



RISK ASSESSMENT

ROPES COURSE

ISSUE 1 | 2026-2027

RISK ASSESSMENT
ROPES COURSE 2026/27



Assessment Completed By: Eleanor Duck

Position: Activities Manager

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Purpose of Assessment:

To identify hazards associated with the operation and use of the Rope Course and ensure appropriate control measures are in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Document Status:

This risk assessment must be reviewed annually or following any significant change to equipment, procedures, staffing, or incident.

This document is available to all staff and reviewed annually.

SECTION 1: EQUIPMENT & STRUCTURAL HAZARDS

| Hazard | Who can get hurt | How they may be harmed | Control Measures |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| Failure of equipment | Participants, Staff | Fractures, bruising, crushing, falls Fall from height | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All PPE undergoes a pre use check (visual and function) by a competent member of the team. ERCA Instructor or ERCA rescue instructor – or under the supervision of above. All PPE undergoes full thorough inspections, at suitable, defined intervals and after any significant incident. These can be completed by competent members of the team, qualified to ERCA Rescue instructor, operational inspection & maintenance or PPE Competent person – or under the supervision of the above. |
| Entrapment between moving parts of elements | Participants, Staff | Fractures, cuts, crushing Impact/crush injury from elements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific instruction is given on the use of certain elements. Participants provided with clear instructions during briefing. Staff are present to monitor. Qualified rescue staff are always available to advise and assist. |
| PPE fitted incorrectly | Participants, Staff | Fractures, cuts, bruises Fall from height, entrapment from badly fitting harness, Injury from the PPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are trained to correctly fit PPE. Participants provided with clear instructions during briefing. All participants are checked by trained staff before they access the course. Staff are present to observe and monitor the participants. |
| Suspension – participant or staff suspended on the course | Participants, Staff | Suspension syndrome, bruising, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific instruction given on the use of certain elements Clear instructions given to participants when fitting harnesses, visually checked by instructor. |

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|---|---------------------|--|--|
| and unable to move onwards or backwards | | fainting, crushing, emotional stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are provided with the correct size Expo glider lanyard. • Staff are present to monitor. • Qualified ERCA trained rescue staff are always available; the number of rescue team members is increased proportionally in line with number of course participants. |
| Staff needing rescue during inspection/maintenance | Staff | Fractures, cuts, falls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance is only carried out by trained competent staff. • Two rescue-trained staff onsite when maintenance work is being carried out. • Rescue plan in place for non-standard areas before work commences. |
| Participants in need of rescue | Participants, Staff | Falls, fractures, cuts, bruises Incorrect set up of equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescues are only carried out by trained and certified rescue staff – minimum of ERCA site specific rescue. • Equipment inspected daily, with a thorough 3-monthly inspection. • Rescues carried out follow ERCA protocols. • Regular training and review provided to all rescue instructors. |
| Failure of element components | Participants, staff | Fractures, bruising, crushing, falls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All course components – including elements, platforms and fixings undergo pre use visual inspection and function check prior to course opening. This is conducted or supervised by ERCA instructor/ERCA Rescue instructor. • Quarterly inspections conducted by Safety and Maintenance Officer or competent person under supervision. • Annual full course inspection by a certified external inspector – ERCA's Professional Standards and the EN 15567: 1:2015 +A1:2020. |

SECTION 2: PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOUR & MOVEMENT

| Hazard | Who can get hurt | How they may be harmed | Control Measures |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Injuries caused by collisions between participants on elements | Participants, Staff | Fractures, cuts, bruises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted numbers on elements and platforms (2 per platform, 1 per element) unless directed otherwise by an instructor. In the event of a participant struggling to complete an element, an instructor may ask the participant next to them to assist. • Reckless and unsafe behaviour is not tolerated at any time. • All participants are provided with clear instructions during the safety briefing – within the video at the start. Understanding of the information given is confirmed during the test course. • Staff are present to monitor the flow of participants per level. • Helmets are worn by all participants |
| Participant frozen - Unable to move forwards/backwards | Participants | Emotional stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction given on the use of certain elements. • Participants all provided with clear instructions during safety briefing. • Instructors encourage participants to tackle the levels in ascending order of difficulty and height. The route planner can be used as a guide to allow them to make an informed choice. • The staff member at the bottom of the tower will advise participants onto appropriate levels, they will act as the final say as to what levels participants go on. • Staff present to monitor and assist. • A rescue instructor is always available when participants are on the course. |
| Hair, loose clothing, jewellery becoming caught | Participants, Staff | Entrapment, grazes, bruising, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants instructed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie long hair back • Tuck away or remove loose clothing |

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| | | strangulation, degloving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewellery should be removed or suitable (unlikely to cause entanglement). • Participants provided with clear instruction during briefing. • Staff are present to monitor. • A rescue instructor is always available when participants are on the course. |
| Injuries to bystanders from falling or swinging participants/objects | Participants, Staff | Fractures, bruises, cuts, grazes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing zones, exit zones and danger areas clearly demarked. • Clear instructions given at check in and during the safety briefing. E.g. Belongings out of pockets, jewellery off etc. • Course undergoes daily inspection to visually check the course integrity and functionality. • Appropriate PPE is worn by all participants. |

SECTION 3: ACCESS, SUPERVISION & USER LIMITATIONS

| Hazard | Who can get hurt | How they may be harmed | Control Measures |
|---|------------------|--|--|
| Access where supervision, age, height or weight limits are not met | Participants | Fractures, bruises, cuts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear signage on tower stating levels of access. • Booking conditions online clearly outline the age/height/weight. The terms and conditions, including the restrictions of access are also displayed on the side of the cabin, next to the briefing area. • Safety briefing gives clear instructions, and all participants are required to complete the practice course to a satisfactory standard – assessed by an instructor. A visual assessment is carried out on the first element of practice course/low ropes. • Wristbands issued to participants to indicate which parts of the course they may access. • Staff present to monitor access to tower and elements. |
| Unauthorised access to tower/ropes course | Public | Fatalities, fractures, cuts, bruises, grazes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the tower and elements are secured when the site is closed. • Signs warning of danger are clearly displayed. |

SECTION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL & SITE CONDITIONS

| Hazard | Who can get hurt | How they may be harmed | Control Measures |
|---|----------------------|--|---|
| <p>Slips, trips, falls on course or access areas</p> | <p>Public, Staff</p> | <p>Fractures, bruises, grazes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkways are kept clear and free from obstruction. • Pre-opening daily inspection of the course. • Clear signage indicting pathways and location of facilities. • Prohibited areas clearly marked. • Yellow and black barrier at the bottom of the tower restricting access. • Area around cabin is gritted In adverse weather conditions. • Course conditions closely monitored and additional warning given to participants if necessary. Levels may be closed for a duration if deemed necessary. |
| <p>Adverse weather (strong winds, lightning)</p> | <p>Public, Staff</p> | <p>Fractures, burns, bruises, grazes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather monitoring is via an anemometer at the top of the tower and weather apps. • Course may be closed due to severe weather such as lightning/storms/strong winds forecast in the area. • Decision to close course will be made by the Activities Manager or Supervisor in conjunction with the Duty Manager. • Lightning app used to track any lightning strikes within 20 miles. If lightning is within 20 miles, is seen or thunder is heard the ropes course is closed for at least 30 minutes after the last strike is seen, heard or occurs within 20 miles. • The ropes course will be closed if the wind speed is set to exceed safe limits. The anemometer at the top of the tower provides an accurate reading on wind speed on site. From 30mph the wind speed will be closely monitored, the decision to close will be made based on guidance from the adverse weather |

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| | | | <p>plan. Ie; depending on the direction and impact the wind is having on the course, the decision may be made to close either, the entire course or specific levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adverse weather plan is used as a guide when making decisions to close the course. • In the event of closure due to adverse weather, the rescue team will assist those on the course to get down as quickly as possible. The team will communicate via radios and participants will be given clear information regarding the closure. |
| <p>Injuries from descending activities (Leap of Faith, Free Fall)</p> | <p>Participants, Staff</p> | <p>Fractures, bruises, cuts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to these activities are strictly controlled by trained staff. • Landing zones, exit zones and danger areas are clearly demarked and cordoned off from bystanders. • Participants are provided with clear instruction. • Staff are present to monitor, with access secured at other times. • Landing area is kept clear and covered with rubber crumb matting. |