

# Award USA - Adventurous Journey FAQ

## Requirements

### **What is the technology policy on the AJ?**

Using cell phones on an AJ can destroy the sense of isolation and self-reliance, which are core characteristics to the AJ. Cell phones can be a useful tool (both for safety and otherwise), but the final decision on their use on the AJ should be agreed upon by the Supervisor and Assessor and shared with the group. Many Assessors and Supervisors require the participants to turn off their phones and seal them in a Ziploc bag (wrapped with tape), to be used only in emergencies.

### **Who started the requirement of being in the wild?**

The "wild" portion of the AJ, or the requirement that the AJ be in the backcountry/outdoors, has always been a part of the Award program. At the program's inception in 1956, Lord John Hunt, one of the leaders of the Everest expedition (which led Edmund Hillary to the summit), brought the challenging outdoor experience to the program structure.

### **What are the time requirements for the Practice Journey?**

Practice journeys should be at least one night, but for Silver and Gold levels, it is highly recommended to spend at least two nights out on the practice journey, as the qualifying journey requires a different level of planning and preparation.

### **What should we use for maps and navigation on our AJs?**

In preparation for the AJ, it is important to choose a location you are able to acquire detailed maps of. The use of compasses and maps are the main source of navigation. If you are unable to find maps, consider contacting the local park office, or register for [alltrails.com](http://alltrails.com)

### **How should we conduct research for the Adventurous Journey?**

It's recommended that you utilize resources provided by Award USA. Additionally, you can visit your local REI or outdoor store. The staff can be very helpful in directing you to local parks that meet your needs or resources that provide information specific to overnight camping trips.

### **What are the costs of an AJ?**

The cost of an AJ can vary greatly and tends to depend on many different components, including the location you choose, the equipment you need, and any training you select that is fee-based. If Participants ultimately choose to complete at Adventurous Journey through a Registered Activity Provider (RAP) rather than independently, there are costs associated with that option as well. For more information of RAP options, visit [usaward.org/adventurous-journeys/](http://usaward.org/adventurous-journeys/).

### **What is the best way to plan the AJ?**

The best way to plan an AJ is to first evaluate what your abilities and resources are. If you know adults who are trained and knowledgeable in the outdoors, they might be willing to assist with the training portion of the AJ. If you know adults willing to act as a Supervisor and Assessor for the AJ, managing a major portion of the planning and logistics, then you should provide them with this Guide to an Independent Adventurous Journey resource to help them determine whether they are willing to serve in these roles.

If you are uncomfortable managing your own AJ, you can reach out to any of our trained, certified and insured Registered Activity Providers (RAPs) to inquire about the opportunities they provide for verified Adventurous Journeys at every Award level.

**What is the best way to ensure that the planning is participant driven?**

To ensure that planning is participant rather than Supervisor driven, it is important to identify your participant team early on in the process. With Supervisor guidance, the team will set clear expectations and parameters for themselves (both cost & location). Additionally, route cards are an essential tool in the preparation and planning process. Route cards enable participants to know where they are going and aid Assessors/Supervisors in knowing where they are located for safe check-in. Additionally, it might be helpful to set meeting dates when the team can begin planning. The key here is to have clear expectations and start early (6-9 months prior).

**Is it acceptable to have different ages in one AJ group?**

It is acceptable to have different age groups in one AJ group, but crossing Award Levels is not acceptable (i.e. Bronze & Silver). It is important to keep in mind that the AJ requires Participants to be peers (usually within three years of each other).

**How does passing/failing work on AJs?**

Passing and failing is something that is determined by the Assessor. The team will be measured against the Conditions of the AJ. Participants should be assessed individually, so they are able to fail as individuals. However, if a group of four is on their Qualifying Journey, and one participant violates the conditions (where it's necessary to be sent home), the Assessor will need to fail the whole group, as they won't have enough members to complete the journey (based on the conditions). If the whole group is involved in violating one of the conditions, the Assessor may fail them as a group.