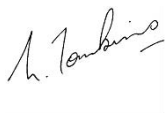



PROCEDURE

Rock Activities SOP



Issued with the authority of the Chief Commissioner
and Chief Executive Officer of Scouts Australia NSW

Chief Commissioner signature		Chief Executive Officer signature	
Sponsor	Deputy Chief Commissioner – Activities, Training, Fellowship		
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Rock Activities SOP

1 Philosophy

Rock activities are covered by Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities procedures. The requirements that are common to planning and conducting *any* type of adventurous activity are covered in [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#). The additional requirements that are specific to rock activities and are described in the following procedure.

Therefore, when planning and conducting any rock activity, it is necessary to refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) as well as this specific SOP. Should contradicting requirements be found in these documents, the more stringent standard shall apply.

2 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) for roles and responsibilities.

3 Conduct of Activities

In addition to the requirements of [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#), the following **additional** requirements apply to this activity;

- 3.1 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 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.
- 3.2 Your risk assessment shall determine appropriate the belay method, taking into account, the competency of the participants. In general, the industry standard of top rope belays is strongly recommended for novices.
- 3.3 Commercial climbing gyms are exempt from this SOP; however [PRO63 Commercial Activities Policy](#) applies.
- 3.4 All Youth members may participate in rock activities provided sectional specific requirements are followed.
- 3.5 In situations where falls could occur, safety lines, belays, or other fall protection system must be considered. For example, risk assessment may determine safety mats (bouldering), or hand lines (canyoning) may be suitable examples of mitigation. Where a belay system is used, the person conducting and/or supervising the belay must be appropriately qualified (Level 2 Abseiling or equivalent competency).

- 3.6 Industry standards recommend top belay systems for novice abseilers. Risk assessment methodology should be applied to determine the most appropriate belay method for the activity (consider age, competency, conditions, and so on).
- 3.7 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 and reviewed by the Region Commissioner Activities (RCA) who may give approval.
- 3.8 All canyon trips, including horizontal canyons, should be assessed after periods of prolonged rain and/or where the potential for flash flooding is possible.
- 3.9 Mobile climbing walls with auto belay devices may be supervised by a person qualified to minimum Abseil level 2 or successful completion of Scouts NSW Climbing Wall Induction training course. This person is responsible for ensuring that participants are using appropriate safety equipment, that the activity is conducted safely, and that the climbing wall is operated within manufacture guidelines. An adult holding minimum Provide First Aid qualifications must also be in attendance.
- 3.10 Bouldering has an inherently higher risk of falls (from a low height):
- 3.10.1. Bouldering surface must be assessed prior to use
 - 3.10.2. All bouldering activities must include a 1:1 spotter
 - 3.10.3. Where the bouldering fall is more than 1 metre or moves are complex and a single spotter will not meet safety requirements, then an appropriate 'crash' mat must be used.
- 3.11 The Activity Leader Checks weather forecasts and warning, monitors environmental conditions prior to and during the activity and takes action to manage hazardous or extreme conditions.
- 3.12 If conditions predicted on the day introduce an unacceptable safety risk, the Activity Leader shall make a decision regarding cancelling or substituting with a less hazardous activity or location.

4 Equipment

In addition to the requirements of [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#), the following **additional** requirements apply to this activity;

- 4.1 The following standard equipment is mandatory for all rock activities:
- 4.1.1. Helmets that adhere to industry standards for rock related activities must be worn during all rock activities (including mobile climbing walls).
 - 4.1.2. Harnesses that adhere to industry standards for rock activities must be worn at appropriate times during all rock activities (including climbing walls). Note, use of harnesses during bouldering should be determined by risk assessment.

4.1.3. Ropes and all protective equipment (karabiners, slings, hardware) must be to Australian Standards specifically for rock climbing/abseiling and used according to manufacturers' specifications and accepted practice (for example static ropes for abseiling in caves).

4.1.4. An additional rope, equivalent to the longest pitch should be carried and ready to use for rescue, if needed.

4.1.5. Rescue equipment, such as pulleys, ascenders and belay devices, suitable for the activity, shall be located where it is deployable within a reasonable time frame for rescue.

5 Ratios and Party sizes

5.1 Refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) for Ratios and Party Sizes requirements.

6 Qualifications

In addition to the requirements of [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#), the following **additional** requirements apply to this activity;

6.1 Abseiling level 1 is the base skill level required to participate in the following rock related activities, unless under the direct supervision of an appropriately qualified Guide or Instructor:

- a) Wet and/or dry canyoning that involves abseiling
- b) Rock climbing
- c) Vertical caving

7 Incidents

7.1 Refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) for Responsibilities and expectations for reporting incidents, including for if a serious incident occurs.