

Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities

Challenge Rope Activities Standard Operating Procedures



These Standard Operating Procedures are issued and updated by the State Activities Council and distributed by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities on behalf of the Chief Commissioner of NSW. They outline the requirements for the conduct of Adventurous Activities within Scouts NSW.

Version 4.0

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1 Conduct of Activities

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Scouts NSW Adventurous Activity Policy.
- 1.2 Challenge Rope Activities includes Crate Stacking, High and Low Ropes, Flying Fox, Rope Bridges (and similar 'off-ground' pioneering projects).
- 1.3 Where the activity is of permanent construction (e.g. purpose built Challenge Rope Course at Cataract Scout Park) the Standard Operating Procedures for that site must be followed.
- 1.4 A risk assessment must be conducted for the activity in relation to the venue and participants.
- 1.5 Where the activity is greater than 2 metres above the ground, a belay (static or dynamic) system, or other fall protection system must be used. Where a belay system is used, the person supervising the belay must be appropriately qualified.
- 1.6 Scouts Australia Policy and Rules (P&R R12.7) Pioneering Activities states:

Pioneering is a day-to-day program activity involving special risks, which require special precautions. Leaders are required to inform themselves of the risks and precautions required to be taken prior to the conduct of the activity. Branch rules may prescribe restrictions and additional requirements especially where public participation is involved.

 - a) *Ropes under tension, e.g. rope bridges of less than one metre height and seven metres span, and flying foxes up to 20 metres where the participant is less than 1.5m off the ground, may be constructed within the Section Program by skilled leaders without formal qualifications.*
 - b) *During the construction of pioneering activities where Scouts may be more than two metres from the ground suitable safety equipment/protection must be worn.*
 - c) *Suitable four point attachment helmets which comply with current Australian standards, e.g. hard-shelled bicycle, caving, rock climbing (not construction) helmets, must be worn for pioneering activities where head injuries are a potential.*
 - d) *Industrial helmets may only be worn in situations where participants remain on the ground.*
- 1.7 The tensioning of ropes used for Challenge Rope Activities should be done by manual means; this includes the use of blocks and tackle. The use of tirlors, power-operated winches, vehicles and the like is not allowed as they place the rope under extreme tension thereby increasing the chance of severe injury to participants.

1.8 Commercially manufactured activities are exempt from 1.7 if the construction of the activity requires mechanical tensioning during construction or authorised servicing.

2 Equipment

2.1 All equipment used for Challenge Rope Activities must be inspected prior to the activity to ensure they meet, and continue to meet, the requirements of the activity.

2.2 All permanent or potentially long-term constructions should be checked in accordance with any manufacturing or engineering requirements.

2.3 A record of such inspections should be kept with the equipment and available on demand.

2.4 It is recognised that participants may have considerable personal equipment, usually obtained over many years of experience. While it remains the personal responsibility for participants to ensure that their equipment is in good order, the Adventurous Activity Coordinator should ensure that the equipment is suitable for the particular activity.

2.5 All equipment is to be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and must meet recognised standards where such standards exist.

2.6 Participants are to be informed of the type and quality of equipment they are expected to bring. Specific mention should be made of anticipated weather conditions and seasonal factors.

2.7 Sufficient food and refreshments suitable for the activity should be available.

2.8 Individual equipment (including personal protective equipment) is appropriate for the anticipated conditions.

2.9 A suitable first aid kit must be available on every activity. Individual participants are also encouraged to carry a first aid kit that should include personal medications.

3 Participant Ratios

3.1 Where a belay system is required ratios must be based on a risk assessment carried out by an appropriately qualified person.

3.2 Ratios and minimum party size are to be determined by a risk assessment process based on the following considerations:

- Level of difficulty and the skills required.
- Anticipated environmental conditions, remoteness and duration.
- Weather conditions and future forecasts
- Prior experience of Leaders and participants.
- Requirements of Land Owners or Land Managers

- Availability of communications and access
- Environmental sustainability

3.3 For youth sections the minimum party sizes must be in accordance with sectional award scheme requirements.

3.4 The Adventurous Activity Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that maximum numbers do not exceed locality specific requirements.

4 Qualifications

4.1 While there are no limitations to how and where a member of the Association receives training in adventurous activity skills, the assessment for accreditation of qualifications remains the responsibility of SAIT.

4.2 Where adventurous activity skills are not within the registered scope of SAIT, the responsibility of such skill recognition remains with the State Activity Council.

4.3 The following qualifications are required:

Flying Fox greater than 20 metres	A person qualified, and current, as required by the Flying Fox Policy and Training.
Crate Stacking	A person qualified to Abseil Level 2 must set up and oversee the belay system. There are no specific qualifications for this activity (see above regarding conduct of activities).
High ropes	A person qualified to a minimum Challenge Rope Guide must set up and oversee the rope course.
Flying Fox less than 20 metres	A person qualified, and current, as required by the Flying Fox Policy and Training.
Low Ropes	There are no specific qualifications for this activity (see above regarding conduct of activities).
Rope Bridges	There are no specific qualifications for this activity (see above regarding conduct of activities).
Pioneering Towers	There are no specific qualifications for this activity (see above regarding conduct of activities).