

Activity Risk Assessment

Name of activity, event, and location	Abseiling Hertfordshire Scout Activity Centres- Phasels Wood Activity Centre	Date of risk assessment	October 2025	Name of person doing this risk assessment	Katy Pearce EM HCSC Reviewed by: Doug Stack ACM HCSC
		Date of next review	October 2026		

Hazard- what could go wrong?	Who is at risk?	Assessment of risk	Control measures in place	Remaining risk using control measures
Injury caused by falling from height	Participants, Instructors	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe systems and procedures are in place, approved by independent technical advisor. There are safety rails on all open edges of the tower and the tower is secured and locked when not in use. At the top of the tower instructors must clip into the instructor safety immediately and stayed clipped in for the duration. At the top of the tower participants are clipped into the abseil safety system immediately and stayed clipped in for the duration of their go. All PPE correctly fitted at start of session and 'Good to go checks' are carried out. All instructors are trained and their competence is assessed as detailed in our standard operating procedure. No more than 8 people allowed at the top of the tower. 	Low
Congestion on and falling from the stairs	Participants, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand rails should be used when ascending and descending the stairs. No more than 2 people on the stairs at any one time. Participants must only ascend when requested by the instructor. Supervising adults must monitor this. No running on the stairs. Extra caution should be taken when slippery. 	Low
Unsupervised use of equipment	All	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The abseil tower and area is locked whenever the area is unsupervised. 	Low
Failure due to weight	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure user weight & height limits are considered and applied and information boards are in place. If harnesses do not fit participants correctly, they cannot participate in the activity. Should an instructor have a concern of a customer's weight they shall ask them directly. Questioning will be done privately away from earshot of the group. 	Low

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Injury caused by entrapment i.e. hair/finger in the figure-of-8	Participants,	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors are positioned in direct view and supervision of participants. 'Good to go checks' are carried out by instructors prior to leaving the ground which include making sure all hair is tied back and loose clothing tucked in. The importance of hand positioning is explained during the safety talk and a demonstration provided. If entrapment does occur, instructors are trained in a rescue to resolve the issue. 	Low
Uncontrolled descent leading to impact with the wall	Participants	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the safety talk participants are provided with a clear demonstration on how to effectively descend the wall. If a participant slips while descending the wall, the descent must be stopped while the participant regains their position. Suitable footwear must be worn, including closed toed shoes. 	Low
Equipment falling from top of the tower	Participants, Leaders	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone in the abseiling compound must have a correctly fitted helmet on their head when individuals are at the top of the abseil tower. 	Low
Participants becoming stuck	Participants	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors are trained in how to rescue participants. Instructors run their sessions utilising 'challenge by choice' and 'comfort zone' offering options for participants to set their own level of challenge. 	Low
Weather	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre Management Team/Lead Instructors must check weather at start of day and monitor throughout. Sessions must be stopped if wind speeds exceed 24mph, dependant on location. Sessions must be stopped immediately in thunder and lightning, and wait for 30 minutes after end of storm, before recommencing. Sessions to be cancelled in extreme hot or cold temperatures. 	Low
Uncontrolled groups of young people	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep all young people involved sitting down while not participating. Groups must be accompanied by a supervising adult. Group leader is responsible for managing the groups behaviour as stated in the booking terms and conditions. 	Low
Self-led sessions/ equipment	Participants, Leaders	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leader is responsible to ensure that those with own permits/qualifications must have completed and signed a Self-Led Activity Registration Form for the activity. Up-to-date permits/qualifications must be uploaded. 	Low

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising adult must be shown the activity area/activity equipment by centre staff before commencing the activity or been provided an alternative method. An additional competent adult should be present supervising individuals that are not engaged on the activity. Those with own permits/qualifications are responsible for their own risk assessment in addition to this risk assessment. When using own equipment individuals are responsible for their own risk assessment. In addition individuals must provide evidence of appropriate equipment records and must be set-up and run to HCSC standard operating procedures. 	
Clients with additional abilities/pre-existing health issues	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leader must provide information about significant medical requirements and additional needs during the booking process. Instructors should discuss any needs with group leaders before the session is started. Lead instructors/management should review information and make any specific adaptations, determined with an individual risk assessment. Group leader is responsible for having access to essential medication i.e. inhalers. Participants with a history of injuries should be warned about the physical nature of taking part in this activity and have read the activity information before starting. 	Low
Novice participants	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio of 2 instructors and at least one competent adult per 15 participants. Safety briefing given at the start of the session to identify the specific hazards and safety rules to follow and reinforced throughout. 	Low
Failure of equipment	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly equipment checks are carried out. Routine visual inspections completed and signed for at the start of the day and before each session by the activities team. If the activity equipment has a defect during use, the activity must be stopped immediately until repairs are completed, safety checks carried out and verified so activity can recommence. This must be recorded appropriately. 	Low
Poorly maintained activity area	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual external independent inspections are carried out. Monthly activity area checks are carried out. Routine visual inspections completed and signed for at the start of the day and before each session by the activities team. If the activity area has a defect during use, the activity must be stopped immediately until repairs are completed, safety checks carried out and verified so activity can recommence. This must be recorded appropriately. 	Low

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Misuse of equipment	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear briefing is provided at the start of the session. • Instructors to follow safe systems they have been taught. 	Low
General Injury	Participants, Leaders, Instructors	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups are responsible for their own first aid. Groups must have someone adequately trained and have a suitable first aid kit. • Additional first aid kit and defibrillator are available at reception/activity and key staff on duty to offer further support if required. • Those with NGB qualifications must hold a valid first aid qualification (if a requirement). 	Low