

FGASA PROFESSIONAL SKS (Dangerous Game) CERTIFICATE



The FGASA **Professional Special Knowledge and Skills (Dangerous Game) Guide** [SKS(DG)] conducts an advanced guided nature experience on foot to view potentially dangerous animals having accumulated the FGASA required guiding experience on foot in areas with all of the Big 5 dangerous animal species.

The FGASA SKS(DG) Guide Certificate consists of the following:

Compulsory components

- The FGASA SKS(DG) Trails Guide Certificate
- The following **PFTC unit standards** (Professional Firearms Trainers Council):
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the Firearms Control Act 2000 (Act No 60 of 2000) applicable to possessing a rifle (Code:117705)
 - Handle and Use a manually operated Rifle or Carbine (Code:119651)
 - Handle and use a manually operated Rifle or Carbine for Business Purposes (Code: 123519)
- The FGASA **Advanced Rifle Handling** (ARH) Certificate and the SKS(DG) shooting Certificate (*Refer to the FGASA ARH Brochure for more information*)
- The FGASA **Tracker Level 3** Certificate
- The required **active guiding experience** in areas with all the **Big 5** dangerous animal category species



FGASA SKS(DANGEROUS GAME) GUIDE

At this level the SKS(DG) Guide:

- Is operating as a professional Lead guide on foot in dangerous game areas.
- Is a professional walking guide who is able to conduct advanced guided walking activities/safaris in any African dangerous game areas.
- May be operating as a competent professional guide on foot in a number of different dangerous game sites. A Site in this case usually refers to a particular Game or Nature reserve or National Park in which dangerous game occur.
- Has previously attained a FGASA Professional Field Guide qualification [*Previously known as FGASA Level 3*] and has previously attained the FGASA Professional Trails Guide qualification.
- Has the minimum required 1 200 hours of experience over a period of at least 4 years in dangerous game areas.
- Has advanced knowledge considered essential to register and legally conduct an advanced guided nature experience on foot in dangerous game areas as a FGASA Professional SKS(DG) guide.
- Has been declared competent against the Professional SKS (Dangerous Game) theoretical and the practical assessments.
- Has a valid, Department of Labour recognised First Aid certificate with a Wilderness component.
- Has the required PFTC unit standards and the required FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH) Certificates.

The Professional SKS(Dangerous Game) guide will:

- be safe at all times
- be knowledgeable on all aspects of the area (fauna and flora, ecology, geology, astronomy, history, etc.)
- be completely proficient in handling his/her rifle (ARH and SKS Advanced rifle handling qualification)
- have advanced navigation and orientation skills (maps, compass & GPS)
- be fit enough to carry out a long walk/hike – 20kms plus
- have knowledge of First Aid to be able to deal with any eventuality that arises while on a walking activity in a remote area



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- have above average observational skills
- be able to handle any situation that arises with confidence and safety (Dangerous animal specific)
- be able to set up a rough camp under the stars in the event of conducting a walking trail in remote areas
- be able to prepare basic menus and cater for the duration of the assessment (cooking is not included)
- be able to work as a 'team member', 'back-up' and as a 'leader' of a team
- be able to operate as a team member, back-up and leader under stressful conditions (handle difficult clients under trying conditions)

How do I get a FGASA Professional SKS(DG) Guide Certificate?

Once you have qualified as a FGASA Professional Trails Guide, attained the Tracker Level 3 Certificate and logged the required hours and encounters as a Professional Trails Guide you will be eligible to complete the Professional SKS(DG) theory Workbook. (*Refer to the Professional SKS(DG) theory syllabus in this document*)

Requirements to be recommended for the FGASA Professional SKS(DG) Guide Certificate:

- Must be a current paid-up member of FGASA
- Must have completed the FGASA DG Theory component (Workbook)
- Must have attained the FGASA Professional Field Guide Qualification
- Must have attained the FGASA Professional Trails Guide Certificate
- Must have attained the FGASA Tracker Level 3 Certificate
- Must have attained the relevant PFTC Unit Standards
- Must have attained a First Aid Level 2 Certificate with a Wilderness component
- Must have logged at least 1 200 hours of guiding on foot in dangerous game areas over not less than 4 years.
- Must have logged a minimum of 100 mentored hours (*Refer to mentorship section in this document*)



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Submission of required evidence

The following has to be submitted to the FGASA office for eligibility to be assessed for the Professional SKS (Dangerous Game) Certificate:

- The SKS (DG) application forms
- Your Dangerous Game logbook reflecting your dangerous game guiding experience. This will then be forwarded on to a selected panel of assessors.
- The logbook will then be independently verified by all on the panel.
- A letter from another Professional SKS(DG) guide recommending that you be admitted to be assessed for the Professional SKS(DG) Qualification and seconded by another professional SKS(DG) guide.
- You will be required to attend an interview with a Professional SKS(DG) panel before being admitted to be practically assessed for the Professional SKS(DG) Qualification.
- You will be invited to attend the practical assessment if all requirements are met.

Dangerous Game Logbooks

All dangerous animal encounters (Refer to the *FGASA definition of an encounter*) as Lead Trails and Professional Trails Guide must be recorded in the FGASA Dangerous Game Logbook.

Dangerous game encounters for the professional SKS(DG) Certificate

At least 300 of the encounters must be as Lead Guide during normal guided walks, which may include guiding students. The balance can be made up during other fieldwork and 100 mentored hours. It can also be made up during training but only if the learner is acting as first/second rifle, thus not a group exercise. It may also not include encounters while the learner is being assessed for the VPDA practical. The dangerous animals must be free ranging in the natural environment, and if hand/boma reared, must have been successfully rehabilitated.

Within this time period you must also have logged at least **600 encounters** (Refer to the definitions of an "Encounter") with free ranging dangerous game from the following categories, with a minimum of **30 encounters per category**,

- Elephant bull
- Elephant breeding herd
- Buffalo bull
- Buffalo breeding herd
- Lion & leopard
- White & black rhino
- Hippopotamus



An encounter is one of the following:

- the guide needs to respond to the animal because of the animal's behaviour and not the lack of behaviour (e.g. a feeding elephant across the river cannot be regarded as an encounter, but the elephant crossing the river towards the side of the trail group to feed or carry on with life and whose path will intersect with the current position of the trail group can be regarded as an encounter)

OR

- a reaction from the animal ie. animal may or may not be aware of the position of the trail group that requires the guide to respond (e.g. charging or threatening behaviour from the animal, or an animal which is moving in the direction of the trail group because it became aware of something or because that is the available escape route for the animal)

OR

- an unintentional chance contact at very close quarters with an animal unaware of the trail group, but which requires extreme caution and readiness from the guides to extract the trail group from the area and ensure the safety of man and beast (e.g. a sleeping buffalo at 5 or 6 yards).

Sightings of dangerous game on foot outside the above criteria are regarded as "sightings" and do not contribute to the required number of encounters.

Please note:

- **An animal may not be provoked in any way to get a reaction. This is unacceptable.**
- **FGASA does NOT promote any form of enforced encounters.**

The SKS(DG) Guide is assessed by means of:

- Proof of a FGASA Professional Field Guide Certificate
- Proof of a Professional Trails Guide Certificate
- Proof of a current ARH Certificate
- Proof of a FGASA Tracker Level 3 Certificate
- Professional SKS(DG) Theory workbook
- Logbook verification (1200 Hours on foot)
- Mentorship logbook verification
- Professional SKS(DG) Practical assessment
 - Shooting
 - Bush phase



The Mentorship phase for the Professional SKS(DG) Guide

The candidate needs to arrange his/her own time with mentors and this could include on a trail, tracking, training, conservation work, etc. Potential Professional SKS(DG) candidates will have access to mentors after they have achieved the Professional Trails Guide Qualification.

These mentorship experiences need to be signed off by each mentor in the 'Mentorship logbook'. FGASA will provide a list of recognised mentors for this qualification.

Over the mentorship period five (5) mentors should be used (from the recognised list) with at least 3 of these mentors being on the list of Professional SKS(DG) Assessors.

Hours of Mentorship

The number of hours of mentorship required between attaining the Professional Trails Guide qualification and eligibility for the Professional SKS(DG) assessment are a minimum of 100 mentored hours out of 600 hours of experience required.

The Practical Assessment for the Professional SKS(DG) Guide

The practical assessment for the Professional SKS(DG) qualification is carried out by at least two qualified FGASA Professional SKS(DG) Assessors in a Dangerous animals guiding area designated by FGASA. To be declared competent for the Professional SKS(DG) practical your assessment will have to take place in an area of 'Big 5' animals (Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Rhino, and Buffalo). This assessment will take place over a number of days on a walking trail (maximum of seven days & six nights) with a group of guides being assessed at the same time.

Two separate practical assessment sessions

The practical assessment for the professional SKS(DG) Certificate is divided into two separate sessions held at different times.

- The Professional SKS(DG) "Advanced Shooting" assessment
- The Professional SKS(DG) "Bush Phase" assessment

The SKS (DG) Advanced Shooting assessment

The first session, the "Advanced Shooting" assessment will take place at a set date and venue at which the guides have to be declared competent before they will be admitted to attending the "Bush Phase" assessment for this qualification. Thus the "Advanced Shooting" assessment may take place a number of weeks/months before the bush phase assessment. It is important that you come to the shooting assessment well prepared. Due to the nature of the qualification a high (well-practiced) degree of rifle proficiency is required. You will be responsible for supplying your own rifle (which must be in good working order) own ammunition (min 60 rounds) and rifle cleaning equipment.

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You will be required to bring the following for the shooting assessment.

- Own camping gear
- Own food
- Own rifle ammo and cleaning kit
- Own backpack and hiking gear
- FGASA Dangerous game log book
- FGASA Mentorship logbook



Before the bush phase assessment takes place, a maximum of 10 guides will be assessed over the period for the advanced shooting requirement. The “Advanced Shooting” assessment may take place over a 3-day period. You will be interviewed during the shooting assessments and will have to have your log books available. You will also be advised on how the bush phase will be run during this time. (*Refer to the Professional SKS(DG) shooting exercise description*).

SKS(DG) Advanced shooting assessment will include:

- **Section one**
 - Rifle Inspection (guide responsible for working order of rifle)
 - Blind Fold Exercise
 - Grouping Exercise
- **Section two**
 - SKS (DG) ARH – (Trails Guide) ARH with a back-pack of minimum of 15kg on
 - Distance Exercise
 - Immediate Action Exercise
 - Shot Placement Exercise
 - Simulated Charge
- **Section three**
 - Halley’s Hop (Without the back-pack)
 - Anchor shot exercise (with backpack)
- **Section four**
 - Jungle Lane (With Back-pack)
- **Section five**
 - Night Shooting
 - Shot placement at night with torch

The SKS(DG) “Bush Phase” assessment

To be eligible for the “Bush Phase” practical assessment you must have been declared competent for the SKS(DG) “Advanced Shooting” assessment.

- Rifle and cleaning kit inspection is mandatory at the beginning of the “Bush Phase” assessment.

A maximum of 4 guides will be assessed for the “Bush Phase” as a group by a minimum of 2 SKS(DG) assessors over a period of between 3 – 5 days at a suitable venue and approved by the SKS(DG) FGASA sub-committee.

The “Bush Phase” practical assessment process for the SKS(DG) Certificate will include the following:

- Navigation (map reading, compass navigation and/or GPS)
- Scenarios (from the encounters of the day)
- Tracking (trailing & finding Dangerous animals)
- Tracking & Sign interpretation
- Sleep-outs (backpacking)
- Setting up a temporary tented camp site
- Back-up skills
- Rifle etiquette
- Situational Awareness
- Secondary disturbance
- Basic survival skills
- Being ethical & responsible
- Show a high level of physical & mental fitness
- Encounters *(It must be remembered that encounters are only a part of the experience a candidate creates for guests and therefore it is not the be all and end all of the assessment.)*

The practical Assessment will be explained to you in detail by the assessors during the shooting assessment phase. It is important that you **“CREATE THE EXPERIENCE”** in order to demonstrate your special skills pertaining to leading a trail in dangerous game areas and utilize all available opportunities to do this.

Once you have been declared competent for the practical evaluation you will have attained the FGASA SKS(DG) Certificate.

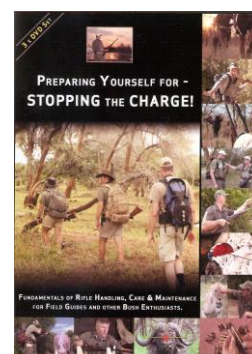
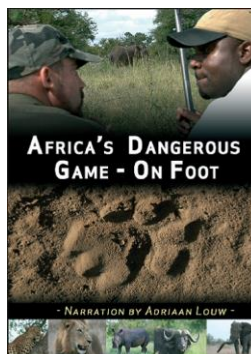


The professional SKS(DG) Theory component

The theory component for this qualification will include:

The theory workbook for the Professional SKS(DG) qualification includes anything from the syllabus below:

- **Dangerous game species**
 - Anatomy
 - Reproduction
 - Habits
 - Ecology
 - Social structure
 - Feeding behaviour
 - Habitats and related behaviour
 - Warning signs
 - Method of attack
 - Evade and escape techniques
 - General diseases
 - Sub-species
 - Related species
 - Protection status
 - Shot placement
- **Firearms**
 - Safety
 - Firearms Control Act
 - Parts & functions
 - Maintenance
 - Design
- **Ballistics**
 - Definitions
 - Internal ballistics
 - External ballistics
 - Terminal ballistics
 - Cartridge designs
 - Calibres
- **Setting up a temporary wilderness camp**
 - Safety
 - Camp Layout
 - Water
 - Ablutions
- **General**
 - Legal aspects
 - Trail procedure
 - Guest empathy
 - Approach & retreat techniques
 - Briefing & debriefing
 - Crisis & trauma management
 - Follow-ups on wounded animals
 - The Wilderness Approach
 - Wilderness ethics and Wilderness Conservation
- **Survival**
 - Navigation (Map reading, compass & GPS)
 - Finding Water
 - Finding & preparing a shelter
 - Basic weapons
 - Tracking
 - Finding & preparing food
 - First aid & Wilderness Medicine
- **The Wilderness back-pack**
 - Design, size & colour
 - Essential items
 - Non-essential items
 - Packing the back-pack
 - ❖ Ease
 - ❖ Comfort
 - ❖ Practicality



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