

Risk Assessment – Rock Climbing

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Previous RA –23/05/17- Ollie Ryall

The purpose of this risk assessment is to help identify hazards associated with this activity and to evaluate the risks to determine what measures should be taken to protect the health and safety of guests, Adventure Ardeche staff and members of the public.

Location: Lauzasses de Casteljeau – Petit Jardin (Bottom Crag), L’Agachu (Top Crag) and New Crag (aka: Craggy McCrag Face).

Description of Activity

Rock climbing takes place at either of the above crags and involves guests climbing a variety of routes up to 12 meters in height and being lowered back to the ground. The climbs used require a variety of climbing techniques to be used on different types of climb and give guests a good introduction to the sport.

The lead instructor for the session to be qualified (minimum SPA) and must have carried out in house training and be signed off to lead the session by senior member of AA Staff. All assistants to also be trained to assist lead instructor as required.

Guests are taught to fit own PPE equipment as well as how to attach themselves to the rope before climbing (figure 8 knot). Guests are taught to belay each other up and down climbs and work in small groups to do this.

Adventure Ardeche staff to constantly monitor guests and check (equipment / knot/ belay technique) before every climb.

Staff: Student ratio not to exceed 1:8 (including visiting teachers / responsible adults).

Hazard Assessment Checklist

| Nature of Hazard | Severity H / M / L | Person(s) at risk | Risk Control |
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| <p>Remote Area</p> <p>Specific Dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance / length of time required for outside medical assistance. • Getting lost. • Bites / Stings (insects / snake). | Low | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA Staff to be First Aid qualified in case of accident. • Comprehensive First Aid Kit / Mobile phone to be carried by lead instructor. • AA Staff know what to do in case of accident requiring outside help. (See Adventure Ardeche Accident Protocol). • AA Staff to be aware of exact location in case outside help required. • AA Staff to be aware of any guests existing medical conditions / allergies and to act in accordance with these. • AA Staff to use all reasonable and practical ways to avoid spreading infection or contamination if administering first aid. • Company Vehicle always at site in case guest(s) needs to be evacuated. |
| <p>Heat / Cold / Extreme Weather</p> <p>Specific Dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothermia (cold / wet). • Hyperthermia (too hot). • Dehydration. • Sun burn / Sunstroke. • Lightening strike. | Low | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Instructor to check weather forecast in advance <u>and</u> on morning of activity. • Guests to be briefed in advance as to appropriate clothing / footwear for expected conditions. • Guest to be told to bring water bottle (1 per person) and sun protection. • AA Staff to have appropriate clothing / footwear. • AA Staff to bring group shelter / spare warm / wet weather clothing in case of poor weather and sun |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Wind | | | <p>protection if hot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra water to be provided by AA Staff and guests encouraged to regularly fill up own bottles. In the event of high winds AA Staff to monitor situation and stop session if danger posed by falling branches or activity becoming too physically demanding. |
| <p>Physical Exertion / Abnormal Stress</p> <p>Specific Dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest too tired to finish climb and gets stuck above ground. Guest too scared to continue and gets stuck above ground. | Low | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All guests and AA Staff to operate within their fitness levels. AA Staff to assess guest's fitness levels and choose appropriate routes to avoid over exertion. Rest times to be built in to session if required. AA Staff to continuously monitor stress levels and to be able to help if required. AA Staff to ensure guests eat and drink enough to sustain physical activity. |
| <p>Traffic / other road users</p> <p>Specific dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injuries caused by contact with other road users. It is worth noting that cars, mini-busses and motor-bikes occasionally travel very fast on this section of road. Also it is popular with cyclists travelling fast and making very little sound. | Med | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest transport asked to stop with exit door on side facing layby and not roadside. AA Staff to be in situ as guests disembark transport to ensure guests do not walk into road. AA Staff to supervise crossing of road and stop traffic if appropriate. |
| <p>Uneven / rough terrain on route to climbing location / at base of crag.</p> <p>Specific dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injuries caused by slips, trips and falls. | Med | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AA Staff to choose appropriate route from car park to climbing venue and lead the way at a suitable pace. AA Staff to ensure correct footwear is worn and laces properly tied. AA Staff to point out and 'danger areas' and how to pass them. If spotting required to pass an obstacle then AA Staff to do this. AA Staff to brief guests about base of crag and how to move around. At top crag a rope to be fixed to provide a barrier on right hand side to prevent guests / AA Staff falling from ledge. |

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| <p>Rock climbing</p> <p>Specific dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falling from height. • Climber becoming physically stuck (trapped body part / clothing / equipment). • Loose rock (falling). • Dropped equipment. • Equipment failure (PPE / fixed equipment). • Injuries caused by jewelry or watches becoming stuck. | <p>Med</p> | <p>All</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA Staff member leading activity to be minimum SPA qualified and have completed site specific in house training. • AA Staff member leading activity to rig climbs as discussed during training and with attention to personal safety. • Guests briefed in advance as to suitable clothing and footwear for climbing. • Guests to be provided and fitted with PPE (harness / helmet) • AA Staff to check PPE and monitor its correct use throughout the session (especially after breaks / removal of clothing / toilet stops). • Safe area to be established where PPE may be removed if necessary. • Routes to be checked in advance for loose rock. Loose rock to be removed if possible before climbs are used. If loose rock is removed a thorough examination required to ensure surrounding area is secure. • Guests not allowed to climb with equipment attached to harness (belay plate) or belongings in pockets. • Guests to be correctly attached to rope (fig 8 knot) before climbing and this to be checked by AA staff each time. • Guests to be belayed up and down each climb using belay plate and karabiner (ATC / HMS screw-gate). • Guests taught to belay each other and work in minimum of 2 belayers (1 x belay / 1 x emergency back up). AA Staff to ensure this is done correctly before the climber starts and throughout climb / lower. • PPE to be inspected thoroughly by designated person weekly during the season as well as at the start of each session by AA Staff. • Fixed equipment to be checked by designated staff member at the start of season as well as by AA staff member each time routes are rigged. • AA Staff and guests to remove rings before climbing. If this is not possible then ring to be taped over. Guests asked to remove watches and dangly earrings. |
| <p>General Public</p> <p>Specific Dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical / Verbal Abuse. • Abduction | <p>Low</p> | <p>Guests</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA Staff to be aware of other people using the area and to provide a visible presence. • AA Staff to carry out regular head counts throughout the day. • Guests told to stay with a minimum of 1 other person at all times. • AA Staff to attempt to de-escalate any potentially confrontational situation if safe to do so. • Lead instructor to be willing to finish activity early and remove all guests if any serious problems do arise. |

Black Spots

Top Crag

- When lowering off left hand route of highest section of crag the climber can swing left at bottom.
- The base of the right hand section has a narrow ledge with 1-meter drop where guests stand to belay. This needs to be protected by tensioned rope to create barrier.
- The central gulley climb where guests can 'bump and scrape' when lowering back down.
- The climbs on the left hand walls have numerous cracks in which fingers could become stuck.
- Many climbs have the stubs of old expansion bolts protruding which could cause cuts / scrapes.

Bottom Crag

- Top of 'the chimney' where climber has to step across gap.
- Lowering from top of 'the chimney' as there is not sufficient room to lean back.
- Top of 'very easy slab' where leaning back before lowering can be difficult.
- Top of middle climb on left hand wall where climber often takes easy route and ends up on ledge to right of lower-off.
- Difficult high step near top of 'gulley climb'.

New Crag (Craggy McCrag Face)

- Far left hand route where rope has to be positioned by instructor each time to ensure it is in correct place. Climber lowers down different section to where climb goes.
- Far right hand route climber must lower down gully on left rather than down where route starts to avoid swinging into gully.
- Difficult route (2nd from left) climber needs to use hands to protect upper body when lowering past roof section.