

Risk Assessment Activity – Abseiling

Pioneer Centre	Assessed by: James Kniffen	Assessed/ Reviewed:	Next Review Date
		03/01/2023	09/01/2024
Reviewed by:	Assist Chief: Max Bishop	09/01/2023	
Reviewed by:	Senior Instructors: Andrew Evrard, Joseph Page & Kieran Miles Lead Instructors: Kieren Plant, Ronan Halpenny, Ruth Gibson & Will Blick		

Overview: Abseiling is carried out on three purpose-built towers supplied and erected by JM Adventure and Adventure Rope Co Ltd. An annual inspection is carried out by High Times Technical Consultants. Regular monthly inspection checks are also carried out on equipment by activities staff as well as a quarterly structural check. A qualified Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (WMCI) Chief Instructor has overall responsibility. All other instructors are RCI or CWI qualified, or in-house trained using NGB recognized techniques. An examination to check competency of staff is completed on each staff member by the external and independent Technical Advisor which is valid for 3 years. This process is periodically checked and validated by the Technical Advisor and senior staff members do continual monitoring throughout the year. Preferred Staff to Client ratio is 1:12 and a maximum of 1:16 under supervision (under instruction 1: 1 instructor to abseiler ratio). All appropriate personal protective equipment is worn during these sessions.

Hazards	Groups of People at Risk from the Hazards Identified	Probability	Control Measures – Reduces the severity and lowers the probability to acceptable levels
		Severity	
		Risk Category	
Structural Failure	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very unlikely	Towers are built by approved contractors and external annual inspections are carried out. Quarterly structural checks are carried out.
		Fatal	
		Medium	
Falling objects	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Helmets are worn by anyone in the area when activities are being delivered or maintenance is being done and guests briefed on how to stand if objects fall to protect themselves. All equipment at top of tower secured and emergency procedures in place in case of an accident. Guests advised to remove things from pockets or have them stored safely in zipped pockets.
		Major	
		Medium	
Unauthorized access to Towers	Guest/participants, and general public	Very likely	Tower doors locked and shut when not in use and the abseiling ropes are pulled up to the top of the tower between sessions to avoid people climbing up them Only access to towers is via a trained member of staff. No access signs are clearly displayed. Group are given a brief of areas that are prohibited to enter without Centre staff.
		Fatal	
		High	
Rope burns		Unlikely	

	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Minor Low	Group briefed on correct clothing. Instructor supervises guests contact with rope. Instructors are trained in safe lowering practices (lowering slowly and smoothly) and are given gloves that can be used to belay in which helps reduce the risk of friction burns.
High level fall	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very Unlikely Fatal Medium	Detailed in-house training & assessment are carried out on activity staff to ensure safe access and practice is used for the activities and the correct use of all equipment. A permanent lanyard is left up on abseiling to allow instructors to access the tower edge without risk on setup and pack down. All PPE is checked and recorded monthly. Clear briefing on accessing the edge for abseiling is given and instructors ensure that no one goes out the gate for abseiling without being clipped into a safety rope. Instructors ensure participants are wearing all PPE before partaking in abseiling.
Environmental Hazards	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very likely Fatal High	All participants are briefed on proper clothing for the current weather conditions. Instructors are issued appropriate PPE waterproof jacket, warm layers, and gloves to use for activity delivery. Towers not used or sessions cancelled in the event of thunder & lightning (activities can resume 30mins after last thunder sound was heard) and/or winds gusts above 40/45mph (senior staff may reassess and end sessions below this level or may let continue if direction is suitable and hazards are managed). Also, further control measures under the Adverse Weather Risk Assessment are to help with environmental hazards.
Slips, trips and falls	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Likely Minor Medium	Maintenance of site is done by the activities team and maintenance team. Instructors visually check the area upon arrival. General brief and group management is provided by instructors to ensure activities are run safely and guests should follow the no running safety rule when in the activity area.
Soft tissue injury	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely Minor Low	Instructor aware of group's capabilities and encourage group to warm up/warm down as needed.
Physiological effects	Guest/participants	Very unlikely Major Medium	Instructors are aware of the group's needs and medical issues. Challenge by choice brief is given and instructors will respect participants choices and be sensitive and adapt to their reactions to the activity they are invited to participate in.
Stress / Panic Attack	Guest/participants	Likely Major / trauma High	Challenge by choice brief is given and instructors will respect participants choices. Instructors will air on the side of caution if participants start to panic or have strong emotional reaction to the activity the instructors will react quickly to ensure the level of stress is brought back down to acceptable level. This should help ensure the activity runs well for all those involved.
		Unlikely	

Helmet suspension (caught on an element)	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Major	Lowering practices taught that prevent helmets catching on elements e.g. slow careful lowering of participants in the correct position.
		Medium	