

# Risk Assessment Activity – Climbing

Pioneer Centre	Assessed by: James Kniffen	Assessed/Reviewed:	Next Review Date
		10/01/2023	12/12/2026
		07/01/2025	
Reviewed by:	Assist Chief: Max Bishop		
Reviewed by:	Senior Instructors: Andrew Evrard, Joseph Page, Steph McMenemy Kieren Plant & Ronan Halpenny Lead Instructors: Rebecca Arms	Dec 2025	

**Overview:** Climbing is carried out on three purpose-built towers supplied and erected by JM Adventure and Adventure Rope Co Ltd. An annual inspection is carried out by High Times Technical Consultants. Regular bimonthly inspection checks are also carried out on equipment by activities staff as well as a quarterly structural check. A qualified Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (WMCI) Chief Instructor has overall responsibility. All other instructors are RCI or CWI qualified, or in-house trained using NGB recognized techniques. An examination to check competency of staff is completed on each staff member by the external and independent Technical Advisor. This process is periodically checked and validated by the Technical Advisor and senior staff members who do continual monitoring throughout the year. Preferred Staff to Client ratio is 1:12 and a maximum of 1:16 under supervision (under instruction 1: 2 instructor to climber ratio). All appropriate personal protective equipment is worn during sessions. All instructors are first aid trained and emergency procedures are in place in case of a major accident.

Hazards	Groups of People at Risk from the Hazards Identified	Probability	Control Measures – Reduces the severity and lowers the probability to acceptable levels
		Severity	
Structural Failure	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very unlikely	Towers built by approved contractors and external annual inspections are carried out and repairs and guidance from reports are followed. Quarterly structural checks are carried out to ensure all is in good working order.
		Fatal	
		Medium	
Falling objects	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Helmets are worn by anyone in the area when activities are being delivered or maintenance is being done and guests briefed on how to stand if objects fall to protect themselves. All equipment at top of tower secured and emergency procedures in place in case of an accident. Guests advised to remove things from pockets or have them stored safely in zipped pockets.
		Major	
		Medium	
		Very likely	

Unauthorized access to Towers	Instructors, staff, guest/participants, and general public	Fatal	Tower doors locked and shut when not in use. Only access to towers is via a trained member of staff. No access signs clearly displayed.
		Medium	
Rope burns	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Group briefed on correct clothing. Instructor supervises guests contact with rope. Instructors are trained in safe lowering practices of lowering slowly and smoothly.
		Minor	
		Low	
High level fall	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very Unlikely	Detailed in-house training & assessment are carried out on activity staff to ensure safe access and practice is used for the activities and the correct use of all equipment taught and monitored by senior staff. The use of climbing ropes to safeguard participants and Gri-Gri belay devices are used to add another level of safety to prevent High Level Falls and closely monitored by the instructor to ensure climbers are being belayed correctly. All PPE checked and recorded bimonthly. Instructors ensure participants are wearing all PPE before using the climbing routes. See supporting documents for safety practices.
		Fatal	
		Medium	
Low level fall	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Instructor supervises belaying to ensure tight rope is maintained while climbing. Particular attention paid when taking first steps up wall (e.g. tight rope on climber) to ensure in the event of a fall the climber will be caught by the rope.
		Major	
		Medium	
Environmental Hazards	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very likely	All participants are briefed on proper clothing for the current weather conditions.  Instructors are issued appropriate PPE, waterproof jacket, warm layers, and gloves to use for activity delivery.  Towers not used or sessions cancelled in the event of thunder & lightning (activities can resume 30mins after last thunder sound was heard) and/or winds gusts above 40/45mph (senior staff may reassess and end sessions below this level or may let continue if direction is suitable and hazards are managed).  Also, further control measures under the Adverse Weather Risk Assessment are to help with environmental hazards.
		Fatal	
		High	
Slips, trips and falls	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Likely	Maintenance of the site is done by the activities team and maintenance team. Instructors visually check the area upon arrival. General brief and group management is provided by an instructor to ensure activities are run safely and guests should follow the no running safety rule when in the activity area.
		Minor	
		Medium	
Soft tissue injury	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Instructors are aware of group's capabilities and encourage group to warm up/warm down as needed.
		Minor	

		Low	
Physiological effects	Guest/participants	Very unlikely	Instructors are aware of the group's needs and medical issues. Challenge by choice brief is given and instructors will respect participants' choices and be sensitive and adapt to their reactions to the activity they are invited to participate in.
		Major	
		Medium	
Stress / Panic Attack	Guest/participants	Likely	Challenge by choice brief is given and instructors will respect participants' choices. Instructors will err on the side of caution if participants start to panic or have strong emotional reaction to the activity the instructors will react quickly to ensure the level of stress is brought back down to an acceptable level. This should help ensure the activity runs well for all those involved.
		Major injury or trauma	
		High	
Helmet suspension (caught on an element)	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Lowering practices taught that prevents helmets catching on elements e.g. slow careful lowering of participants in the correct position. Hand Ascender is accessible for rescue and staff taught the rescue procedures and periodically practice the rescue.
		Major	
		Medium	
Frozen climber (on the wall)	Guest/participants	Unlikely	Rescue procedures are in place and practice once a quarter by staff with prevention being the aim by using 'challenge by choice' and building up participants slowly.
		Minor	
		Low	