



PROCEDURE

Cataract Scout Park Natural Surface Abseil (Abseil B and Sandy)



Issued with the authority of the Head of Risk, Commercial Manager of Scouts Australia NSW

		Head of Risk Signature	
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Cataract Scout Park

Natural Surface Abseil

(Abseil B and Sandy)

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1 Location

- Abseil B is located at the back of campsite 6 down a walking track.
- Abseil Sandy is located at the far end of the turning circle just past the camping area at Sandy Plateau. Grid reference 981099 of the map: 'APPIN' 9029-1S Third Edition, published by NSW Department of Information Technology and Management.

2 Aims of Abseiling

- To implement 'challenge by choice' by:
 - Enabling participants to expand their comfort zones, take initiatives and stretch their limits. (Necessary information and details are provided so that all participants can make an informed decision whether to participate in the activity and to what point.)
 - Respecting each individual's limits strengths and weaknesses so that no participant is 'forced' to do anything outside their wishes.
- To understand the fear of heights and work through it through determination and communication.

3 Pre-Activity Checks

- Check weather forecast as below.
- Complete Activity Equipment Log (HS-30.8) as per its directions. Check for any previous comments regarding equipment and, if any, ensure they have been addressed.
- Ensure all equipment is accounted for.
- Check all equipment before the activity begins to ensure that it is safe, clean and in working order.
- Check the activity site for hazards (fallen trees, branches, excessive leaves, snakes, etc.).
- Ensure **liability forms** have been signed and participants are present during the Essential Briefing.
- Recommended minimum age of participants is 8 years old.

Weather conditions appropriate

- A BOM Weather check should be done prior to this activity
- Activity **cannot** be conducted during lightning storms or in winds gusting over 80kmph.
- It is at the discretion of the Program Manager, or staff in charge, whether the activity continues or not. In the case of a severe weather warning being issued for the area, the Program Manager, or staff in charge, must document justification of their decision if they choose to continue.
- Specific consideration must be given to:
 - Water on climbing surfaces making them slippery.
 - Mud/sand/soft fall causing damage to equipment.
 - General health and wellbeing of the group (it is extremely important to consider the effects of the weather on the participants, not only on the infrastructure and equipment).

Medical

- Obtain briefing from Supervising Adult/Teacher on particular medical needs for each group.

- Instructor must carry a first-aid kit at all times, located in the office.

NB: Instructor must have current first-aid qualifications.

Supervision

- 1 Qualified Activity Instructor
- 1 Qualified Assistant Activity Instructor
- 1 Supervising Adult/Teacher

The qualified activity instructor will be the group leader, and the assistant qualified activity instructor will assist.

Equipment

- 8 Participant harnesses
- 8 Participant helmets
- 2 Static rope abseil lines (one per abseil)
- 2 Static rope belay lines (one per abseil)
- 2 Static rope participant safety lines
- 2 Static rope instructor safety lines
- 1 Black belay strop
- 1 Belay device (ATCs)
- 20 Carabiners (10 per abseil)
- 8 'Figure 8 descenders' and accompanying carabiners
- Gloves
- 2 Rope protectors
- 2 Instructor harnesses*
- 2 Instructor helmets*
- Ladder set up as follows (for Abseil B only):
 - 1 A.L.F.
 - 1 Static rope
 - 1 Sling
 - 1 Pulley with maillon rapid link attached
 - 6 Carabiners
 - 1 Rigging plate
- Rescue kit containing:
 - 4 Waist Prusiks
 - 2 Leg Prusiks
 - 8 Carabiner

Activity Setup

- Ensure that all participant harnesses and helmets are set up neatly in an appropriate location.
- Ensure the gloves, figure 8 descenders and accompanying carabiners are placed with the harnesses and helmets
- Perform a routine visual check of the abseil site prior to use and report any hazards to the Program Manager immediately.
- Ensure that the 'drop zone' is clear prior to the start of the session.
- Ensure that your own safety is first priority during the set up procedures and make yourself 'safe' as soon as possible.

**If an instructor uses their own personal gear, it must be in proper condition and maintained to the same equipment standards as Cataract Scout Park.*

NOTE: From here on in, the two separate abseil set ups will be referred to as 'left' and 'right' as if you are standing on top of the cliff, looking over the edge.

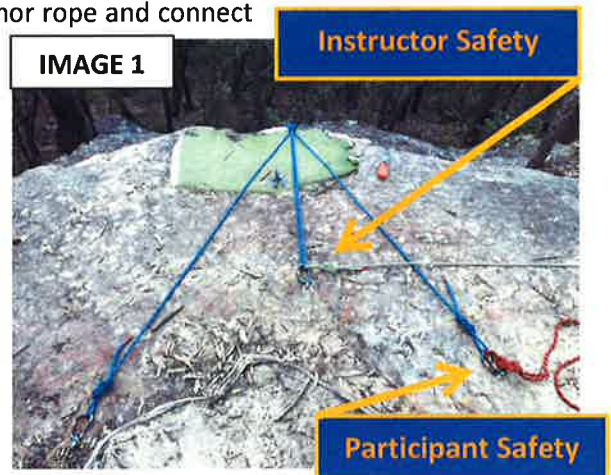
NB: You must ensure that you are clipped into 'safety', and a helmet worn, at all times if you are within two meters of the cliff edge.

Anchor

The anchor set up is the same for each side (Please refer to Image 1)

➤ Follow the instructions below to create a separate anchor system for each abseil:

- Tie a 'figure 8 on the bight' in both ends of the anchor rope and connect the rope, via two carabiners, to the two outside bolts at the top of the abseil.
- Attach a third carabiner to the middle bolt and clip the middle of the anchor rope into the carabiner. This creates two loops in the anchor rope. Ensure all carabiners are screwed up and orientated correctly.
- Pull the two loops of the anchor rope together, ensure the rope is equalized correctly, and tie a large overhand knot to secure the loops. Ensure that one loop is slightly longer than the other.
- Repeat all the above for the second anchor system.
- Abseil B Right Side only - Ensure the is the correct length, so the clip in point is above the slope.



Instructor safety

The Instructor safety set up is the same for each side

- Tie a 'figure 8 on the bight' in both ends of the static instructor's safety rope. Ensure that at least a hand span's length of tail is left at each end.
- Connect one end of the rope via a carabiner, to the center bolt of the rigging system. Clip another carabiner to the 'figure 8 on the bight' at the other end of this rope. Ensure the rope is the correct length to allow the instructor to safely belay and adjust if necessary.
- Abseil B, Right Side only – using the longer Instructor safety, and tie a Figure of 8 on the bight, near the center of the rope. Adjust to ensure you have one safety that will reach the clip in point, and one safety that will reach to the true edge of the cliff, to be used only when needing to see over the edge.

Participant safety - *The participant safety set up is the same for each side.*

- Tie a 'figure 8 on the bight' knot in each end of the rope. Ensure a hand span length of tail is left on each end. Ensure the figure 8 is also loaded and dressed.
- Connect the rope, via a carabiner, to a bolt in the rigging system. Clip another carabiner to the other end of the rope to allow the participant to connect to the safety line. It is recommended that for the left abseil, the bolt furthest to the right is used. It is recommended that for the right abseil, the bolt furthest to the left is used.

Belay line - *The belay line set up is the same for each side. (Please refer to image 2)*

- Follow the instructions below to create a separate belay line for each abseil:
 - Tie a Munter/Italian Hitch near one end of the belay line and connect, via a carabiner, to one of the loop of the anchor system.
 - Tie a 'figure 8 knot' in both ends of the static belay line.

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- Double check that the belay line is able to reach the ground.
- Repeat all the above for the second belay line.

NB: There is a black belay stop and A.T.C device provided if the Instructor prefers to use this belay system. Set up as below:

- Connect the black belay stop, via a carabiner, to the longer loop of the anchor system.
- Correctly thread the belay line through the A.T.C device and connect, via a carabiner, to the 'free' end of the belay stop.
- Tie a 'figure 8 knot' in both ends of the static belay line. Then tie a 'figure 8 on a bight' next to the belay device on the 'dead end' of the line, which is the opposite side to where the participant will be tied in ('live end'), in order to stop the belay line from running through the belay device until the participant is ready to descend the abseil.

NB: It is recommended that for the right abseil belay system at both the Abseil B and Abseil Sandy sites, a Munter/Italian Hitch is used rather than the A.T.C device due to the forward position of the belayer.

IMAGE 2



Abseil Line - The abseil line set up is the same for each side. (Please refer to image 2)

- Follow the instructions below to create a separate abseil line for each abseil:
 - Attach a carabiner to the opposing loop of the anchor system from belay.
 - Connect the abseil line, via a Munter/Italian Hitch to the carabiner and allow the rope to hang to the ground. Ensure that the length of rope is correct by pulling it through the Munter/Italian Hitch.
 - Secure the abseil line with three half hitches on the bight below the carabiner. Connect the bight, via another carabiner, to the anchor in order to avoid the half hitches releasing (non-critical carabiner).
 - Double check that the abseil line is able to reach the ground but is not so long that it would be difficult to pull through the figure 8 descender once the participant has reached the bottom of the abseil.

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- Ensure all critical carabiners are done up and orientated correctly.
- Connect the rope protector to the abseil line and secure so it will reach the edge but not go too far over.
- Repeat all the above for the second abseil line.
- ABSEIL B Site, RIGHT SIDE ONLY: Ensure Participant clip in point is above the slope.

Ladder (Abseil B site ONLY) (Refer to Image 3)

- Connect the rigging plate to the grey post via a carabiner. Connect the A.L.F to the rigging plate via a carabiner. Ensure the carabiner is done up and orientated correctly.
- Feed the static rope through the A.L.F and then the pulley. Tie the ends of the long rope together using a 'double fishermans knot', ensuring enough tail is left over.
- Ensuring the 'double fishermans knot' is directly next to the A.L.F., tie an 'alpine butterfly' knot just below the 'double fishermans knot' and connect a carabiner to the 'alpine butterfly' knot.
- Ensure that the A.L.F. locks off correctly and connect yourself to the 'alpine butterfly' via the carabiner.
- Ensuring that you do not drop the pulley, bring the pulley, maillon and the sling with you as you descend the ladder.
- Once at the bottom, disconnect yourself from the rope.
- If required, tie the two ends of sling together using a tape knot and girth hitch the sling around the bottom rung of the ladder.
- Connect the pulley to the sling via the maillon rapid link and screw the maillon closed.
- Feed the static rope through the system until the alpine and fisherman's knots reach the A.L.F once more, and tie a second 'alpine butterfly' in the opposite side of the long rope next to the pulley. Connect a carabiner to this loop.
- Connect yourself to the rope, via the carabiner on the 'alpine butterfly' knot, and ascend the ladder once more.
- Clip on end of the daisy to the rigging plate via carabiner and clip a carabiner to the other end of this daisy chain. This is for the supervising adult/teacher to connect to when guiding participants up the ladder.

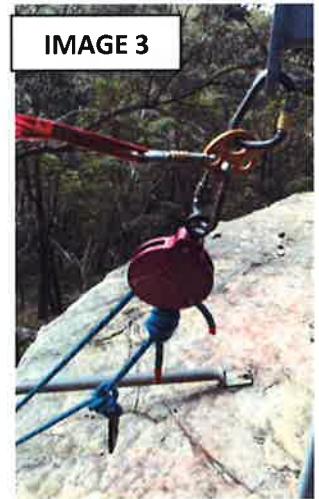


IMAGE 3

Munter/Italian Hitch



Alpine Butterfly

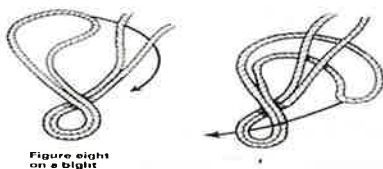
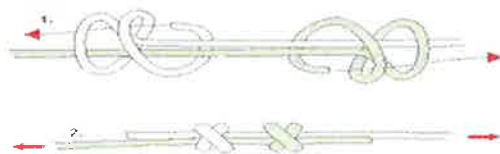
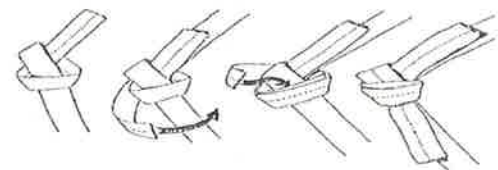


Figure 8 on the Bight



Double Fisherman's Knot



Tape Knot

Qualified Activity Instructor's Role

- The Qualified Activity Instructor must be signed off on induction and competent in operating and running an abseil session, including rescue procedures, before taking the responsibility of the session.
- The Qualified Assistant Activity Instructor must be signed off on induction and competent in assisting with an abseil session, including rescue procedures.

The following instructions apply to both the Qualified Activity Instructor and the Qualified Assistant Activity Instructor:

- Both instructors will belay participants down the separate abseils.
- All instructors must be connected to the anchor system whilst within two meters of the cliff edge.
- A helmet must be worn by all instructors at all times whilst within two meters of the cliff edge.
- Set-up as per directions above.
- Participants must be clipped into a safety line whilst within two meters of the cliff edge via the safety line.
- A head to toe check must be performed before the participant is allowed to abseil. If the participant fails the head to toe check they must return to the 'safe zone' to correct the problem.
- The participant is to be attached to:
 - the 'live end' of the belay line by tying a rethreaded figure 8 into their harness belay loop and the abseil line via the figure 8 descender and carabiner.
- The participants are to be instructed on how to abseil and, if necessary, given final reminders on safety and encouraged when they are ready.
- All rescues are to be carried out, or supervised, by the Qualified Activity Instructor.

NOTE: All instructors must check the setup of the activity before their session begins regardless of who set it up and how many sessions have been run already.

4 Essential Briefing

Supervising adult /Teacher's role

- Supervising Adults/Teachers work in conjunction with a Qualified Activity Instructor and Qualified Assisting Activity Instructor and do not assume responsibility for technical aspects of the activity.
- They are responsible for supervising participants waiting in the designated area and have a duty of care to all participants throughout the entire activity.
- They are expected to:
 - Be a role model and exemplar for the participants and follow all safety rules.
 - Assist with the fitting of helmets and harnesses as necessary.
 - Assist with the participants clipping into the ladder system.
 - Supervise the participants in the 'safe zone' during the activity.
 - Provide positive reinforcement and support for all levels of achievement.

Note: If time allows for the Supervising Adults/Teachers to participate they should wait until the end of the session.

Participant Briefing

The following sets out all the essential points that must be explained before any participant is allowed to attempt the activity.

It is the responsibility of the Qualified Activity Instructor to ensure that all participants have fully understood the Essential Briefing before commencing the activity. It is the decision of the Instructors regarding whether or not a participant is ready to take part in the activity safely.

General

- Introduce yourself and the activity to the participants.
- Explain, as appropriate, the following:
 - the 'aims' of the activity and what 'challenge by choice' means (see 'Aims' section of this document).
 - What abseiling is (namely, walking backwards down a wall using a rope) and that this particular abseil will be done on a 9 metre high natural surface.
 - that the participants will be attached to two ropes, one of which will be held by the Instructors from the top of the cliff to keep the participants safe.
 - 'Rock calls'. If something is knocked/dropped over the edge.
- Instruct the participants to:
 - Not remain in the 'drop zone' at the bottom of the abseil.
 - Wait in the 'safe zone' where they will be putting on a harness and helmet before their turn.
 - Not cross the blue boundary rope until instructed.
 - Not throw or kick any object or run around.
- Explain the Ladder rules (Abseil B site) as follows:
 - Once a participant has reached the bottom of the abseil, they are to disconnect from the ropes and walk immediately to their right (when facing the cliff wall) and locate the ladder.
 - They must connect the ladder rope to their harness via the carabiner on the 'alpine butterfly' and ensure it is screwed closed correctly.
 - They can then safely ascend the ladder and should only disconnect from the rope once they have stepped well away from the cliff edge.
 - Only one person at a time may climb the ladder.
 - Anyone waiting at the bottom must be two steps back from the ladder.
 - Participants must maintain three points of contact whilst climbing the ladder.

Helmet and Harness

- Demonstrate, as appropriate to session, to the participants how to correctly fit a helmet and harness.

Abseil Demonstration

Explain and demonstrate the following points as appropriate to the session.

- Participants will be connected to:
 - The belay line, which will be held by the Instructor as their backup if they let go of the abseil line. You may show them the re-threaded figure 8 knot and how to untie it once they're at the bottom of the abseil.

- The abseil line, which the participants are connected to via the figure 8 device and carabiner. Demonstrate as appropriate how this system works, including the 'go' and 'stop' positions.
- Explain that the participant's other hand MUST be kept away from the figure 8 descender and where they should keep this free hand.
- Explain the abseil stance and body position as appropriate.
- Explain, as appropriate, the overhang and how to navigate it.
- Explain the process for when the participant reaches the ground

5 Rescue Procedures

Most rescues can be avoided by ensuring loose items are not near any devices and hair is tied back. Additionally, the instructor should be able to prevent most inversions by raising the angle of the abseil line, if necessary, while participants navigate the cliff edge and/or holding the belay line tight and instructing participants to move their feet further down the wall to maintain or reinstate the appropriate body position.

If there is a need for a rescue, you may follow the procedures below:

Participant inverted

- Hold the belay line tight and, if necessary, lock it off with three half hitches.
- Calm and reassure the participant and give them directions on how to regain the correct position
- Once they are on the ground, check that they are 'OK' and whether any first aid is required.

Item caught in the figure 8 device

- Hold the belay line tight and, if necessary, lock it off with three half hitches.
- Calm and reassure the participant and give them directions on how they can untangle themselves.
- If they are unable to do so, perform the appropriate rescue procedure:
 - Leg lift
 - Crowd haul
 - Release system
 - Assisted hoist
 - Unassisted hoist
- After the activity, ensure that the instructor who performed the rescue completes the Abseil Rescue Form (*located in green instructor folders or in the office*).
- If necessary, complete an Incident, Accident and Near Miss Report Form (*located in green instructor folders or in the office*).
- There are two sets of rescue equipment on standby to perform a Z-drag if necessary.

6 Debriefing

As Activity Instructors we assist participants in understanding and realizing what they have achieved and how it can apply in everyday life. A debrief works best if the participants feel they can contribute most of the input and ideas themselves.

- There are many ways to perform a debrief/reflection. You may like to:
 - Address aims (see page one) and discuss the participants' successes and challenges.

- Discuss challenging their fear of heights, their personal choices, and respect for other people's choices as to limits, strengths and weaknesses.
- What was their perception of Abseiling at the start ("where were you in your comfort zone")? What are their feelings towards it now ("has your comfort zone expanded")?

7 Packing Up

On site

- Participants should fully loosen the harnesses and return them, with the helmets, to where they came from.
- During the pack up at the top of the cliff, ensure that everybody remains safely attached.
- All abseil ropes must be pulled to the top of the cliff, untied and coiled before being placed in the transport bag/box.
- All hardware must be accounted for and placed in transport bag/box along with the ropes.

Final pack up at Equipment Shed

- Complete Activity Equipment Log as per its directions.
- Any issues/problems with any equipment should be notified as soon as possible to the Program Manager.
- Ensure all equipment is packed away appropriately and all rubbish has been put in the bin.
- If necessary, an Incident, Accident and Near Miss Report Form must be filled out (*located in the green instructor's folder or in the office*). Any completed forms must be handed to the Program Manager at the earliest convenience.
- If a rescue has been performed, the Abseil Rescue Form must be filled out by the instructor who performed the rescue (*located in the green instructor's folder or in the office*). These forms are to be handed to the Program Manager at the earliest convenience.

8 Appendices

- Briefing Card

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Version 4</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cataract Scout Park Abseil Briefing cards</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abseil – Page 2 of 6 – Version 4</i></p> <p>These briefing cards have been designed to assist in jogging your memory during briefs and sessions. Anything in BOLD is a requirement as per our Standard Operating Procedures.</p> <p>Everything else are suggestions and will depend on the group and its ability if you include it or not. These are to be used in conjunction with the Standard Operating Procedures as not all information is included</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abseil – Page 3 of 6 – Version 4</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Introduction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has abseiled before? • Challenge by Choice. • Boundaries <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Helmet</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hair is tied up. • Make sure you brief the helmet to keep secure on participant during the activity. • Happy Turtle. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Harness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief how to put on harness securely and test it.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abseil – Page 4 of 6 – Version 4</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rescue</u></p> <p><u>Participant inverted</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secure belay line. ➤ Calm participant. ➤ Direct them to re-correct position. ➤ Check if they are 'OK'. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abseil – Page 5 of 6 – Version 4</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rescue CON.</u></p> <p><u>Item caught in the figure 8 device</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secure belay. ➤ Calm participant ➤ Direct them how to untangle themselves. ➤ If unable, perform the appropriate rescue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leg lift ○ Crowd haul ○ Release system ○ Assisted hoist ○ Unassisted hoist 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abseil – Page 6 of 6 – Version 4</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pack Up:</u></p> <p>After each session: Ensure equipment is in good condition and secure for the next session</p> <p>Harnesses are completely loosen and are in designated area. Helmets are all happy turtles and in designated area.</p>