

Risk Assessment – Abseiling

Written by: Ollie Ryall

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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: Beaume Escure Cave near Camping Chaulet Plage, Casteljau, 07460.

Description of Activity

Abseiling involves participants controlling their descent into a cave through a hole in its roof using a figure of eight descender fitted to a static rope.

An alternative (longer) abseil can be rigged on the rock face further along the track if required.

A shorter abseil / lower can be rigged at the cave entrance and is more suitable for younger children.

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.

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
<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>	Low	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Instructor to check weather forecast in advance <u>and</u> on morning of activity.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothermia (cold / wet). • Hyperthermia (too hot). • Dehydration. • Sun burn / Sunstroke. • Lightening strike. • High Wind 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 protection if hot. • 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 contiguously 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 cave / inside cave and on path to top of abseil</p> <p>Specific dangers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries caused by slips, trips and falls. • Serious injuries posed by larger drops. 	Med	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA Staff to choose appropriate route from car park to abseil 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 inside cave and how to move around.
<p>Abseiling</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. • Burns caused by rope friction. • Hair becoming trapped in Figure of eight device. 	Med	All	<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 abseils discussed during training and with attention to personal safety. • Abseil rope to be tied using a releasable knot (Italian hitch with 2 half hitches). • 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. • Abseil to be checked in advance for loose rock. Loose rock to be removed if possible before abseil takes place. If loose rock is removed a thorough examination required to ensure surrounding area is secure. • Guests not allowed to abseil with equipment attached to harness or belongings in pockets. • Guests to be correctly attached to rope (locking karabiner) before approaching top of abseil and this to be checked by AA staff each time. • Guests to wear protective gloves. • Guests to wear hair tied back and tucked into clothing if possible. • Guests to be belayed down abseil with a safety rope using Italian Hitch. • 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.

<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.