

Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures



April 2026

Standard Operating Procedures: Indoor Climbing and Mobile Wall

Definition and Scope of Activities

Locations for indoor climbing are purpose built climbing centres, outdoor built walls and mobile climbing towers.

The major activities covered within this section are as follows:

- Indoor roped climbing
- Bouldering
- Abseiling from towers
- AOC mobile tower
- Other mobile towers.

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 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

Indoor climbing activities can take place all year.

The mobile wall cannot be used in high winds, during lightning or storms or extremely heavy rain.

Location Constraints

Mobile wall must be sited on a suitably level site

Mobile Wall Induction / Specific Section

- Leaders must complete the in-house induction process prior to working on mobile wall sessions.
- The wall must be erected according to induction and manufactures guidelines.
- Auto belays must be hung as directed.
- Members of the public must not enter the area while the wall is being erected or dismantled.
- The 'front facing section' of the wall should not be used with an auto-belay.
- A walk round inspection should be carried out by before the wall is opened to members of the public.
- If large numbers are expected a queue system and crowd management should be in place.
- Staff should rotate tasks to avoid task fatigue which may lead to errors.

Tuition Ratios

The tuition/supervision ratios are:

Indoor climbing

1 Leader to 8 participants

Note: The above ratio can be increased to 1:12 where the participants are deemed competent: for example hold N.I.C.A.S L.2 awards, where the leader is in a supervising role.

Mobile wall

Min 2 staff who have completed the induction for the wall, one of whom holds an CWI /RCI award min.
Minimum of three members of staff where the event is expected to be particularly busy e.g. local fetes.

Tuition Leader Qualifications

All leaders must hold valid first aid certificate

Minimum qualifications

Indoor climbing	CWI
Mobile wall	CWI + Induction

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

- Mountain Leader Training – www.mltuk.org

Equipment - Participants

Harness if roped climbing

Members of the public climbing on the mobile wall should tie back or remove items of clothing hair which may get caught on holds or cables. Items of personal property which may fall out of pockets or from the person should not be carried on the wall.

RISK ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT REF NO: artificial climb

Activity: Climbing indoor / Mobile wall*

Location: Various

Assessor: DS, JL

Hazard * denotes mobile tower specific	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					
* Moving the wall Collision with person/ property/ vehicle	x	x	x	Two persons to be present (min) while the wall is being moved. No un-trained persons should move the wall Banksman should be considered when reversing the wall Trailer and vehicle regularly inspected,	1	5	5	None				
*Setting up of wall Injury to staff/public during the setup of the wall	x	x	x	Two persons (min) to be present while the wall is being set up Wall set up according manufactures guidance Hydraulics and all mechanical elements checked for obvious damage before use and trailer regularly inspected by competent person. Cordoned area to be set before erecting the wall if there other people in the vicinity.	1	5	5	None				

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Failure of bolts and top anchors	x	x	x	Check moving parts on the A-frame and Anchor bolts for any obvious damage or loose bolts. *wall bolts inspected regularly	1	5	5	None				
Hold spinning		x	x	Tighten any loose holds as they are discovered.	3	2	6	Holds may come loose at any point, Tools are kept with the wall to allow holds to be tightened up on site.				
Body part / clothing caught on / in the wall		x	x	Good observation from instructors, loose clothing to be removed/ tucked in. *Hook holds on mobile wall turned down or to the side.	2	3	6	Helmets must NOT be worn while using an auto belay.				
*Mechanical failure of the wall	x	x	x	Wall inspected regularly Set up by trained personal, on site inspections of the wall	1	5	5	None				
Object falling from height	x	x	x	Pockets emptied and no loose object carried up the wall	2	3	6	Helmets must NOT be worn on Autobelay When setting up the Mobile wall staff should cross check the setup of the belays				

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				helmets to be worn if deemed necessary by instructor				etc to ensure that all attachments are secure.				
Auto belay failure		x	x	Belays inspected as per service instructions. Visual check by instructor prior to use Clients instructed in use Observation from instructors Used within manufactures guidelines *set up as instructed	1	5	5	Rescue protocol in place Record any jams including the device ID number and location on the wall when the jam occurs. If a Jam occurs, the belay should be removed from use immediately and inspected prior to re-introduction.				
Fall from height		x	x	Appropriate safety systems to be used.	1	5	5	None				
*Loss of crowd control e.g. persons coming into operations area.	x	x	x	Use of barrier to keep operation area clear. Queuing systems in place and method of controlling the number of persons inside operations area.	3	2	6	Staff to be vigilant and remove any unwanted presence from operating area. The police often attend the local fetes and may be of further assistance.				

Further actions approved by:	Signature:	Date:
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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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Ancrum Outdoor Centre, 10 Ancrum Road, Dundee DD2 2HZ Tel: 01382 435911
Web: www.ancrum.com Email: ancrum.centre@leisureandculturaldundee.com

