

Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures



Chainwalk

Standard Operating Procedures: Chainwalk

Definition and Scope of Activities

The chain walk at Ellie, Fife

Precautions to Minimise Hazards

It is essential that the Standard Operating Procedures are followed and that personnel leading the Group fully brief the group to pay attention to hazard warning information, remain in control of the activity and follow accredited tuition and activity progression.

The specific hazards identified above are not exhaustive and additional hazards or combinations may arise during the course of an activity necessitating ongoing attention to minimise or control the risk(s) to a manageable level.

Seasonal Constraints

Chain walk activities can take place all year. Caution should be taken if there is snow or ice around the chain walk especially when walking on the path at the top of the chain walk. The venue is exposed to wind and rain, and the chains become slippery when wet.

Locations / Tide / Weather Constraints

Access / Egress to the chain walk is restricted by high tide. Both ends of the chain walk cut off around 4m of tide. At Low tide some of the more challenging 'chains' can be omitted however when the tide is higher than around 2.7m the two more challenging chains cannot be omitted and the group will be forced to tackle them.

The chain walk may not be appropriate for groups with very low / limited ability and fitness levels.

The tide should be checked before going. Beware of spring tides and allow plenty of time to tackle the chain walk.

In extremely windy conditions some large waves can be generated around the chain walk, especially when there is a strong South westerly through to South Easterly wind.

Age Limits

The minimum age for participating in the chain walk is 8.

Additional time may be necessary for very young people.

Tuition Ratios

The tuition ratios are:

- 1 Leader to 8 participants

Tuition Leader Qualifications

Minimum qualifications for leading groups on the chain walk are:

- Hold a relevant group leadership NGB Award such as LLA or L2 MBL and a rock-climbing award such as CWI or RCI and hold a valid 2 day First Aid Certificate.
- Complete the in-house training and assessment or hold MCI award or above and be familiar with the chain walk.

The National Governing Bodies contact data relevant to this section are as follows:

- Mountain Leader Training – www.mltuk.org

Equipment - Participants

All participants must have access to windproof/waterproof/protective clothing, appropriate to conditions, safety harness if using rope / cows-tails, helmet, and suitable footwear.

Instructors should carry a safety rope

Equipment – Group Safety

Additional equipment to be considered depending on location / conditions:

- Safety rope (minimum spec. 20 metres 8.5mm)
- Watch
- First aid supplies
- OS map (1:50000 scale)/compass
- Hot drink or means of making one
- 4 Karabiners
- Group emergency shelter
- 2 8ft Slings
- ATC

Access / Environment

As locations are Coast based there may be access restrictions due to land use. Access permission should follow national access codes of practice – see below.

Coastal cliffs often provide an important habitat for nesting birds and species of moss / alpine not normally found at lower levels. Groups should exercise care to reduce unnecessary disturbance and damage from overuse of specific sites.

RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT REF NO:
Activity: Chain walk
Location: Ellie
Assessor: DS, JL

Hazard	Who might be harmed?			Existing controls What makes the hazard less risky? What makes these controls effective?	Risk			Further actions Avoid Control at source Take advantage of technology Protect all Make what you have more effective	Target date dd-mm-yy	Responsibility	Completion Date	New Residual Risk
	Public	Client	Leader		Probability	Severity	Rating					
Bolts / chain failure	x	x	x	Regular checks by fife council, staff to visual check on each visit	1	5	5	None				
Equipment failure	x	x	x	Equipment checked prior to use and on return to stores, regular PPE checks by competent person	1	5	5	None				
Rock fall	x	x	x	Helmets to be worn when needed	2	5	10	Details of rock fall to be passed on to the team and Fife outdoors.				
Tidal changes / trapped by tide / Large waves		x	x	Tidal charts / swell / wind checked prior to trip and observations on day	1	3	3	None				
Stuck in rock squeeze		x	x	Check the size of hole suits the client and clothing checked for snag hazards	1	4	4	None				
Slip / trip / fall from height	x	x	x	Good route choice robust safety brief	1	5	5	Leaders to observe competency of students to look after themselves				
Falling into the sea		x	x	Use of safety systems and group control	1	5	5	None				
Chain-walk route suffering from erosion and footholds not as positive as they used to be – Leading to a slip or fall, potentially from height.	x	x	x	- Route choice suitable for groups ability - Spotting groups in exposed locations - Use of confidence rope if necessary	2	3	6	Additional erosion reported to Fife council Outdoor Dept, who are seeking to re-cut steps and put additional measures in place.				

Further actions approved by: Derek Napier
Signature: D Napier
Date: 9th April, 2026
Urgency of Action = (20> *Very High*) (16-20 *High*) (9-15 *Moderate*) (4-8 *Low*) (1-3 *Very Low*)

Severity = 1. Damage 2. Minor Injury 3. +3 Days/Hospitalised 4. Major Injury/Permanent Disability 5. Fatality

Probability = 1. Very Unlikely 2. Unlikely 3. Fairly Likely 4. Likely 5. Very Likely

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