

Risk assessment Tower based roped activities (Climbing, Zip Wire, Abseil)

Next Review: Dec 2026

Whitemoor Lakes		Reviewed annually by senior team as recorded below:					
Assessed by:	Name	Date 2026	Date 2027	Date 2028	Date 2029	Date 2030	
Nicola Whiting	Nicola Whiting						
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Overview / Carried out on a purpose-built tower supplied and erected by JM Adventure. A Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI) qualified Chief Instructor has overall responsibility. All other instructors hold NGB qualifications (RCI or CWI or ERCA instructor) and/or have been in-house trained using NGB recognized techniques. An examination is completed on each in house trained staff member by the Technical Advisor and/or Chief Instructor. This process is periodically checked and validated by an independent Technical Advisor. Staffing Ratio 1:12 under instruction, 2:16 (under exceptional circumstances with consent from the client). All appropriate personal protective equipment is worn during sessions.							
To be used in conjunction with Special Educational Needs, Disability and Medical conditions risk assessment.							

STEP ONE	STEP TWO	STEP THREE	STEP FOUR	STEP FIVE
List significant hazards here:	List groups of people who are at risk from the hazards you have identified:	List the Control Measures for the identified risks:	Identify any residual risk remaining after the control measures have been put in place:	Identify any benefits that may result from exposure to the perceived and residual risk for participants:
Fall from height-top of tower	Instructors Guests Staff	Abseil, Zip wire and top of tower: Instructors & staff at height always attached to a lanyard when working near an exposed edge, using a shorter attachment point when at the edge for abseil. Instructors to be first on to the top of the tower/ never leave participants unsupervised at the top. Participants briefed only to enter the tower edge area when properly secured and invited to by their instructor, otherwise staying behind the gates. Gates closed between participants so no edges exposed for unattached participants. Participants briefed to keep both feet on the floor when at the top of the tower and not climb/ lean over the walls.	Instructor complacency/ errors Participants may struggle to follow instructions	Exposing participants to perceived risk of falling encourages them to overcome fear of heights and increases self esteem.

Falling from height-internal tower	Instructors Guests Staff	Participants briefed on giving each other space on the stairs and taking their time going up and down. Group managed to avoid waiting on or near top of stairs. Landing door and trap door to remain locked when not in immediate use, tower locked between sessions	Trips or missed foot placement can lead to fall on stairs	
Falling from height-lowering from zip wire	Instructors Guests Staff	Instructors at bottom of zip wire responsible for rope management for lowering participants. Only 1 participant to be sent down the zip wire at a time, with the instructor at the top waiting until that participant reaches the ground and the rescue ladder is positioned to the side, out of the way before sending the next participant down either line. If there are 2 participants on the zip wire at the same time due to instructor error, the instructor on bottom zip must hold both dead ropes and lower participants 1 at a time.	Misuse of equipment by outside parties/trespassers. Participants may struggle to follow instructions. Risk of tripping on stairs Instructor errors	Exposure to Heights has proven personal developmental benefits, encouraging participants to recognise perceived risk vs actual risk and overcome fears
Falling from height-bouldering/traversing	Instructors Guests Staff	Participants briefed about bouldering height- keeping feet below the painted line. Bouldering/ traverse exercises & games supervised and participants reminded of height limit/ asked to come down if they step up too high.		Engage participants with fear of heights during climbing session
Fall from height-rope climbing & peer belaying	Instructors Guests Staff	Harnesses and carabiners always checked by instructor before participant starts roped climb. Participants briefed on group belaying and supervised by instructor throughout. Participants to be lowered by the instructor to reduce risk of errors.	Instructors' attention diverted while group belaying	The group will feel a sense of responsibility for looking after each other's safety. Handling ropes teaches responsibility and encourages involvement.
Structural failure	Instructors Guests Staff	Annual inspections carried out by an external qualified inspector and remedial work to installation and equipment carried out whenever required. Internal inspections carried out by qualified inspectors a minimum of every 3 months. Instructors vigilant and report any changes/ defects	Damage by weather or vandalism in between inspections	
Injury from falling objects	Instructors Guests Staff	Participants briefed on 'below' rule and not to stand underneath participants on activity. Shoes to be fastened securely and no loose items in pockets. Helmets worn to reduce head injuries.	Some may not take items out of their pockets. Shoes may become loose when climbing.	
Equipment Failure	Instructors Guests Staff	All instructors trained to use suitable belay systems and set ups according to NGB standards and manufacturer's guidelines. Equipment safety checks carried out every 2 months with visual checks prior to and during every use. Condition of equipment monitored and tracked to ensure lifespan is	Misuse of equipment by outside parties/trespassers.	

		not exceeded		
Tangled in ropes or devices	Instructors Guests Staff	RCI/CWI/ERCA training and/or in House Training for instructors to practice and understand good rope management. Instructors trained in rescues including releasable abseil in case abseil and safety rope become tangled.	Safety rules might not be adhered to. Misuse of equipment by outside parties/trespassers.	
Misuse of equipment	Instructors Staff Guests Public	All staff trained to use suitable belay device according to NGB standards and manufacturer's guidelines. Tower locked when not in use. Fences surround the course	Misuse of equipment deliberately including by outside parties/trespassers.	
Rope burns	Instructors Guests Staff	safety brief given prior to start. Lowering speed sufficiently controlled by instructor to minimise slack in safety rope so participants can't abseil or descend past a rope fast enough to get a burn.	Small risk of rope burn. Misuse of equipment by outside parties/trespassers.	Handling ropes teaches responsibility and encourages involvement
Unauthorized climbing on equipment	Guests Staff Public	Site rules and access to activity areas explained during site tour. Ladders locked away inside towers overnight. Fences surround the course. Authorisation procedure for staff using activities outside work hours. Safety signs	Safety rules might not be adhered to. Misuse of equipment by outside parties/trespassers.	
Weather (High Winds, lightening, extreme temperatures)	Instructors Guests Staff	Activity cancelled or curtailed during lightning, extreme winds or if extremes of temperature impact ability to run session safely.	Negative effects of weather on individuals can never be fully removed.	Exposure to cold and inclement weather has proven positive developmental effects and teaches people about their limitations.
Hair or clothing caught in lowering device	Instructors Guests Staff	Rescue procedures taught and practiced by staff, releasable abseil set up on an Italian hitch. Participants briefed to keep long hair tied back and remove or tuck in ID lanyards/ draw cords for hoodies etc and keep fingers well away from metalwork	Some may not listen to safety rules	
Falling with excessive slack due to racing to complete the climb	Instructors Guests Staff	Participants are reminded that it is not a race, and to take their time safely to enjoy the activity. Instructors to remind them again or tell them to stop climbing if required to allow belayers to catch up. Helmets worn to reduce head injuries.	Participants may become excited and forget.	

Hitting Girder inside Tower and Swing outside of the tower	Instructors Staff Guests	Guests given route which will reduce swing. Helmets worn to reduce head injuries.	Risk still posed to individuals not following instruction and route.	Teaches responsibility and trust to groups.
Indecent exposure of participants & discomfort from harness straps rubbing	Instructors Guests Staff	Participants and group leaders briefed on arrival at centre about appropriate clothing for activities- no vest tops, crop tops or short shorts. Instructors to check prior to session start and send participants to change if necessary. Harnesses fit checked by instructor within line of sight of group leaders.	Ill- fitting clothing may move during activity, some trouser fabrics are slightly see-through when stretched which may cause participants embarrassment	
Non- ambulant participant access: Hoisting and free hanging abseil				
Misuse of equipment	Instructors Staff Guests	Hoisting winch only to be used by qualified senior instructors or those who have received site specific training.	A small risk of human error remains.	The specialist equipment installed on the tower enables less-abled guests and wheelchair users to access the top floor of the tower and take part in activities.
Rope burns	Instructors Guests	The hoisting system is backed up by a belayer to prevent it running and causing burns.	As with all rope handling, some risk remains.	By not using automated winching methods the guest is able to be involved in the winching themselves.
Collision with trap door or side of the tower	Guests	While one instructor hoists a second will guide the ropes and guest through the gap. Helmets worn to reduce head injuries.	There is some risk remaining dependant on the size of the guest.	The trap door on the top floor enables the guests to be at the top of the tower with their peers, or they can be manoeuvred from the floor from the outside of the tower.
Collision with tower during free hanging abseil.	Guests	Guests are attached to a rope that is used to guide them away from the tower. Helmets worn to reduce head injuries.	There is a small risk as the guest moves over the edge of the tower.	Abseiling on the outside of the tower allows the guest to experience an abseil in the same way their peers would as opposed to an indoor abseil.