

## Recommended Code of Practice for High Altitude Guided Commercial Expeditions

*Approved by UIAA General Assembly Malacca October 1998*

**1. Definition.** This Code applies specifically to commercial operators attempting 8000m or other comparable peaks which offer to guide or accompany climbers above Base Camp and also to operators who offer more limited facilities. However it may also concern operators who supply transport etc to Base Camp, and may also supply Base Camp services and High Altitude porters.

**2. Rationale.** A variety of organisations offer to take clients on 8000m peaks. They vary from those which provide a full service to the summit or nearly to the summit, to those where there is minimal support for clients above Base Camp. However at the present moment it is difficult for clients to deduce from brochures exactly what is offered in terms of guiding and support, and whether it corresponds to their needs. This Code supplies clients with pointers to assist them to make an informed choice.

**3. High Altitude Warning.** Mountaineers climbing at very high altitude, especially above 8000m are at the limit of their mental and physical powers and may not be capable of assisting others as has always been traditional in mountaineering.

This fact is of particular importance to mountaineers of limited experience who rely on professional guides to bring them safely up and down 8000m peaks. They should be made aware that the risks involved in climbing 8000m peaks are such that a high degree of self-reliance is always necessary.

**Guides may have to carry out a rescue of members of their own team or others on the mountain. This may cause clients to miss a summit attempt.**

# The Code

1. The leader or chief guide and as many as possible of the guides should have high altitude experience appropriate to the altitude of the peak to be climbed. There is no qualification appropriate to high altitude guiding, so the term "guide" does not imply that the person holds a professional qualification. Clients can only judge from the previous experience of the guides, who may be westerners or Sherpas or other local mountaineers.
2. The guiding and portering staff on the mountain and the material supplied must be adequate for the aims of the party and stated level of service offered.
3. A doctor in the party is very desirable but at the very least advance arrangements must be made for medical help. Advance arrangements must also be made for evacuation assistance in case of emergency.
4. The minimum safety equipment available must be walkie-talkie radios, **radio or satellite rear-link** and recommended medical supplies.
5. Advertising must give a true picture of all the difficulties and dangers involved, and avoid promising the impossible. Biographical information about the guiding team should be included.
6. The client must truthfully reveal his experience, medical history etc to the organiser so that the organiser can make an informed choice about the potential client.
7. Information supplied in advance should include a clear statement of the guiding, portering and equipment which will be supplied by the organiser, together with details of the clothing and equipment to be supplied by the client.
8. Operators and clients must take account of the *UIAA Environmental Objectives and Guidelines* and follow the *UIAA Expeditions Code of Ethics*.