



In the previous edition of this magazine there was some advice about minimising the environmental impact of DofE expeditions. In this edition Alex Davies takes a look at expedition behaviour.

With more and more DofE expedition teams out and about in the UK, the DofE is becoming ever more high profile. The sight of a line of rucksack-carrying young people in a range of high-visibility colours can be a common sight in many areas.

It is vital to the reputation and sustainability of the DofE that teams remember that they are using a national resource that needs taking care of.

More than you realise

With more and more people undertaking their DofE each year there are inevitably more expeditions taking place, often located in the same areas.

Most Assessors and Supervisors will have probably climbed to a high point, spotted an expedition team in the right place only to then see another four or five teams that could also be theirs.

There are usually many more DofE teams around that you realise, often only becoming apparent in the evenings when the campsite is packed with groups from all over the county and beyond.

Pulling up in a convenient driveway for ten minutes to see a team though may seem fine but, after ten Supervisors have done it every weekend for ten weeks, the land owners can justifiably become very frustrated.

Pick up and drop off

Like checkpoints, there are often obvious and convenient start and

finish points which team after team will inevitably use.

Avoid complaints from local land owners by checking beforehand to see if it is private land. Alternatively, call in advance to agree a time when the owner is happy for you to be there.

Many car parks are pay and display so will require those people dropping off, picking up or using attached toilet facilities to pay.

Some owners and National Parks have waived parking charges when they are told in advance that it is a DofE group, so it is often worthwhile calling ahead.

Litter

DofE participants should be setting the example in the countryside by having a planned strategy for removing all of their litter.

All litter created during an expedition must be removed by the participants and either carried away or disposed of in appropriate bins.

DofE participants should leave areas as they would wish to find them and should be willing to remove other litter they find as well as their own.



Remember that any 'dead-letter droppings' must be collected and never left behind.

Check the area you are going to as some, like The New Forest, count these as litter and will remove any that are found.

Camp sites

As well as the obvious courtesy that needs to be shown to all other users, it is vital that the Supervisor identifies themselves to the camp site owner or manager, even if not staying with the team at the camp site overnight. The camp site owner/manager must always have a contact number for the Supervisor so they can be reached if there is an issue or emergency.

Behaviour

Due to the robust training and practice expedition programme DofE teams complete, most are well trained in the Countryside Code, and their variations around the UK, and have an understanding and value of the countryside.

It is important to stress that teams which damage land, crops, property or release livestock, even inadvertently, can be chased for compensation.

At the request of the DofE network in last year's survey, the new DofE Expedition Guide includes a section on key behaviour expectations of DofE participants undertaking expeditions (see pages 118-9). This also includes new powers for Expedition Assessors to remove their assessment services if teams persistently and deliberately flout these requirements.

