

Risk Assessment Activity – High Ropes

Pioneer Centre	Assessed by: James Kniffen	Assessed/ Reviewed:	Next Review Date
		11/01/2023 07/01/2025 12/12/2025	12/12/2026
Reviewed by:	Assist Chief: Max Bishop	Dec 2025	
Reviewed by:	Senior Instructors: Andrew Evrard, Joseph Page, Steph McMenemy, Kieren Plant (ERCA Trainer) & Ronan Halpenny Lead Instructors: Rebecca Arms		
Overview: The three High Ropes courses have an annual inspection which is carried out by High Times Technical Consultants that ensure the courses are in safe working order. Regular bimonthly inspection checks are also carried out on equipment by activities staff as well as a quarterly structural check. All rope techniques, together with equipment and its life inspection procedures are established and overseen by a Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (WMCI) Chief instructor and the ERCA Trainer. Staff are in-housed trained using NGB recognised techniques, and all other instructors are RCI, CWI or ERCA qualified. An examination to check competency of full-time 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 do continual monitoring throughout the year. Preferred Staff to Client ratio is 2:12 and a maximum of 2:16 under supervision (under instruction 1: 1 instructor to climber ratio). 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	
		Risk Category	
Structural Failure	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very unlikely	High Ropes Courses have an external annual inspection. Any action points followed up e.g. repairs and replacements. Quarterly structural checks are carried out as well as a visual check on the day of delivery.
		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 procedures in place in case of an accident and guests advised to remove things from pockets or have them stored safely in zipped pockets.
		Major	
		Medium	

Unauthorized access to High Ropes Courses	Instructors, staff, guest/participants and general public	Very likely	Fencing surrounds the High Ropes courses with a dedicated gate. There is 'no access' signs on the fencing and participants are told not to enter fenced activity areas without staff. All staples and ladders are locked away when the areas are not in use and instructors are not present.
		Fatal	
		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. Participants are secured to a safety rope before heading up on elements and a Gri-Gri belay device used which adds another level of safety to prevent High Level Falls. All PPE checked and recorded bimonthly. See supporting documents for safety practices. A clear briefing on when participants can start an activity is given. Instructors ensure participants are wearing all PPE before partaking in the HRC.
		Fatal	
		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. Courses are 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 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 instructors 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	Instructor aware of group's capabilities and encourage group to warm up 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

		Major	sensitive and adapt to their reactions to the activity they are invited to participate in.
		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 acceptable level. This should help ensure the activity runs well for all those involved.
		Major / 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 a rescue and staff taught the rescue procedures and periodically practice the rescue.
		Major	
		Medium	
Frozen climber (on an element)	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	