

# Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities

## Rock 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**

**November 2014**

# 1 Conduct of Activities

- 1.1 These Standard Operating Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Scouts NSW Adventurous Activity Policy
- 1.2 The term 'rock activities' includes all activities conducted on natural or artificial rock environments. This may include abseiling, bouldering, canyoning, caving and climbing. Rock activities may also include multi-pitch, overnight trips, canyons or artificial surfaces. The use of belay systems and safety equipment (including safety mats for bouldering) is a fundamental requirement of all rock activities.
- 1.3 Commercial climbing gyms are exempt from these rules. The Commercial Activities Policy applies.
- 1.4 Scout rock activities should be conducted with due regard to all relevant land management, minimal impact and environmental requirements.
- 1.5 Joey Scouts, Cub Scouts and Scouts can participate in rock related activities in line with any sectional specific requirements.
- 1.6 Where the activity is greater than one and a half (1.5) 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 qualified and the belayer must hold SISO ABN 202 'Safeguard an abseiler using a single rope belay system'.
  - 1.6.1 Industry standard requires top belay systems for novice abseilers.
- 1.7 High-risk 'stunt' methods have no place in an activity where safety is the first consideration. Star jumps and abseil races are examples of stunt activities. If unsure whether an activity would be considered a 'stunt' a risk assessment should be documented followed by discussion with the Regional Commissioner for Activities who may give approval.
- 1.8 All canyon trips, including horizontal canyons, should be assessed after periods of prolonged rain and/or where the potential for flash flooding is possible.
- 1.9 Mobile Climbing walls with auto belay devices may be supervised by a person qualified to minimum Abseil Level 2. This person is responsible for ensuring that participants are using appropriate safety equipment.
- 1.10 Bouldering can only be conducted following a risk assessment.
  - 1.10.1 Bouldering surface must be assessed prior to use
  - 1.10.2 All bouldering activities must include a 1:1 spotter
  - 1.10.3 Where the bouldering fall is more than one metre or moves are complex and a spotter alone will not meet safety requirements then an appropriate 'crash' mat must also be available

## 2 Equipment

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 All equipment is to be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and must meet recognised standards where such standards exist.
- 2.3 All Scout owned equipment must be stored and maintained in accordance with manufacturers requirements. Logbooks must be used to accurately record the use, cleaning and storage of this equipment and kept with the equipment. It is strongly recommended that use of personal equipment is also recorded appropriately.
- 2.4 The following standard equipment is mandatory for all rock activities:
  - 2.4.1 Helmets that adhere to industry standards for rock related activities must be worn during all rock activities (including mobile climbing walls).
  - 2.4.2 Harnesses that adhere to industry standards for rock related activities must be worn during all rock activities (including mobile climbing walls).
  - 2.4.3 It is recognised that the wearing of a harness when bouldering is not always practical and therefore is not mandatory. Their use or non-use for this purpose must be based on a risk assessment.
  - 2.4.4 Ropes and all protective equipment (karabiners, slings and chocks) must be manufactured specifically for rock climbing/abseiling and used according to the manufacturer's specifications and accepted practice (for example static ropes).
  - 2.4.5 An additional rope, equivalent to the longest pitch should be accessible and ready to use for rescue, should it be required.
  - 2.4.6 A rescue pack of pulleys, ascenders, and a belay device should be easily accessible for rescue, should it be required.
  - 2.4.7 Emergency communication equipment suitable for the venue should be available and ready for use (e.g. mobile phone, radio, PLB etc).
  - 2.4.8 A first aid kit appropriate for the activity must be on site and readily available at all times.
- 2.5 Navigation equipment appropriate to the situation must be carried. The activity coordinator must be competent in the use of topographical maps and compasses. Relying solely on electronic navigation devices is not appropriate.

- 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 carried. Overnight activities should include at least one day's emergency rations.
- 2.8 Individual equipment (including personal protective equipment) is appropriate for the anticipated conditions.
- 2.9 Individual participants are encouraged to carry a first aid kit that should include personal medications.
- 2.10 An electronic emergency locating device must be available on all activities more than one hour from an emergency response.

### **3 Leader to Participant Ratios and Party Sizes**

- 3.1 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
- 3.2 For youth sections the minimum party sizes must be in accordance with sectional award scheme requirements.
- 3.3 The 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 or recognition of qualifications remains the responsibility of SAIT appointed leaders.
- 4.2 All required qualifications must be recognized by Scouts NSW and be recorded on the individual's member record.
- 4.3 Where adventurous activity skills are not within the registered scope of SAIT, the responsibility of such skill recognition remains with the State Activity Council.

4.4 Abseil Level 1 is the base skill required to participate in the following rock related activities:

- 4.4.1 Wet and/or dry canyoning that involves abseiling
- 4.4.2 Rock climbing
- 4.4.3 Vertical caving