



Risk Assessment - Outdoor Rock Climbing & Abseiling

Date Reviewed	Reviewed By	Notes
20/08/16	Richard Irvine	Desk review only
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This risk assessment report is for advice only. All instructors must *actively and continually risk assess throughout all activities*, taking appropriate action to reduce the risk presented to clients and themselves to an acceptable level. All documents presented within the Key H&S Policy are dynamic.

All instructors are professionally qualified (SPA or higher) and expected to demonstrate continual CPD.

Hazard	Risk	Solution
Instructor and/or participants unaware of hazards and safe working practice.	<p>Injuries caused as a result of poor practice.</p> <p>Anxiety caused by realisation of imminent danger without the means to manage the risks.</p>	<p>All participants are to be accompanied by instructors who are able to risk assess actively on site, have significant <i>instructional</i> experience in the type of environment in which they are working and have been trained, assessed to an NGB level.</p> <p>Instructors should offer an appropriate safety brief taking into account the nature of the client group, their anxieties, their confidence, and their questions.</p> <p>All instructors are to carry appropriate technical and safety equipment sufficient for all members of their party.</p>



<p>Rockfall</p>	<p>Injury caused by falling rock</p>	<p>All participants, observers and Instructors are to wear helmets at all times whilst under or approaching a crag.</p> <p>Instructors must identify a safe area in which all people can stand/sit, ideally out of reach of falling debris.</p> <p>Loose debris is to be removed, stabilized or avoided to prevent it falling after having achieved the above situation.</p> <p>Instructors should consider not using a venue that is prone to rockfall.</p>
<p>Heights</p>	<p>Injury caused by a fall from height</p>	<p>Instructors must ensure that all participants, themselves and observers are aware of the whereabouts of the edge and of sloping and/or loose ground leading to the edge. We recommend using a physical marker e.g. kit bag to identify a no-go parameter.</p> <p>Instructors must ensure that all participants, themselves and observers are belayed effectively before approaching an edge at height, and before leaving the ground to climb. (Except for situations such as bouldering at low level, and lead climbing to the first runner).</p> <p>All participants engaged in climbing or abseiling must be belayed effectively at all times, unless their height is minimal and/or physical support (spotting) can be used.</p> <p>Instructors should ensure that all participants know not to climb unless the instructor is</p>



		supervising.
Faulty equipment	Injuries caused by failure of equipment	<p>All equipment will be checked prior to use and faulty items removed from operation.</p> <p>Equipment must be used only for the purpose(s) intended.</p> <p>Equipment must be treated with respect, with care and will be maintained as required to ensure good working order.</p> <p>We recommend using minimal components in the safety system.</p>
Faulty belaying	Injuries caused by failure in the operation of the belay system	<p>Instructors must carefully instruct belayers and observe their practice at all times, or sufficiently regularly to ensure that they <i>maintain</i> good practice.</p> <p>All sub-standard practice by participants must be stopped and corrected immediately.</p> <p>Instructors must check understanding of belay principles and check operation before allowing participants to belay.</p> <p>If a Gri-Gri is used, the dead rope must be held securely behind the belay device at all times whilst belaying is in progress. A Gri-Gri must not be used as a failsafe device.</p> <p>Instructors should be aware that no belay devices are failsafe devices.</p>
Cragfast participant	Anxiety and stress caused by fear	Instructors should make themselves aware of a participant's state of mind,



		<p>their fears and anxieties.</p> <p>Instructors are to ensure that they have the means to perform a mid crag rescue at all times.</p> <p>Instructors are to offer appropriate support to enable participants to regain control and retain dignity for themselves.</p>
<p>Cragfast participant caused by jammed abseil device, trapped clothing, jewellery, hair or parts of the body.</p>	<p>Anxiety and stress caused by fear, minor cuts/bruises</p>	<p>Instructors are to ensure that they have the means to perform a mid crag rescue at all times.</p> <p>Instructors should use a releasable abseil rope as required.</p> <p>Instructor will advise participants to remove any jewellery that increases this risk.</p> <p>Instructor will advise participants to wrap, tuck or hide long hair to reduce the risk of it becoming entangled in the belay or abseil device.</p> <p>Instructors could ensure that loose clothing, toggles, laces, etc. are appropriately tucked away.</p>
<p>Climber/abseiler pendulums or falls</p>	<p>Injuries caused by impact with rock, another object or another person during a swing or fall</p>	<p>Instructors must ensure that the abseiler/climber remains directly below their point of attachment as much as possible.</p> <p>Instructors to maintain appropriately tight belays in a situation where a fall or swing would cause significant impact with another object, especially trees or rock ledges.</p>



		<p>Instructor to ensure that climbers and abseilers do not move into a position from which a swing or fall will cause an impact with another person.</p> <p>Instructors to ensure appropriate space for a fall/swing where unavoidable, and to ensure that other people do not occupy that space.</p>
Abseiling rapidly	<p>Injuries caused by losing control of the abseil rope</p> <p>Injuries caused by impact with ground or other objects at speed</p>	<p>All abseilers, including instructors are to wear protective gloves when abseiling rapidly.</p> <p>Instructors will use a personal safety device (e.g. shunt, Prussics) whilst abseiling without a belayed safety rope</p> <p>Instructors must ensure that belayers tighten the safety rope so that the abseiler almost stops 2-3 metres from the ground, and is then gently approaches the ground.</p> <p>Belayers are to be exceptionally vigilant at all times and to maintain close control of the abseilers speed by means of well-controlled safety rope (e.g. one with no significant slack).</p>
Rugged or steep terrain leading to top or base of crag	<p>Injuries caused by a fall on rugged terrain.</p> <p>Injuries caused by a slip leading to a fall from height.</p>	<p>Instructors are to identify an approach route to avoid hazards as much as reasonably possible.</p> <p>Instructors to consider using a fixed rope or belay when a slip on the approach might lead to a more catastrophic fall.</p>

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		All participants to wear boots providing ankle support on rugged approaches.
Instructor falls whilst climbing free	Injuries caused by instructor fall. Isolation of participants in a hazardous environment.	Instructor is to consider ensuring that at least one member of their party is aware of an emergency procedure to be implemented in this scenario. If all participants are considered not to be sufficiently responsible, instructor should consider self-lining or another appropriate form of belay. Instructor is to ensure the Event Coordinator/responsible person has details of their destination, party, estimated time and date of return. Instructor must not change location or vary route significantly without first contacting the Event Coordinator/responsible person and changing destination details and ETR.