

Outdoor Education Standard Operating Procedures

Summer Mountaineering

Standard Operating Procedures: Summer Mountaineering

Definition and Scope of Activities

Locations range from mountains, quarries, sea cliffs to roadside crags which can be either accessed by road or are located remotely.

The major activities covered within this section are as follows:

- Mountaineering non-roped e.g. scrambling
- Mountaineering roped e.g. multi-pitch climbing
- Teaching Skills – e.g. Introduction to leading / RCI skills

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

Climbing activities can take place all year. The normal accepted season for climbing is where summer conditions are present but the presence of snow/ice on a route deems the classification of risk to be winter. A slight 'dusting' of snow or occasional patches of snow is acceptable providing the snow conditions are not worsening. Furthermore where underfoot conditions may lead to a slip resulting in a downhill slide, conditions may be deemed as winter and winter qualifications would be required to lead a group in this terrain.

Location Constraints

Use of remote high mountain plateau in winter conditions should be avoided with participants under 16 years of age.

Tuition Ratios

Maximum tuition ratios – These may be reduced by the instructor

1:6 On non-technical scrambles (rope carried but not expected to be used)

1:3 On technical scrambles / Multi-pitch rock climbs

1:2 Teaching lead climbing

Tuition Leader Qualifications

Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor MCI

All leaders must hold valid first aid certificate (min 2 days)

Note: While working towards the MCI and working under a mentor a trainee MCI may lead activities in this section as deemed appropriate by the mentor (please see the Association of Mountaineering Instructors AMI - 'working with a mentor' for details)

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

- Mountain Leader Training – www.mltuk.org
- Association of Mountaineering Instructors www.ami.org

Equipment – Participants

All participants must have access to windproof / waterproof / protective clothing, appropriate to conditions

- Other equipment as needed by the activity

Equipment – Group Safety

Additional equipment to be considered depending on location / conditions:

- Safety rope
- First aid supplies
- OS map (1:50000 scale)/compass
- Hot drink or means of making one
- Emergency rations
- Group emergency shelter or tent
- Torch

Access / Environment

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

Mountains and 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: Climbing 1

Activity: Summer Mountaineering

Location: Various

Assessor: DS, LJ

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					
Slip / Trip / Fall from height	x	x	x		Safety systems in place, clients given good safety brief, progressive routes	1	5	5	None				
Falling Rock / objects	x	x	x		Helmets to be worn when required, area to be checked for loose objects, items secured at top of cliff, safety brief on checking holds	2	5	10	None				
Anchor Failure		x	x		Qualified staff using sound judgement to select suitable anchors	1	5	5	Staff to use 'info log' to pass information about changes to venue. Continued CPD				
Falling while setting up			x		Instructor to use appropriate safety systems	1	5	5	Continued CPD and peer appraisals to avoid complacency and skill fade				
Hair / clothing or body part catching on equipment		x	x		All loose clothing and accessories are put away, tied or removed	2	2	4	None				
Crag fast climber / stuck climber		x	x		Appropriate route choice	2	1	3	Instructor to use skills to rescue if needed				

 CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE				RISK ASSESSMENT				ASSESSMENT REF NO: Climbing 1				
Activity: Summer Mountaineering				Location: Various				Assessor: DS, LJ				
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					
Leader fall	x	x	x	Appropriate route choice, acceptance of risk, progressive teaching, use of coaching during route.	2	5	10	Continued CPD				
Body part / equipment / clothing trapped in rock		x	x	Clothes and equipment checked for snag hazards / robust safety brief on climbing techniques, appropriate route choice	1	4	4	None				
Poor student belaying		x	x	Use of suitable backup systems for novice belayers. Leaders to use judgement of competency before removing backup systems or remotely supervising.	3	5	15	Continued CPD				
Equipment Failure	x	x	x	PPE checks by competent person. Check of equipment prior to use	1	5	10	Continued CPD				

Further actions approved by: Derek Napier	Signature: D Napier	Date: 9th April, 2026
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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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