicate to your customers the measures that are in place and what is expected of them to comply and reduce the risks of transmitting the COVID-19 virus.

Credit: David Kirkland & SPTO



References

- ¹ https://www.mcttt.gov.fj/doc_uploads/Tourism%20Guidelines.pdf
- ² <https://corporate.visitkiribati.travel/covidtoolkit/>
- ³ <https://sansee.travel/sansee-helps-tourism-recover-safely-after-covid-19>
- ⁴ <https://www.abta.com/>