

Examining Outdoor Training & Certification Standards by Incident Data

Based on Incident Trends at Outward Bound California (2012-2014)

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Research Topic

A critical examination of industry training and certification practices is warranted due to the high cost and time commitment to attain and maintain these certifications by both organizations and instructors. Furthermore, examination of the certification process should take place due to the burden placed upon institutions required to offer these certifications for their instructors.

OBCA Recorded Incident Data (2012-14)



Methods

Data were compiled using Outward Bound Accident Data from 123 incidents over a three year time period (Jan – Aug) and correlated with the corresponding curriculum from various certifications. Total percentages were obtained to compare certification use frequency in real-time incident/accident data from a major outdoor program.

Conclusions

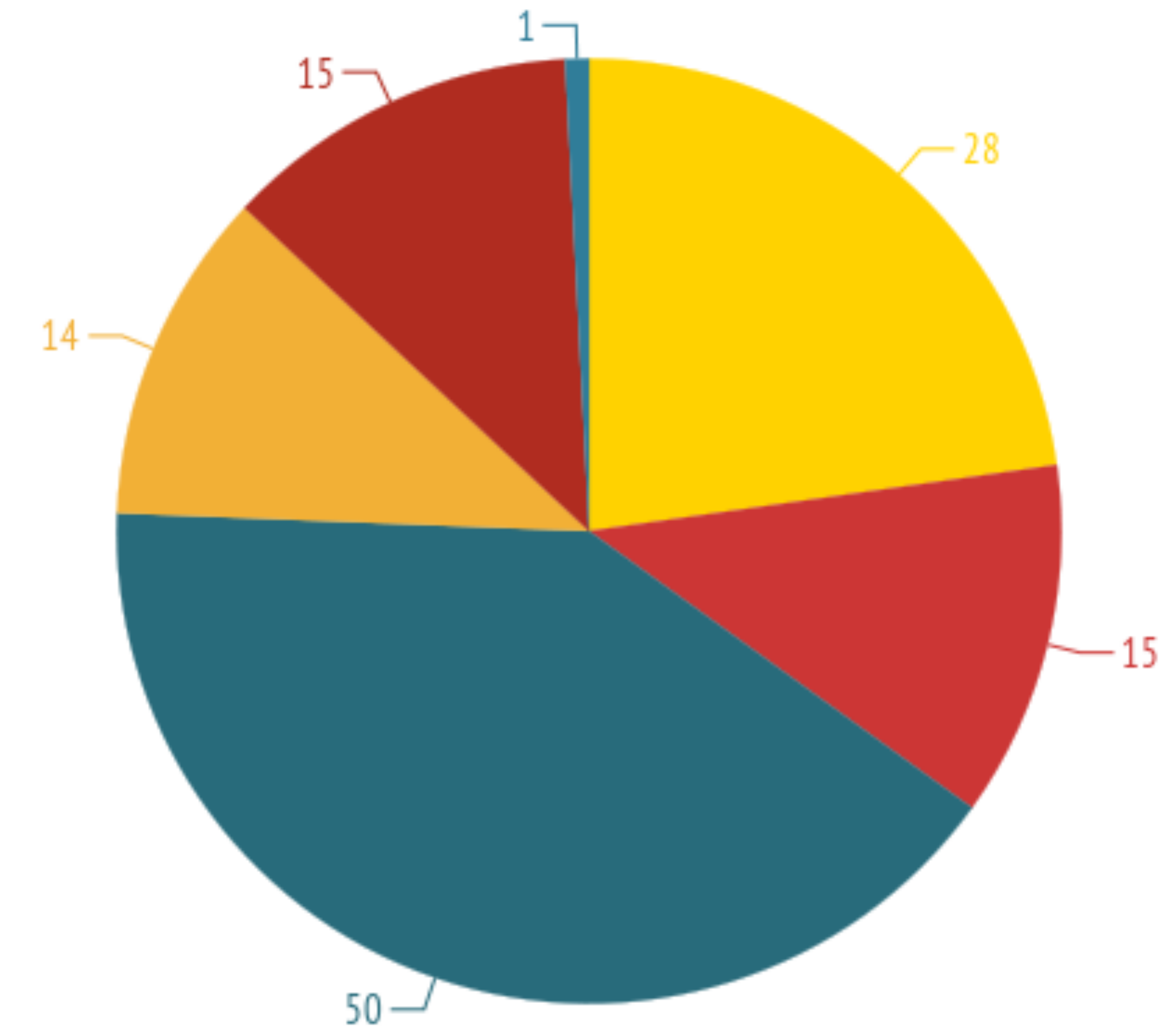
1. Pre-season wilderness trainings with WFA / WFR and AMGA-SPI do not address the full range of incidents that occurred at OBCA.
2. There is an industry need for a certification or training process to equip instructors with techniques to address behavioral and motivational incidents.
3. Depending on the program and activities, organizations may consider WFA as a minimum level of training and encourage WFR level.
4. As suggested in the data, driving training is an essential component for wilderness organizations.

Course Areas



Action Statements

1. Evaluate how much organization time, money, and resources to dedicate to training or certifications of their staff based on recorded incidents.
2. Identify appropriate certifications required to perform organizational jobs within my organization (i.e. Wilderness First Responder versus Wilderness First Aid)
3. Create more effective staff trainings to better prepare them for the most likely incidents that they may encounter.



Incidents by Certification or Training(2012-14)



Implications

Behavioral issues continue to be an important topic for programs seeking to serve student needs. The majority of non-first aid incidents were dominated by behavioral issues. Program managers should seriously consider how staff are trained and how programs are managing behaviors that students are showing up on course with. Additional training and perhaps a certification for staff should be considered to meet this programmatic issue.



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