

WHS Standard Risk Assessment Abseiling



Activity or event being assessed:	RockSchool Activity Days (www.rockschool.org.au)		
Assessed by:	Marion Fisher, Bob Leys, Gillian Hardy	Date:	1/12/2024 – 31/12/2025
Consulted:	RockSchool Executive and Activity Team	Leader in Charge or Manager's name:	Marion Fisher
Group, site or event name:	Noorumba Girl Guide Camp via Thorp Rd, Woronora	Leader in Charge or Manager's Signature:	

L = Likelihood Almost Certain (A): Expected to occur during the activity Likely (B): Will probably occur during the activity Possible (C): Might occur during the activity Unlikely (D): Not likely to occur during the activity Rare (E): Exceptional circumstances.	C = Consequence Insignificant (1): No injuries Minor (2): First aid treatment only Moderate (3): Medical treatment only Significant (4): Long term illness or serious injury Severe (5): Death or permanent disability <i>Hint: Select the most "realistic" consequence, rather than the "worst possible" consequence.</i>	Risk Level					
		<i>Consequence →</i>	Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Significant (4)	Severe (5)
		<i>Likelihood ↓</i>					
		Almost Certain (A)	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
		Likely (B)	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
		Possible (C)	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely (D)	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High		
Rare (E)	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium		

Identify the hazards →

Assess the risk →

Mitigate the risk →

Re-assess the risk

→ Assign responsibility

Task or activity being assessed	Hazards associated with each task or activity	What is the risk level - Low, Moderate, Significant or High	What reasonable steps are suggested to reduce the risk further? Are any new hazards introduced?	Revised Risk Level (only proceed if risk level is acceptable)	Person responsible
All Activities COVID 19 and other infectious diseases	<p>Contracting COVID 19 or other infectious disease Infected participant or leader joins activity</p> <p>Contact transfer from equipment or other surfaces</p> <p>Symptomatic or positive illness test result (staff or participant) prior to activity</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclude sick people with consideration given to rescheduling. Activity cancelled or postponed during lockdown. Follow Scouts NSW operating procedures, policies and rules. Keep attendance records / registers to allow for contact tracing Activity leader and other staff to be familiar with COVID safe operating plan. Briefings to ensure participants understand requirements and participate within guidelines Maintain social distancing and mitigate risk of food handling contacts. Consider the use of masks, gloves, safety glasses in close contact situations Use hand sanitizer and/or provide soap and water where practical Minimise the sharing of equipment and implement appropriate cleaning Provide staff with protective gloves. Ensure first aid qualified staff are present at the activity Ensure first aid kit is available 	Low	<p>Activity Leader and Staff to Ensure control measures are followed</p> <p>Participants to follow controls.</p>
Site Assessment, Planning and Participant Briefing	Personal Injury	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On arrival at activity site identify activity site and assess onsite conditions. Ensure an activity location specific assessment is undertaken to identify and additional risks to those identified in the risk assessment and the control measure for those unanticipated hazards. Ensure a site specific induction for activity leaders and staff is undertaken. Assess communication reception and requirements 	Low	<p>Activity Leader to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check activity site and conduct a location specific assessment where necessary Ensure induction is carried out.
Selection of PPE and required equipment.	Personal Injury	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of required equipment for task. Identification of minimum PPE required for task (eg helmets, gloves, harness, rescue kit, first aid kit, wetsuit) Ensure all ropes, slings, harnesses, attachment hardware are rated and in good condition. Conduct pre-inspection of all equipment prior to the activity. 	Low	

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment to be used in accordance with the manufacturers specifications 		
<p>Working Outdoors / Pre Preparation</p>	<p>Adverse / Extreme Weather Remote medical assistance</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use experienced personnel and leaders, Continuously monitor participants and self, Carry first Aid kit, PLB and phone, Plan access and egress routes. Carry maps & compass. Notify relevant authorities/ people of intended route and times and party details. Wear appropriate attire for the activity, Carry PPE for weather changes i.e. rain jacket, light source and heat source, hats suitable layers of clothing. Check participants medicines/ allergy requirements, Monitor the weather leading up to the trip and check forecast prior to leaving. Change activity and/or location if weather conditions are not suitable or a trigger is reached. 	<p>Low</p>	<p>Activity Leader to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess site conditions on arrival maintain awareness of weather condition, plan access and egress routes, monitor participants, remind participants of appropriate cautions and preventative actions, notify relevant persons, ensure equipment is available. <p>Participants to follow controls.</p>
	<p>Slips, Trips, Falls</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry first Aid kit, PLB and phone, Wear appropriate attire for the activity, Monitor the weather leading up to the trip and check forecast prior to leaving. Change activity and/or location if weather conditions are not suitable or a trigger is reached. 	<p>Low</p>	<p>Activity Leader to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess site conditions on arrival maintain awareness of weather condition, monitor participants, remind participants of appropriate cautions and preventative actions, <p>Participants to follow controls</p>
	<p>Hypothermia</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry first Aid kit, PLB and phone, Plan access and egress routes. Wear appropriate attire for the activity, Carry PPE for weather changes i.e. rain jacket, light source and heat source, hats suitable layers of clothing. Monitor the weather leading up to the trip and check forecast prior to leaving. 	<p>Low</p>	<p>Activity Leader to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain awareness of weather condition, monitor participants, remind participants of appropriate cautions and preventative actions, <p>Participants to follow controls</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change activity and/or location if weather conditions are not suitable or a trigger is reached. 		
	Cuts, Bites, Stings	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry first Aid kit, PLB and phone, Wear appropriate attire for the activity, Carry PPE for weather changes i.e. rain jacket, light source and heat source, hats suitable layers of clothing. 	Low	Activity Leader to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure equipment is available. Participants to follow controls
	Party lost / Participants lost	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use experienced personnel and leaders, Continuously monitor participants and self, Carry first Aid kit, PLB and phone, Plan access and egress routes. Carry maps & compass. 	Low	Activity Leader to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain awareness of weather condition, plan access and egress routes, Participants to follow controls.
	Sunburn Hyperthermia Dehydration	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sunblock, Ensure participants take drinking water. Look for shade areas Carry first Aid kit, PLB and phone, Continuously monitor participants and self, 	Low	Activity Leader to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain awareness of weather condition, monitor participants, remind participants of appropriate cautions and preventative actions, Participants to follow controls.
Assessment of Participants	Fitness Exhaustion / Fatigue Ability (or lack of) Shock / Nervousness / Anxiety / Panic Mental Stability All abilities participants Horseplay (pushing, tripping etc) Personal injuries (see section below)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously monitor participants during activity, provide encouragement and support. Ensure necessary support is available for participants as required. Adjust activity and/or activity duration Provide instruction and assistance Rotate team member duties throughout the activity to minimize risk of fatigue & complacency 	Low	Activity Leader to ensure control measures are followed and to plan for additional assistance if required.
	Medications - Failure to bring or take	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review medication information obtained from activity notification forms 	Medium	Activity Leader to ensure control measures are followed

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	Allergies Medical conditions eg/ Epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, heart conditions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onsite discussions and briefings Check participants medicines/ allergies, including Anaphylaxis treatments (eg Epi Pen). Remind participants to take any necessary medications. 		and to plan for additional assistance if required.
Manual Tasks	Musculoskeletal injuries	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials/equipment placed as close to the activity area as possible Ensure there are adequate personnel to perform the task Avoid lifting loads more than 1/4 of your body weight Do not use extreme force to move items. Lifted items held close to the body whenever possible Keeping knees bent and back straight and lift, unload keeping knees bent Use team lifts for heavy items Schedule regular breaks and practice job rotation Avoid overreaching, long periods of repetitive movements, awkward and sustained positions, twisting and side-bending Avoid long periods in harness. Alternate drops with others 	Low	Activity Leader and Staff to ensure control measures are followed
Access / Egress / Site Assessment, of Activity Site	Personal Injury	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe access and egress routes for the activity site Identify On Rope Zones, Safe Zones and No Go Zones. 	Low	Activity Leader to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe access and egress
Rigging and Dismantling Abseil Pitches and Belays	Fall from height	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only people involved in rigging to be present in the activity area (On Rope Zones). People rigging the abseil pitches should be attached to a fall prevention system. Ensure rigging personnel are suited to the task, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have appropriate level of training for the difficulty of the job are physically fit are able to work at heights Rope systems should not be used until it has been inspected by a completed person, at the following times:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After construction After any repairs or changes After any incident that may have affected its stability. At regular intervals during the activity. Consider gear placement to ensure it does not become a trip 	Medium	Activity Leader and those involved in rigging to ensure control measures are followed

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			hazard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ropes should be pulled up prior to dismantling any rigging. 		
	Falling object(s)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible Isolate area below abseil pitch where people may be struck by falling objects. Where possible rocks or other debris that may fall off cliff should be removed. Ensure all persons wear appropriate PPE including helmets. 	Medium	Activity Leader and those involved in rigging to ensure control measures are followed
	Communication failure	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective communications in place between activity staff to alert others on activity site in case of an emergency. Communication protocols for the activity have been discussed and agreed with activity staff 	Low	Activity Leader and those involved in rigging to ensure control measures are followed
	Equipment failure Incorrect use of equipment	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All equipment to be checked prior to use. Ensure edges protected where possible to eliminate chance of rope damage. All equipment used in systems to meet the Standards set out in the Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and are labelled as such. Equipment to be used in accordance with the manufacturers specifications 	Medium	Activity Leader and those involved in rigging to ensure control measures are followed
	Anchor failure Unsafe techniques	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchors assessed and evaluated for strength and suitability. Equipment to be used in accordance with the manufacturers specifications Only people involved in rigging to be present in the activity area (On Rope Zones). Ensure suitable rope system is established. 	Medium	Activity Leader and those involved in rigging to ensure control measures are followed
	Injury to public or other users	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible Isolate area below abseil pitch where people may be struck by falling objects. 	Low	Activity Leader and those involved in rigging to ensure control measures are followed
Participating in abseiling activity	Fall from height Falling object(s) Inattentive belayer / belayer losing control	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement covering:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site access & egress. Safe Zones, No Go Zones, and On Rope Zones Equipment to be used (PPE), including how to wear and use. Communications 	Medium	Activity Leader to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. Ensure participants are continuously monitored Ensure weather

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emergency plans and evacuation points ○ Specific hazards/risk and the controls ○ Environmental controls ● Use PPE as per manufacturer's instructions. ● Wear helmet. ● Continuously monitor participants ● Fit harness properly. ● Wear enclosed footwear suitable for the activity. ● Cliff edge manager must ensure visual/verbal safety checks are performed prior to commencement of abseil (eg ABCDE check). ● Control group size appropriate for activity and allow space for breaks and/or space to change to next pitch. ● Provide instruction. 		<p>conditions are monitored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure first aid supplies and first aider are on site. ● Ensure descent management processes and safe methods are followed. <p>Staff and Participants to follow controls.</p>
	Equipment failure Incorrect use of equipment	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check equipment before use. ● Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement covering:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equipment to be used (PPE), including how to wear and use. ○ Communications ○ Specific hazards/risk and the controls ● Use PPE as per manufacturer's instructions. ● Cliff edge manager must ensure visual/verbal safety checks are performed prior to commencement of abseil (eg ABCDE check). ● Participants to also be encouraged to perform self-checks. 	Low	<p>Activity Leader and Staff to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. ● Ensure participants are continuously monitored ● Controls are followed <p>Participants to follow controls.</p>
	Uncontrolled descent Abseiler lets go of rope Abseiler Descends too fast Unsafe techniques	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use PPE as per manufacturer's instructions. ● Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement, covering:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equipment to be used (PPE), including how to wear and use. ○ Communications ○ Abseil techniques and other techniques ○ Communication methods ● Use appropriate friction control. ● Provide belays and ensure belayers have necessary training/ experience ● Use recommended safe practice/ techniques for abseiling. ● Cliff edge manager must ensure visual/verbal safety checks are performed prior to commencement of abseil (eg ABCDE 	Low	<p>Activity Leader and Staff to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. ● Ensure participants are continuously monitored ● Controls are followed <p>Participants to follow controls.</p>

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			check). • Participants to also be encouraged to perform self-checks.		
	Rope Burn	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use recommended safe practice/ techniques for abseiling. • Cliff edge manager to ensure safety checks are performed prior to commencement of abseil. • Participants to also be encouraged to perform self-checks. • Releasable abseil system setups should be considered. • Equipment for vertical rescues to be available at cliff edge of activity site. • Ensure on-site staff are trained and familiar with vertical rescues, emergency and evacuation procedures. • Wear gloves. 	Low	Activity Leader and Staff to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. • Ensure participants are continuously monitored • Controls are followed Participants to follow controls.
	Slips, Bumps, Falls,	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use recommended safe practice/ techniques for abseiling. • Releasable abseil system setups should be considered. • Equipment for vertical rescues to be available at cliff edge of activity site. • Ensure on-site staff are trained and familiar with vertical rescues, emergency and evacuation procedures. 	Low	Activity Leader and Staff to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. • Ensure participants are continuously monitored • Controls are followed Participants to follow controls.
	Hair stuck in hardware / environment	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie hair back and/or wear hat or beanie. • Use recommended safe practice/ techniques for abseiling. • Cliff edge manager to ensure safety checks are performed prior to commencement of abseil. • Participants to also be encouraged to perform self-checks. • Releasable abseil system setups should be considered. • Equipment for vertical rescues to be available at cliff edge of activity site. • Ensure on-site staff are trained and familiar with vertical rescues, emergency and evacuation procedures. 	Low	Activity Leader and Staff to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. • Ensure participants are continuously monitored • Controls are followed Participants to follow controls.
	Hand/ body/ limb stuck between rope and a hard surface	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use recommended safe practice/ techniques for abseiling. • Cliff edge manager to ensure safety checks are performed prior to commencement of abseil. • Participants to also be encouraged to perform self-checks. • Releasable abseil system setups should be considered. • Equipment for vertical rescues to be available at cliff edge of 	Low	Activity Leader and Staff to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity commencement. • Ensure participants are continuously monitored

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			activity site as part of the pre-determined Rescue Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure on-site staff are trained and familiar with the pre-determined Rescue Plan, vertical rescues, emergency and evacuation procedures. Wear gloves. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controls are followed Participants to follow controls.
	Visibility / Nightfall	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan activity timing Plan pack up times, taking into account delays due to darkness Monitor activity duration Take torches and/or provide other lighting 	Low	Activity Leader and Staff to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participants are briefed prior to activity Equipment required is brought
Emergency Situation / Response	Fatality Panic (eg anxiety, claustrophobia) Remote areas – no food/water/warmth Delayed medical assistance Bushfire / Flooding Bushfires	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For police, fire or ambulance call '000.' Apply DRSABCD process. Follow site emergency and evacuation procedures A communication system is available, e.g. a mobile phone, radio or PLB Check for dangers to self before helping others Maintain control of the area and stabilise the situation Apply first aid to the injured person Complete an incident report Trained first aid providers on site A reliable means to contact emergency services is available. Falls rescue plan implemented for the site Use an escape route if needed In pre-activity briefing include general procedures and processes in the event of an emergency. Ensure staff know what their role is and what tasks they need to carry out. Monitor incident scene and use all available means to assist casualty Ensure medical condition of participants is known prior to activity commencement. Ensure participants bring required medications and use at correct times. 	Moderate	Activity Leader and Staff to ensure control measures are followed
	Anaphylaxis	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure medical condition of participants is known prior to activity commencement. Ensure participants bring required medications and use at correct times. 	Moderate	
	Diabetic Incident	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure medical condition of participants is known prior to activity commencement. 	Moderate	

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants bring required medications and use at correct times. 		
	Asthma attack	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure medical condition of participants is known prior to activity commencement. • Ensure participants bring required medications and use at correct times. 	Moderate	
	Other injury or Shock	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For police, fire or ambulance call '000.' • Apply DRSABCD process. • Follow site emergency and evacuation procedures • A communication system is available, e.g. a mobile phone, radio or PLB • Check for dangers to self before helping others • Maintain control of the area and stabilise the situation • Apply first aid to the injured person • Complete an incident report • Trained first aid providers on site • A reliable means to contact emergency services is available. • Falls rescue plan implemented for the site • Use an escape route if needed • In pre-activity briefing include general procedures and processes in the event of an emergency. • Ensure staff know what their role is and what tasks they need to carry out. • Monitor incident scene and use all available means to assist casualty 	Moderate	

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	Suspension trauma	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where likelihood exists, the pre-determined Rescue Plan should give consideration for immediate rescue to reduce the risk of suspension trauma, so far as reasonably practicable. • Equipment for vertical rescues to be available at cliff edge of activity site as part of the pre-determined Rescue Plan. • First aid equipment to be available on activity site • If a suspension may last up to 5 minutes – consideration of providing foothold straps and/or releasable anchors or another way of placing weight on legs should be considered • Releasable systems are preferred for abseiling activities and must be hard locked. • Ensure on-site staffs are trained and familiar with vertical rescues, emergency and evacuation procedures. 	Low	

List Location Specific Risks Identified During Your Site Assessment Assess The Risks and List The Control Measure For Those Unanticipated Hazards.					
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Arrival at site	Participants lost en-route	low	Maps available, phone signal OK – to chase up missing participants Encourage to walk together	low	Activity leaders
Site condition -water supply	Unexpected broken pipes No water pressure	moderate	Inform participants Caretaker contacted Assess repairs Change location	low	Activity leaders
Site condition - vandalism,	broken glass dispersed rubbish	moderate	Inform participants Caretaker contacted Assess repairs Change location	low	Activity leaders
Rigging and dismantling	Errors in set up	moderate	Work-zone marked out (tape, rope or tree line) Always independent qualified person to check Discuss alternatives if needed	low	Activity leaders

