# Tree climbing Risk Assessment

**Activity**  
Tree Climbing

## What are the hazards?
- Unauthorized Use
- Vandalism
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Falls from height
- Items falling from height
- Adverse weather conditions
- Human error, inappropriate use of equipment.
- Ladders slipping
- Rope burns
- Tree impact injuries

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the risks?</th>
<th>Existing safety measures/controls</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Risk Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Unauthorized use leading to falls from height            | - Only one tracer per tree will be left out  
- All PPE and other equipment will be locked in the high ropes compound shed over night | LOW        | LOW         |
| Vandalism or weather damage leading to the tree becoming unstable | - Visual check of tree prior to the session commencing  
- Annual inspection by an aborcultureist  
- Dead wood cleared annually | LOW        | LOW         |
| Slips trips and falls from debris and equipment under tree | - The area under the tree will be managed to minimise trip hazards, the area will be wood chipped if required and any branches, roots or other debris will be moved if possible before the session. Bushes/low vegetation will be cut back to allow access to the area under the tree but this must be done sympathetically  
- Equipment to be laid out neatly as trained and a tidy site managed throughout the activity | LOW        | LOW         |
| Falls from height due to poor instruction/understanding  | - Instructors assessed to NPTC Unit 38, Tree climbing and Arial rescue or another qualification approved by CI and Director of Avon Tyrrell  
- Qualified instructors refreshed in techniques every 12 months internally  
- Instructor to follow training | LOW        | LOW         |
<p>| Falls from height from faulty equipment                  | - All equipment checked at the time of purchase                                                   | LOW        | LOW         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Falls from height due to the techniques taught not being understood / forgotten/ human error</strong></th>
<th><strong>All equipment checked before use, and regularly inspected and recorded on Papertrail</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>All equipment that is questionable in regards to integrity and in line with how the manufacturer recommendations, is removed from active use and checked by the SI or the CI or is sent off for an external opinion or is replaced as appropriate.</strong></th>
<th><strong>LOW</strong></th>
<th><strong>LOW</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Items falling from height causing injury to the people below the tree</strong></td>
<td><strong>The instructor will provide a clear demonstration of all the required techniques</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Participants will demonstrate competence before ascending the rope</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Only the instructor is allowed to remove the ascender</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>At the point of lowering, the instructor on the ground will assist with speed control.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Participants are not allowed to climb above the top anchor point</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>There will be a second prussic attach to a rope halo at the base of the tree acting as a back-up if a participant has an issue with their prussic.</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Strong winds causing people to swing into other people and the tree resulting in impact injuries</strong></td>
<td><strong>Everything must be removed from the pockets</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Shoes must be securely fitting.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Helmets worn by all participants, unless in designated safe zone.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>All trees used for this session will be inspected annually by an aboriculturist</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>When necessary the tree will be dead wooded</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>When dropping dead wood no one may stand under tree.</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The ladder slipping leading to injuries from falling from height</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session stopped in high winds at the decision of the instructor based on:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Wind direction</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Wind speed</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Group</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tree movement</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>After high winds the tree will be checked for damages</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rope burns from releasing the Prussic while descending the rope</strong></td>
<td><strong>If a ladder is used it must be secured if possible or footed by another instructor on its first use</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>During the training and demonstration phase of the introduction clients are to be made aware of:</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Risk Assessment</td>
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| How to release the Prussic/Blakes hitch without coming into contact with the main rope | - Gloves can be provided if required  
- The ground instructor will help control the speed reducing the chance of burns | LOW |
| Grazes on feet, arms and legs from the tree while climbing | - Ropes to be placed to minimize this  
- Recommend trousers and long sleeve tops to be worn  
- Suitable shoes must be worn i.e. trainers, hiking boots, shoes. Not wellington boots, flip flops, open toed sandals etc. | LOW |
| Impact injuries from swinging on the rope and or branch walking | - These activities are only to be allowed if the group are deemed competent by the instructor  
- Advice and training provided about the pros and cons of rope swinging and branch walking | LOW |

Reference to other manuals assessments:
- The Tree climber's companion (book can be found in CI office)  
- A Guide to Good Climbing Practice (book can be found in CI office)  
- Avon Tyrrell reference and training folder  
- UK Youth Health and Safety policy

When was the assessment reviewed and by whom?
- November 2017  
  Chief Instructor

Date of next review and to be done by whom?
- November 2018  
  Chief Instructor