

## Abseil – Operational procedures

### Staffing & Ratios

Appropriate qualifications:

- MT.UK Single Pitch Award / MIA / MIC
- Assistant site specific sign off by MIA / MIC in line with ML.UK approved procedures, when working alongside an SPA / MIA / MIC

Ratio 1 instructor : 1 rope

All groups should have an additional assistant / responsible adult responsible for conduct on the ground and safe access to the abseil. Where no assistant is available, the group must be 'held' in a safe area that can be supervised by the instructor, without distraction from their safety role on the abseil.

### Weather limitations

Abseiling is possible in all conditions (*with the exception of electrical storms or gale force winds*).

Instructors must be aware that abseiling on wet rock brings increased risk of slips. The top of abseil crags become slippery in / after wet weather. Strong winds also have an impact on balance when abseiling, and a particular impact on anyone at the top of the crag. In wet and/or cold weather ropes are more difficult to hold.

### Venues

Severn Trent site

Any suitable crag or building, following site specific assessment.

### Site specific considerations – Severn Trent site

There are specific risks from

- Loose rock: The areas to either side of the main abseil may hold loose rock. No-one should stand below these areas at any time. All participants must move away from the base of the crag as soon as they reach the ground. Everyone on the ground below the crag must wear a helmet at all times.
- Road: The car park area is bounded by a road. No-one should go onto / cross the road unless supervised. Participants making their way to the access path must be supervised and stay in single file at the edge of the road.
- Top of crag: No-one should go onto the downward sloping top of the crag unless they are attached to a secure belay. Participants must wait on the rock at the top of the slope / in the hollow behind the abseil stakes until called forward by the instructor.

### Instructor equipment

Instructors should be equipped with:

- Harness
- First aid kit
- Helmet
- Knife
- 120cm sling
- 2 Prussik loops

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- Hair bands
- 2 Screwgate Karabiners
- Mobile phone
- Spare clothing [i.e. spare hat, warm jacket, survival blanket] appropriate to the conditions [in vehicle if close]

## General Procedures

Before the start of any session, instructors must be fully aware of any medical conditions that may affect participation, and any specific requirements of the group.

All anchors and equipment must be checked at the start of every session.

No-one, including instructors, is to go on to the sloping top of the crag unless attached to the anchors.

Harnesses and helmets must be re-checked immediately before each participant abseils.

Be aware of members of the public below the crag.

Make sure everyone knows what to do when they reach the ground.

Ensure you brief the group fully. Your briefing must include;

- Activity description / goals
- Safety rules
- Communication
- Check all equipment is correctly fitted
- Check ground supervisor understands role

Group control is very important. The ground supervisor needs to understand the site specific risks and their role & responsibilities.

Ensure that all participants understand that they have the choice whether to abseil or not. Give them whatever support they need. Make sure the rest of the group understand they are to put no pressure on anyone.

**The risk assessment must be reviewed on arrival on site to take into account prevailing conditions and recent changes, and monitored throughout the activity session.**

Risk factor	Control
Fall	Effective briefing & group control Clearly defined waiting area Anchors checked before each use Harness worn correctly & checked. Chest harness as necessary. Safety system managed by competent staff Attached to belays at all times on sloping crag top
Entrapment of items in descender	No loose clothing Jewellery removed / taped over Hair tied back Releasable abseil
Hit by falling objects	Helmets No persons beneath crag Monitoring of crag condition

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	No throwing stones
Traffic	Effective briefing Group management near roads
Slips & grazes	Suitable footwear Briefing on proper technique
Exposure	Suitable clothing