

# Activity Risk Assessment

Activity	Climbing				
Address of premises	Hesley Wood Activity Centre, White Lane, Chapelton, S35 2YH				
Author of this risk assessment	Megan Hughes				
Issue Date	22/04/2024				
Review	This document is reviewed annually. We can review it sooner if needed.				
Reviewed by	Alyssa Jordan	Date	01/11/2024	Changes?	Yes, see review page
Reviewed by	Luke Joseph/Alyssa Jordan	Date	21/10/2025	Changes?	Not required
Checked by Operations Director	 Andy Moore	Date	05/11/2025		

Explanation of Risk Rating: Risk Rating = Probability x Severity			Probability			Rating	Actions resulting from Risk Rating
			Unlikely 1	Likely 2	Certain 3		
Severity	1	Minor injury or damage	1	2	3	1-3	<b>Low Risk:</b> Carry on, ensuring controls are in place. No further controls required.
	2	Major injury or damage	2	4	6	4-6	<b>Medium Risk:</b> Implement extra controls if practical to reduce risk to low. Monitor risk level to ensure no increase.
	3	Severe injury or damage, Serious illness or death.	3	6	9	7-9	<b>High Risk:</b> Stop activity immediately. Implement further controls to reduce risk if possible. Find alternative method.

The Hesley Management Team will monitor and review the controls to reduce risk in accordance with South Yorkshire Scouts Health & Safety Policy.

**The information contained within this Risk Assessment should be taken as the minimum requirement and is not to be considered exhaustive.**

What is the hazard? How might people be harmed?	Risk Level (with existing control measures)			Who is at risk?	What are the control measures?
	Probability	Severity	Rating		
Normal hazards associated with any climbing activity (i.e. falls from height, impact with something solid).	2	2	4	All involved	<p>All climbing sessions follow guidelines set by the technical advisor (TA), certified under Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Mountain Training standards. Sessions use techniques aligned with Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI) standards or higher certifications. Instructors must complete the Hesley Wood in-house training and be assessed by an approved external assessor.</p> <p>Instructors with national climbing qualifications must present relevant documentation before leading sessions. Copies of qualifications will be securely stored at the Centre in compliance with GDPR.</p> <p>Helmets must be worn by everyone in the climbing compound whilst sessions are taking place.</p>
Structural failure.	2	2	4	All involved	The climbing tower structure undergoes an annual inspection by a certified professional to ensure compliance with national regulatory standards. In addition, Hesley Wood staff perform pre-use safety checks to verify the integrity and safety of the structure.
Equipment failure.	2	2	4	Participants	Only Hesley Wood equipment is permitted for use during sessions at Hesley Wood. All equipment undergoes regular inspections and is documented in accordance with Hesley Wood/Industry standard current inspection policy to ensure safety and compliance.
Hazards arising from the actions of 'non qualified assistants.	2	2	4	Participants	Staff responsible for leading the sessions to delegate responsibility appropriately to competent persons whilst still overseeing general safety.
Unauthorised climbing – usual risks associated with climbing.	1	2	2	Intruders	<p>Climbing tower area is fenced off. Gate to be locked when tower is not in use.</p> <p>“No unauthorised entry” signs in place.</p>

Weather: Thunderstorms, high wind, heavy rain.	1	2	2	All involved	Session may have to be cancelled or delayed due to thunderstorms, high winds or heavy rain, where operation can become dangerous.  See weather policy for more details.
Hazards arising from the actions of group members i.e. Disorderly behaviour and overcrowding causing distractions.	2	2	4	All involved	To prevent overcrowding and ensure safe supervision, a maximum group size of 12 participants with 2 observers is set for one-hour sessions. For sessions extending to 90 minutes, group size may increase to 15 participants, provided additional observers are available to maintain effective oversight and participant safety throughout.  The Group Leader must be present during sessions.  If a group members behaviour becomes dangerous the instructor must follow the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for Disorderly Behaviour.

What is the hazard? How might people be harmed?	Risk Level (with existing control measures)			Who is at risk?	What are the control measures?
	Probability	Severity	Rating		
Lead climber bolts. Climber falling with finger in bolts.	2	2	4	Participants	Instructor to warn participants of the dangers of touching the bolts during the briefing. Message to be reinforced by instructor as and when necessary.
Warm-ups I.e. Running, Trips, Muscle Strain.	1	2	2	Participants	<p>Warm-ups are recommended for all types of sports to prevent injury: All warm-ups should be suitable for the activity taking place: E.g. light jog/run moving on to warming up arms and shoulder or light bouldering at beginning of the activity.</p> <p>For warm-ups that involve running ensure area is clear of trip hazards and ensure suitable space between participants.</p> <p>For light dynamic stretching warm-ups, ensure area is clear and suitable for movements and all participants are appropriately spaced. Ensure all participants are free of any injuries that could be made worse by activity, all participants to stay in their comfortable range of movement to avoid muscle strains or pulls.</p> <p>For static stretching warm-ups: ensure adequate space for movement and participants are spaces out and are free of any injuries that could be made worse by intense movement. Static stretching should only be done after light movement i.e. walking/jogging so muscles are not cold. Participants to stay in their range of movement to avoid muscle strains or pulls. Stretches should not be held for more than one minute.</p> <p>For bouldering warm-ups: participants should start on lower holds and easier holds. Participants should climb two or three times in different areas to ensure different movement of the body to cover different muscle areas. Any other associated risk for bouldering is cover by bouldering RA.</p>

Games .i.e. Obstructed Observation Falling of the wall, Collison, Trips Overcrowding.	1	2	2	Participants	<p>Games that involve bouldering run the risk of the instructor’s observation points becoming obstructed by the tower. Instructor must move around to ensure visuals of participants are maintained throughout. Clear instructions must be given to participants about height limits for climbing.</p> <p>Falls off the wall: Participants will be given clear instructions about height limits. They will be told to stay in the “safe area” of the climbing wall, where risk of injures that could occur from falling are minimised.</p> <p>Instructors need to give reminders regarding height limits and instructions on how to downclimb from the wall and land safely i.e. bending knees.</p> <p>Collision: Games that involve movement around the wall should be kept at a pace so that reaction time is not impeded and to minimise risk of participant crashing into each other.</p> <p>Trips: Area should be checked for trip hazards before use.</p> <p>Overcrowding: Participants to keep a safe distance apart whilst climbing, reminder as needed.</p>
Normal hazards associated with bouldering.	2	2	4	Participants	<p>Instructor will inform participants the upper height limit for their hands and feet. Instructors to continually reinforce this during sessions. Where possible, participants should aim to climb down from the wall rather than jump off. Participants to be given tips about landing appropriately e.g. Bending knees to minimise impact on landing.</p>
Spotting when bouldering	2	2	4	Participants	<p>For younger participants, they must have a leader or instructor spot them. The instructor must show the leader how to spot and be happy with their ability to do this. For older participants, they can spot each other as long as the instructor has trained them and is happy with their ability to spot effectively.</p>

Additional hazards associated with rescues.	2	2	4	All involved	<p>The prescribed rescue procedures have been designed by an independent external assessor and all climbing instructors have been assessed as competent on rescue procedures.</p> <p>Instructors being assisted by unqualified persons: Instructor to delegate responsibility appropriately to competent persons whilst still overseeing general safety. Unqualified persons are strictly prohibited from lowering down climbing participants.</p> <p>Being assisted off the tower: Instructor must ensure participants are not holding on to anything that would cause injury i.e. they should hold onto the climbing rope and not the bolts.</p> <p>Instructor to employ rescue technique when assisting person off the tower. They must ensure rope tension is appropriate for the size of participant to avoid uncontrolled collision into tower.</p>
Additional hazards associated with rescues. Were participant could become unclipped	2	3	6	All involved	<p>The prescribed rescue procedures have been designed by an independent external assessor and all climbing instructors have been assessed as competent on rescue procedures.</p> <p>Instructors being assisted by unqualified persons: Instructor to delegate responsibility appropriately to competent persons whilst still overseeing general safety. Unqualified persons are strictly prohibited from lowering off climbing participants.</p> <p>Clear instructions not to touch the metal work.</p> <p>Rope tension should always be monitored to ensure participants are unable to unclip themselves on the top of the tower.</p>

**Related Risk Documents**

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Climbing, Review Log – Climbing, Inspection and Replacement Policy, Ropes Rescue Procedures, EAP for Overcrowding, EAP for Disorderly Behaviour and EAP for Structural Failure

**Review Log**

Reviewed by	Date of review	Reason for review	Changes made	Actions required	If actions have been completed insert date completed
Dan McKinlay	20/12/24	Tec assessment	Additional information regarding Spotting risk	Administrative only	20/12/2024

See Review Log – Climbing for previous reviews and changes

Version 2 publication date: 05/11/2025