

## General Risk Assessment for Climbing, Bouldering and Abseiling

**Activity:** Climbing, Abseil and Bouldering Activity Session

- What are the hazards?**
- Participants at height
  - Uneven ground
  - Unauthorised use, malicious damage and vandalism
  - Accessing and setting up, de-rigging
  - Items falling from height on to participants / instructors
  - Equipment failure
  - Adverse weather including lightning / high winds and storms.
  - Loose fittings on tower

**Who at risk?** Staff, participants and members of the public.

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk rating
Physical injuries, fractures, death from falls during either climbing / abseiling or bouldering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All equipment is checked before use and regular inspections carried out by qualified instructors</li> <li>• Equipment is monitored and replaced according to our SOP's and the manufacturers recommendations</li> <li>• Any equipment that is questionable is immediately taken out of action, put into the second opinion bin located in the ropes course shed and then the Senior Instructor is informed</li> <li>• The tower is checked every morning before use, checking for malicious damage and vandalism/storm damage</li> <li>• Access is via internal ladders. The instructor will ensure that every person on top of the tower has a safety lanyard attached to the tower and their harness. The gate will only be opened at the top when required.</li> <li>• Instructors are trained in every aspect of the session, from set up to delivery as well as maintenance and inspections.</li> <li>• Regular session monitoring by senior staff</li> <li>• Soft ground covering around the base of the tower and bouldering walls.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone within the tower compound must be wearing a helmet except when they are under a shelter or a clearly defined safe zone.</li> <li>• Bouldering is briefed by the instructor prior to starting. Participant's feet must stay below 1m from the ground. Participants are generally able to continue to boulder following a briefing but must be supervised by a responsible adult willing to supervise and enforce the rules.</li> <li>• Suitable fences and lockable gates around the perimeter of the tower. The gate is locked when the area is not in use. Warning signs on the fence about unauthorised access</li> <li>• Open access to the Cafe Bouldering wall- but clear signage displayed, self led session</li> <li>• Internally accessing the tower is prevented with a lockable door. This is kept locked when not in use.</li> <li>• The equipment shed is locked and alarmed at the end of the day.</li> <li>• Participant's bouldering are encouraged to step down before they fall off the bouldering wall.</li> <li>• Participants bouldering should be spotted</li> <li>• All equipment is stored in the Ropes shed at the end of each day</li> <li>• All instructors will have been trained, assessed and deemed competent to run sessions and will operate as per their training and SOP's</li> <li>• Instructors will be observed periodically to ensure they are operating to procedures. This is recorded on Papertrail.</li> <li>• All activities staff are first aid trained.</li> </ul>		
Items falling on to heads causing impact injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone within the tower compound is required to wear helmets- unless in designated safe area.</li> <li>• Participants are asked to remove loose items from their pockets.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk rating
- from the top of the climbing tower or from adjacent trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dead wooding is carried out on an annual basis</li> <li>• There are regular inspections carried out by a competent person.</li> <li>• Instructors set up and sign to say they have checked the tower before the first session takes place each day. They will ensure there are no loose items at the top of the climbing tower.</li> </ul>		
Adverse weather conditions causing injury / illness such as lightning causing electrocution, wind and rain causing hypothermia and very hot days causing hyperthermia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sessions cancelled in Force 6 and stronger winds (There is an anemometer available to check the wind strength- located in the Activities office and a weather station on top of the main house)</li> <li>• Sessions stopped in lightning storms for 30 minutes.</li> <li>• Guests are recommended to wear appropriate clothing, carry water and sun cream.</li> <li>• There is shelter available for both rain and sun.</li> <li>• In the event that the weather conditions get too much for groups/individuals, the sessions can be cancelled / postponed and the group sent off to get dry/ warm up or cool down.</li> <li>• Water is available free of charge from drinking fountains and standpipes around the grounds.</li> <li>• Instructors can stop a session if they feel the weather conditions are unsuitable and safety might be compromised.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW
Harnesses / systems failing due to poor fitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors training and assessment covers correct fitting of equipment</li> <li>• Staff are monitored and feedback is recorded and passed onto them</li> <li>• A complete system check takes place prior to all ascents/descents</li> <li>• Instructors will double check equipment and that all active participant are ready before anyone leaves the floor.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW

Reference to other manuals assessments:

- Avon Tyrrell reference and training folder
- [UK Youth Health and Safety policy](#)

Reviewed May 2019 by Chief Instructor

Approved by Director of Avon Tyrrell & Operations

Next review May 2020

## Abseil Risk Assessment

**Activity:** Abseil Activity Session

- What are the hazards?**
- Falls from interior ladders
  - Entrapment – hair/clothes/fingers in fig 8
  - Rope burns to hands
  - Falling from the top of the tower
  - Scraping body on descent

**Who is at risk?** Staff, participants and members of the public.

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk rating
Physical injuries, fractures, death from slipping and falling from interior ladders or from the top of the tower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors are trained in every aspect of the session, from set up to delivery as well as maintenance and inspections.</li> <li>• All participants under 18 must be supervised as they climb up the ladders on the inside of the climbing tower. This can be done by the instructor or a responsible group leader.</li> <li>• All participants climb to the top of a ladder and wait on the next platform until all participants are there as well as the instructor before moving up the next ladder.</li> <li>• On the final ladder the instructor will ascend first in order to clip participants in to the safety lanyard as soon as they reach the top platform.</li> <li>• The participants safety lanyard is short enough to prevent them falling down the access hatch</li> <li>• The instructors safety line is short enough to prevent them from falling over the edge of the tower when the abseil gate is open</li> <li>• There are electric lights inside the climbing tower.</li> <li>• Surrounding the abseil platform is a permanent barrier with lockable gates.</li> <li>• All gates are kept closed with the exception of the gate that participants need to go through to abseil.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When abseiling, participants are tied in to the safety rope, and the instructor has full control before they are taken off the "safety lanyard".</li> <li>• Before stepping through the gate, all equipment, ropes and knots are thoroughly checked.</li> <li>• Instructors are secured with their own independent safety lanyard.</li> <li>• The abseil is to be set up as per their training &amp; SOP's.</li> <li>• All instructors are first aid trained</li> </ul>		
Entrapment of fingers/clothes/ hair in the figure of 8 on descent of the tower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system is explained to participants before they start their abseil and they are told to keep their hands away from the figure of 8.</li> <li>• Hair should be tied back or bunched under the helmet to avoid it coming loose and getting tangled in the system.</li> <li>• Loose clothing should be removed or secured beforehand.</li> <li>• If there is a case, of entanglement all instructors are trained in rescue procedures and the abseil is releasable.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW
Scraping body on descent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors brief participants on proper abseil position ensuring that feet have contact with the wall but not the rest of the body.</li> <li>• Instructors coaching throughout and in constant verbal contact.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW
Rope burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor monitors the speed of descent and will slow down the descent if participant is going too quickly using the safety rope.</li> <li>• Participants briefed on how to use the figure of 8 device, including keeping a steady speed.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW
Participants descending to quickly , hitting the floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safety line will be attached to the participant and if necessary the instructor will control their descent</li> <li>• Proper instruction and explanation will be given to the participant</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk rating
resulting in impact injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructors assessed for their competence</li> </ul>		
Unauthorised use of the tower during abseil sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All bouldering activity to be undertaken under instructor's supervision or with direct supervision from a responsible group leader to ensure rules are enforced.</li> <li>The Instructor on the ground must be aware of participant numbers, carry out random head counts and be aware of where each member of the group is at all times.</li> <li>Group leaders are required to assist in group supervision while on abseiling sessions and will be asked to do so at the start of each session.</li> <li>The access door to the tower will be locked and the key will be with a trusted person- or in the Ropes Shed.</li> </ul>	LOW	LOW

Reference to other manuals assessments:

- Avon Tyrrell reference and training folder
- [UK Youth Health and Safety policy](#)

Reviewed May 2019 by Chief Instructor

Approved by Director of Avon Tyrrell & Operations

Next review May 2020