



Hautbois Activity Centre Risk Assessment			
ABSEILING			
Assessment Code: RA-ABS25	SOP Code: SOP-ABS25	Lesson Plan Code: LP-ABS25	
Review Date: March 2026	Assessor: Rory Howard	Tech Advisor: Chris Pretty	

**Description:** Abseiling takes place on a purpose-built tower on site. The tower measures 10m, participants access via stairs inside and abseil from a single platform at the top. Ratio of 1:12  
 SR= Severity Rating; 5 (Catastrophic) 4 (Major) 3 (Moderate) 2 (Minor) 1 (None)  
 LH=Likelihood Rating 5 (Almost certain) 4 (Likely) 3 (Possible) 2 (Unlikely) 1 (Insignificant)  
 RR= Risk Rating; A (Acceptable Risk) RR (Residual Risk remains despite controls- 'occupational hazard') U (Unacceptable Risk, action to be taken immediately)

Significant Hazard	Persons at Risk	How	Controls	Severity	Likelihood	Risk Rating
Incorrectly fitted or faulty equipment	Participants, leaders & instructors	Incorrectly fitted harnesses & helmets may result in participant falling or having their airway restricted. Faulty equipment could result in a fall or serious injury.	Safe Operating Procedures adhered to. All equipment fitted by a competent Instructor holding the Girlguiding Level 1, or higher qualification/training plus in-house trained and competency-tested by the Technical Advisor. All equipment visually and physically checked by instructor to ensure correct fitting including once being worn by participants before every go. Regular activity & PPE checks carried out to ensure all equipment is fit for purpose. Any defected items removed from service and placed in quarantine for inspection by a senior member of staff.	3	2	RR
Equipment Failure - problems with equipment or tower.	Participants, leaders & instructors	Risk of falling or injury from unsafe and unsound attachment.	Inspections by external assessor and recorded. Quarterly checks by Activities Team to highlight any potential issues, PPE checks regular and recorded.	3	1	A
Entrapment	Participants	Hair becoming trapped in the device such as the figure 8.	All long hair tied back; baggy clothing restrained. Proper instruction to prevent entrapment during abseil. Instructor informs client of safe area to hold rope and ensure that participant remains in full view throughout. All instructors receive additional rescue training for entrapment.	3	2	RR
Unsupervised use	Participants, leaders	Any group or individual staying on site. Climbing over activity and falling causing injury.	Group information pack informs group leaders that all activities are out of bounds unless on a pre-booked supervised session. Fencing acts as a boundary to the activity site. Clear signage. Tower locked when not in use.	3	1	A
Being hit by falling objects	Participants, leaders & instructors	When going down the wall have flailing feet, causing injury. Items being dropped from participants pockets.	Hard hats to be worn always while the abseiling session is running. Participants briefed to remove items from pockets, shoes are tied at beginning of session for safety and comfort. Safe viewing area is shown to group.	2	1	A
Slip, trips & falls including stairs	Participants, leaders & instructors	Participants running up/downstairs, natural hazards.	All clients to be reminded to walk up/down the stairs and to be vigilant when walking around the activity area. All participants to be supervised by an instructor or leader.	2	2	A
Poor Instruction	Participants	Rope burns, slipping, minor personal injuries	Instructors qualified to Girl Guiding Level 1, Current Local Authority Award or above i.e. SPA MIA. All instructors carry first aid kits for minor injuries.	2	1	A

This Risk Assessment should work in conjunction with the generic risk assessment (RA-GEN) and relevant activity's Safe Operating Procedure (SOP-).

<b>Hautbois Activity Centre Safe Operating Procedure</b>			
Abseiling SOP-ABS25			
Location: 3D Map ref. - A	RA-ABSP25	LP-ABS25	
<b>Review Date:</b> March 2026			
<b>Must be used in conjunction with Generic Safe Operating Procedure (SOP-GEN25)</b>			

**Qualifications: (Instructors must be at least 18 years of age)**

- Minimum - Current Girlguiding UK Level 1 Climbing and Abseiling award for guiding groups and/or a Current LEA Climbing and Abseil Award for Non-Guiding Groups E.g. Climbing Wall Supervisors Award.
- In house Abseiling rescue refresher training
- First aid certificate - 1 day minimum.

**Activity Area:**

- Check area by wall for any items that may cause damage.
- Visual check of the tower, wall, staircases and edge of wall for debris that may fall or damage the tower.
- Visual check of Safety lanyards and anchor slings
- When checking inside the tower shut the tower door behind you to prevent unauthorised access.

**Equipment:** Visual checks of all equipment must be done before each session.

- Harnesses to be loosened and laid out ready for the group.
- Helmets to be laid out with harnesses fully loosened.
- Instructor must be fitted with a Helmet and Harness before setting up the abseil tower.
- All users of the tower must be attached to a safety lanyard while at the top of the tower.
- Descent ropes must be attached to an anchor sling and be tied with an Italian hitch and tied off with two half hitches (known as a locked off Italian Hitch or a releasable abseil) A closed Screw gate karabiner must be placed in the dead-end loop to prevent slipping.
- A figure of eight descender must be used on the descent rope in conjunction with a screw gate Karabiner.
- The safety rope must be attached to the anchor sling using an Italian hitch.
- The participant must be attached to the safety rope with a screw gate karabiner and figure of eight knot with a stopper knot.
- The Instructor must check the ropes reach the ground before use.

**Session Management:**

- Participants to be asked to remove personal items such as phone from pockets and rings from fingers.
- Introduce and explain the correct fitting of the harnesses and helmets
- Each participant harness and helmet must be checked by the instructor before they can abseil.
- The following safety rules must be highlighted to all participants (confirming their understanding)
  - Helmets must always be worn in the fenced area.
  - If Helmets or Harnesses are taken off at any point in the session, they must be checked for correct fitting by the Instructor before the participant can abseil.
  - Stairs must be walked up in a sensible fashion.
  - Only four people at the top of the tower with the instructor at any one time.
  - Participants are not allowed directly below the descent line as participants are descending. (Waiting on the bench is ideal).
- Take first four participants up to the top of the tower.
- Connect all participants to the safety lanyards, explain that once they are attached only the instructor can remove them from the safety lanyard.
- The participants are attached to the descent line and safety line by the harness manufacturers recommended attachment point. (Centre alpine harness - Yellow loop at front of harness).
- Participants are instructed in simple logical steps the technique to abseil as is recommended by the GUK Climbing and Abseiling scheme. (Reminding them of the importance to keep hands by their hip and away from the abseiling devices).
- Instructors must observe the descending client to monitor their technique ensuring they are not going to cause any items to jam into the abseiling devices.
- If the Tower is to be used later on in the day the ropes are to be pulled up and the harnesses locked away inside the abseil tower hung on the delegated hooks.
- Following the final session of the day all equipment must be returned to store and any faults or defect be reported to the Assistant manager or senior instructor.
- In the event of an emergency Instructors to follow the Staff accident and incident emergency procedure

The instructor on session will always be the first person to enter the abseiling area and the last person to leave checking that the door is locked and gates are closed.