



CLIMBING WALL



OPERATING PROCEDURE and RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessment and Operating Procedure Climbing Wall

This activity takes place on site at 89th Activity Centre. The activity site has a rubber safety matting and Climbing Wall area.. **The Climbing Wall and Aerial Runway MUST NOT be used together unless the safety barriers are dividing the activities. The Peg Wall, Leap of Faith and Crate Climbing must not be used when this activity is running.** No one other than the participants must enter the area while the activity is running.

Please Note: Participants are not allowed on the top of the wall at any time. No participant should sit or stand on the wall at the top of a climb and abseiling from on top of the wall is prohibited.

The activity involves groups or individuals (1 to 8 persons) climbing up or down the climbing wall. All participants must wear climbing harness & helmet and are safety roped via belay.

See the Activity Area of the Scout Association web site for more general information about this activity:

<https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/16/climbing?moduleID=24&cat=26,407,351>

Fact Sheet FS120452 Climbing (Single Pitch) and Abseiling

Leader Qualifications

Activity Leaders must hold a Scout Association **Adventurous Activity Permit** or equivalent, or be authorised by the GSL after in-house training & assessment specifically for this activity.

Refer to and be familiar with the relevant Fact Sheets for the activity listed on the Scout association web site.

Prior to collecting Climbing equipment the Leader in charge of the activity must:

- Read and signed the Climbing Requisition Form.
- Check the equipment being used is in good and serviceable condition
- Been made aware of the location of First Aid Equipment / Emergency telephone etc.

Ratio and Other Restrictions

Supervisory arrangements will vary depending on the ability and needs of the group but should not exceed: Children and Young People 1:4 with a Leader and 2:8 with 2 competent adults on session (1 Leader and 1 assistant)

Adults Ratio 1:8 with 2 competent adults on session (1 Leader and 1 assistant)

Pre Session

- All non-essential persons to be kept in the Training Room during erection and lowering process
- Lead climbing protection points are not fitted to this wall. If tracer cords have not been fitted or have been dislodged a ladder or scaffold tower should be used to refit the climbing ropes to the top anchors following the relevant Working at Height regulations.
- Top-roping belay method must be used at all times.**
- Abseiling MUST NOT be carried out from the top of the wall.**
- If ropes are required for 'crate stacking' or 'leap of faith' they should be fitted to the A frame whilst it is in the lowered position
- Only authorised people should erect/adjust the climbing wall and its associated equipment and time on the top of the wall must be kept to an absolute minimum during erection and dismantling.** The process for erection is as follows (see Ending The Session below for dismantling): The swinging panel on the right must be located by the pins/bolts at both sides on top

of the wall before climbing commences. Use an in-place tracer cord to fit a climbing rope and climb the wall on the left hand end (when facing the wall) ensuring that a competent belayer is in position. A dynamic rope should be used to avoid shock loading. Once the top is gained the erector can then make themselves secure and move across to the area behind the swinging A frame using cows tails. The locking bolts can be slid into position. The winch cable for this is under considerable tension and so the erector should keep clear of it when the A frame is being raised. Check there is no one in the vicinity of the A frame, secure the area and winch up the A frame until it is beyond 45° and then fit the large plates with bolts and lynch pins. Lower the A frame until the load comes off the cable. Make a visual check of the cable condition. It is easy to lean over the top at this point to fit climbing ropes if any tracer cords have failed.

- All karabiners and belay devices need to be checked.
- Climbing ropes and other equipment must be inspected prior to use. Damaged items must be immediately removed from service and quarantined for assessment, repair or replacement.
- Check barriers are in place to prevent use of other activities.

Briefing and Kitting Up

It is the instructor's (leader's) responsibility to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the participants.

- Participants must be kitted up in a Waist Harness and helmets all fitted correctly.
- All participants must wear helmets at all times whilst on the activity.
- Harnesses and helmets must be checked for the correct fit and buckling before EVERY climb
- For a very small climber a full body harness will be used.
- The belay is set up using a belayer on the ground, through the anchor on the wall and connected to the climber creating a Top Rope system. **This method must be used at all times.**
- Instructors should be familiar with the belay devices and system used for the activity.
- Instructors will need to demonstrate how to belay and also how to lower. This must take place before the session starts.
- Belayers must wear a harness and helmet and must be supervised by an authorized activity instructor who should be able to take control of the rope if necessary..
- Descendeurs will be linked to harnesses using a screw gate karabiner and the alignment checked by an activity instructor.
- Soloing is not permitted.
- **Participants are not allowed on the top of the wall at any time. No participant should sit or stand on the wall at the top of a climb and abseiling from on top of the wall is prohibited.**
- No participant should have loose clothing or jewellery. Long hair must be tied back. The carrying of items in pockets should be avoided. A strong pair of shoes or trainers must be worn
- Horseplay of any kind is not permitted throughout the session
- Food and drink shall not be permitted in the climbing area.
- The activity must be stopped if there is a risk of thunder, lightning and or high winds developing.
- The Instructor should consider stopping the session in very wet conditions.
- Activity instructors should ensure that all group members use the wall in a controlled manner in accordance with these procedures.
- Activity instructors must not be seated during a climbing session.
- It is the responsibility of the activity instructor to ensure that all equipment is stored correctly at the end of the session.

Instructing and Supervising the Session

This should be a positive and enjoyable experience for the participants. Participants where possible should be given the choice of whether they want to attempt a challenge and also how far up they wish to go. We operate a system of "Challenge by Choice".

All participants must wear a harness and helmet and be attached to a safety rope tied to the harness. The belayers must be directly supervised by the instructors and may need direct assistance when lowering participants from the wall.

- Demonstrate the different routes up the wall according to skill level
- Offer different solutions for climbing the wall
- Belayers must wear a harness and must be supervised at all times by an authorized activity instructor who should be able to take control of the rope if necessary.
- Belay ropes need to be kept tight at all times, no need to give slack.
- Remind climbers that they are not allowed on the top of the wall at any time.

Ending the Session

It is the responsibility of the activity instructor to ensure that all equipment is stored correctly at the end of the session:

- **The A-Frame must be unlocked and returned to stored (down) position at the end of the session:**
 - First secure the area and one qualified person attain the top of the wall (as per erecting instructions above).
 - Take the weight of the A frame on the winch cable.
 - The person on top of the wall needs to remove the two pins, freeing the large plates.
 - The A frame can then be lowered on the winch cable
 - All ropes except one on the far left end should be removed from the wall and replaced with tracer cords. Any snags or difficulties can be dealt with from the top of the wall
 - The erector should then be lowered down by belay and the final rope replaced by tracer cord.
- Replace the barriers and warning signs
- All equipment must be returned to stores and checked
- Any issues must be recorded in the Equipment Use Record or Incident Log and any damaged items must be removed from service and quarantined for assessment, repair or replacement.

11th February 2014. Prepared By Scott Murdoch and Robin Kent

15th April 2014. Revised by Robin Kent

12th May 2014. Minor updates by Robin Kent

12th November 2015 and 1st December 2015. Updated to reinforce rules that climbers are not allowed on the top of the wall at any time by Robin Kent

Hazard Identified Risk Arising	Person(s) At Risk	How Is The Risk Controlled? Current Control Measures	Person(s) Responsible for Controls	Review Date Revisions
Other Activities	All site users	The Safety Barriers MUST be in place if the Climbing Wall is in use whilst the Aerial Runway is in use. No climbers must be on the wall if the Peg Wall, Crate Stacker or Leap of faith is in use.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Crush Injury during erection and lowering of A-frame and wall panel	Participants	All non-essential persons to be kept in the training room during erection and lowering process	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Incorrect wall and equipment erection	Participants Activity Leader/ Instructor	All Leaders and assistant leaders to be trained in wall operating and safety procedures and be fully conversant with wall operating procedure manual. Only leaders are permitted on the top of the wall and only then during the erecting and lowering process.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Failure of belay point	Participants	All belay points to be checked in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Equipment Failure	Participants	The condition of all equipment to be checked prior to use. Any suspect equipment to be removed and quarantined until assessed, repaired or replaced. All equipment to be regularly checked in accordance with FS120411 'Care, Inspection and Storage of Climbing Equipment'.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	

Falling from height	Participants Activity Leader/ Instructor	Participants to only climb on the wall when properly attached to the top-rope belay system. All helmets, harnesses and belays to be checked for correct fit before EACH climb. No participant to be on the top of the wall at any time. Leaders to follow procedures as in operating procedure and climbing wall handbook Only leaders are permitted on the top of the wall and only then for a minimum amount of time during the erecting and lowering process for the A frame. The erector must make themselves secure using cows tails	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Persons being hit by falling objects	Participants and non-participants	Good instructor/group awareness. All persons to wear helmets at all times in area of climbing wall.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Falling over objects on floor	Participants	Instructors to follow operating procedures and keep area to base of wall clear.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Cable failure	Participant	Replace cable every 4 years or sooner if damage is suspected.	GSL/Maintenance Manager	
Extreme Weather	All participants and non-participants	Instructor to be aware of prevailing weather conditions e.g. - Thunder, lightning, snow, gales, heavy rain and falling branches. Check site for hanging tree snags or broken branches after storms etc.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	
Health and fitness	Participants	Instructor to be aware of any medical issues before the session. Medication required during the session to be available in briefing room (e.g. asthma inhalers, epipen etc.) No recent injuries such as neck, back or shoulder that could be aggravated. For adults check they are not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	Activity Leader/ Instructor	