# Cardiff University Students’ Union Mountaineering Club Activity Risk Assessment

Please read the guidance notes, or visit a member of the Activities staff team, for assistance to complete. Useful guidance can also be found from your relevant National Governing Body.

THIS IS A LIVE DOCUMENT THAT NEEDS REGULARLY REVIEWING AND UPDATING.

1. **General Information:**

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| Club / Society: | Cardiff University Mountaineering Club | | |
| Name of most recent assessor / reviewer: | Rebecca Carman | Date of most recent review: | 15/09/2024 |
| Committee position of most recent assessor / reviewer: | Secretary | Date of original assessment: | 15/09/2024 |

1. **Description of Activity:**

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| **What is the activity?** Attach any routes and maps if applicable.  Abseiling involves lowering yourself down a rockface using a prussik and belay blate attached to a rope that anchored by a trad anchor, metal bolts or the rope is around a large, fixed objects. Abseiling can be done for fun although it is most often done as they way to get to the bottom of the climb to begin it (like when climbing on sea cliffs) or once completing the climb in order to get back down to the ground. For abseiling, harnesses, helmets, prussiks and belay plates are required. In cases where it cannot be visually seen that the rope hits the ground of the abseil stopper knots should be tied into the end of it to ensure that no climber abseils off the end of it. Climbers should check that their prussik has been attached to the rope correctly before they begin abseiling, this can be done by pulling on the rope and seeing if it moves through the prussik.  When setting up an anchor to abseil off trad gear or preexisting metal bolts are typically used. When using trad gear 1 or 2 people who are experienced with placing trad gear and building anchors should create an anchor by placing/attaching gear to trees, rocks and inside crack/gaps in the rock. These anchors can be made with nuts, hexes, slings and rope. All protection points are connected using a rope or sling and locking carabiners. The rope or sling is then tied off in a way that adds redundancy and equalises the strands and two locking carabiners are used to attach the rope that will be used for the abseiling. To be able to abseil down the rope it must be thrown over the edge of rock once it has been connected to the anchor. Before doing this the person throwing the rope will check that the area beneath the climb is clear and then shout ’rope’ before it is thrown down. When using preexisting metal bolts, the rope can be passed through the bolts until the midpoint of the rope is at the bolts.  Sometimes it is required to abseil in more than one pitches, requiring a one or more anchors on the rock face which will be used to abseil down the next pitch. In this scenario climbers will abseil to the pitch then make themself safe by clipping into an anchor point, then pulling the rope through from the above pitch and through the anchor of the next pitch.  Once the abseil is no longer in use the anchor must be cleaned. When the abseil is being used to access the start of a climb the climber can simply dismantle the once they get to the top of the anchor. When the abseil is being used to get down from a climb the abseil anchor is typically made up of metal bolts or wrapping the rope around a large tree or rock. In these scenarios the rope can simply be pulled down.  The club does not run trips with the sole purpose of abseiling however it may be a known approach to the start of a climb or descent from the climb. It may also be done purely for the enjoyment of club members and to teach members how to abseil in low pressure situations where it isn’t required to approach or leave a climb.  **Location / address of the activities:**  Crags local to Cardiff, crags local to the bunkhouse or campsite that is being used by the Club on residential trips.  **Approximately how many people are involved?**  4-10 people, depending on demand  **Approximate duration of the activities:**  Abseiling typically takes a couple of minutes per person, although multipitches will take longer. |

1. **Hazard Assessment:**

Please continue this assessment for as many pages as required.

If your National Governing Body or managed facility provider have their own Risk Assessment, please attach and reference it within your assessment. Ensure that you act on any control measures that require implementation as a result of this assessment.

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm, for example, a hole in the playing surface.

A hazardous event takes place when someone or something interacts with the hazard. Every hazardous event has a likelihood and a consequence.

Likelihood is a measure of the chance that a hazardous event will occur.

The consequence / severity is the most likely outcome should the hazardous event occur.

Risk is a combination of the likelihood of a hazardous event occurring, with the consequence / severity of the event.

Use the scales below (1-3) to complete the risk matrix.

*Areas for consideration (non-exhaustive list):*

* *Activity that has the potential to cause injury to those participating.*
* *Different levels of ability.*
* *The safe use of equipment required to do activity.*
* *Facilities / location where the activity takes place on/in/at, for example, surfaces, fixtures and fittings.*
* *Environmental factors that would impact the activity, for example, lighting and temperatures.*
* *Risk to both participants and non-participants from each other’s interaction.*
* *Appropriate leadership and information distribution / collecting, for example, participants brief and medical details.*
* *Transport / getting to and from the activity.*

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| **LIKELIHOOD** | **CONSEQUENCE / SEVERITY** |
| **1** = unlikely the event will happen, although conceivable. | **1** = unlikely for an injury to occur, although conceivable, and minor if so. For example, minor cut / graze. |
| **2** = the event could occur sometimes and is fairly likely. | **2** = something more than a ‘scratch’ or ‘bruised ego’. A ‘three day’ injury, requiring further medical assistance. For example, cuts needing stitches. |
| **3** = it is likely the event would occur quite easily / regularly. | **3** = a major injury. For example, broken bones, loss of consciousness, loss of limbs, death. |

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| **INJURY**  What type of injury / damage can occur? | **HAZARD**  What is the hazard that can cause the injury? For example, activity, equipment, procedure, location, environment, participants. | **EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES**  What measures are currently in place to reduce the risk of injury? | **LIKELIHOOD** of injury, taking account of existing control measures  (use scale 1-3). | **SEVERITY** of injury, taking account of existing control measures (use scale 1-3). | **RISK**  = Likelihood X Severity. |
| Traffic collision | Not following the Highway Code and Road Traffic Act 1988 while driving | All drivers must have passed the necessary driving tests that are provided SU Transport | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Abseiling under the influence of alcohol | Drinking alcohol before competing in any sport activity impairs the participants ability to safely complete the activity | Ensure that all members do not drink alcohol before any sport activity | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Spread of sickness | Attending group activity while sick and can infect other members and cause them to also become sick | Encourage any member who is showing signs of sickness to stay away from activity until signs have gone | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Slipping or tripping | Sprains, bruising, cuts | Ensure that members are aware of any potential hazards, such as uneven flooring and wet patches (if seen). Ensure members are wearing appropriate clothing for the activity (e.g. closed toe shoes). | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Abseiler falling because of personal equipment failure | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, loss of consciousness, shock, death | Regular inspection of club kit to be carried out by instructors, the elected Gear Secretary and other experienced committee members. Any faulty or expired equipment will be removed immediately from the kit store. Club members should by regularly inspecting any personal equipment for damage and should avoid using equipment past its expiration date. | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Abseiler injured because of lowering themselves too quickly | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, shock | Novice abseilers will be show how to lower themselves and control the speed before they begin abseiling. Abseilers should only lower themselves at speeds they are comfortable with, bearing in mind the weather and rock formations. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Stuck abseiler | Stress/anxiety | Participants correctly briefed on the activity beforehand, a second rope should be able to be set up in order to allow an experienced abseiler to lower themselves to the stuck abseiler in order to aid them. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Abseiler stranded because of jammed belay device | Stress/anxiety    Other injuries (bruising, shock, sprains) may occur depending on the circumstances of the jam | Ensure long hair is tied back, tuck in hoodie strings, remove all jewellery before climbing, keep fingers a safe distance away from belay device, all to ensure they do not get caught when abseiling. Ensure rope is running through belay device correctly before beginning abseiling. A second rope should be able to be set up in order to allow an experienced abseiler to lower themselves to the stuck abseiler in order to aid them. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Entanglement or entrapment in ropes | Friction burns, stress, anxiety | Clothing to protect body from fiction burns. Ensure people do not twist the rope around themselves. Excessively loose clothing should be avoided. Ensure that there are no knots in the rope before abseiling | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Slipping and/or sprains from approach to crag | Broken limbs, dislocations, sprains, bruising | Appropriate footwear to be worn for the approach, taking into account weather conditions and length/difficulty of approach. Avoid having equipment dangling across the body that could limit leg or arm movement. | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Injury on sharp segments of rock | Cuts, scratches | Clothing can be used to protect knees, elbows and other body parts from the rock. Climbing specific finger tape can be used to protect hands from particularly sharp bits of rock. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Changes in body temperature do to long periods of time spent outside in rain/sun/wind/snow | Hypothermia, hyperthermia, shock, stress, heat stroke , dehydration | Appropriate clothing brought for weather conditions with enough spare layers. Water bottles to be bought to crag. Committee to make participants away of the weather predictions and inform them on what suitable clothing should be bought. Enough First aiders will be present in all groups and trips, and all groups will have adequate first aid kits provided. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Rope breaks due to sharp rocks or friction against rocks | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, loss of consciousness, shock, death | Rope protection such as carpet or specially made product will be used to reduce the friction on the rope if it is sitting against the rock. Sideways motion of the rope under weight should be avoided | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Anchor fails e.g.  gear pops out of the rock or breaks | Shock, anxiety, Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, loss of consciousness, shock, death | Anchors will be made by members who have lots of experience with building anchors. There should by redundancy in all anchors so that if one section fails the rest of the anchor will still be safe enough to lower the climber to the ground | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Rope or other equipment lands of someone stood at the bottom of the rock after being thrown/dropped/falls off the top | Bruises, cuts, loss of consciousness | Everyone at the bottom of the rock or climbing will be wearing helmets. Person to ensure area is clear beneath the rock and shout before dropping gear over the edge | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Someone falls off the top of the rock whilst setting up or dismantling an anchor | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, loss of consciousness, shock, death | People setting up anchors will not stand near the edge of the rock where possible, and will sit down where possible. | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Abseils off the end of the rope | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, loss of consciousness, shock, death | When the ends of the rope cannot be visually seen to be on the ground stopper knots will be tied in all ends of the rope to ensure that no one will abseil off the end of them. When abseiling over the sea the stopper knot should prevent the abseiler from abseiling into the sea | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Prussik fails or is set up incorrectly by abseiler | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations, loss of consciousness, shock, | Abseilers should check that their prussik is functioning correctly before abseiling by attempting to pull the rope through the prussik. Novice abseilers will have their set up made by an experienced abseiler or be watched whilst they do it themselves. Abseilers will be taught the risks of using non-extended abseil set ups and will be encouraged to use an extended set up. | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Abseiler swings into rock whilst descending | Broken limbs, sprains, bruises, dislocations | Abseils should be set up to avoid an horizontal movement where possible. Rock formation should be taken into consideration when setting up an abseil to avoid scenarios where it is likely the the abseiler will swing. | 1 | 2 | 2 |

**ADD MORE ROWS IF REQUIRED, THIS SPACE IS NOT LIMITING.**

1. **Risk Evaluation:**

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| Risk factor from assessment matrix | Level of risk |
| 1 - 2 | **LOW RISK:** no further control measures should be required at this time but ensure any in place are maintained and reviewed. |
| 3 - 4 | **MEDIUM RISK:** ensure that the suitable control measures are in place as described in the hazard assessment. You must continuously consider and implement additional control measures where possible. Do not do the activity if you are uncomfortable with the equipment, guidance and support available. |
| 6 - 9 | **HIGH RISK: DO NOT DO ACTIVITY** until risk has been considered, reduced and additional control measures have been enforced. You must identify the additional, necessary control measures and re-evaluate the activity to understand if it is appropriate. Speak to the Activities department for advice. |

1. **Supervision / Safety of the Activity**

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| **What supervision is required for the activity?** Coach / leader registration via the student portal is to be completed for all coaches and activity leaders, including volunteers and current students.  Novices will require an experienced abseiler to set up their abseil once they have been taught how to do so an experienced abseiler should check the set up to ensure that it has been done correctly until there is confidence that it will be done correctly. Experienced abseilers will not need supervision but should be checking that their prussik has been set up correctly before they start any abseil.  **What appropriate ratio of coach / leader to student is required for the activity?**  Each abseil route should have an experienced abseiler at the top ensuring that all novices are setting up their abseil correctly. As only one person can abseil on a system at any time this means that there will be a 1:1 ratio of novice abseilers to mentors.  **What First Aid provision is required?** If not required within the student group, how / where can you access this?You can source assistance with First Aid training from the Activities department if it is identified that provision is needed.  Each group should have there own first aid kit in one member’s bag, other group members should know whose bag this is. Each group will have at least one, but ideally multiple trained first aiders within the group. Group members should know how to call for emergency services.  **What safety equipment do you need to provide for this activity to go ahead?**  Harnesses, helmets, belay devices, prussiks, ropes, rope protection, trad gear for setting up anchors   * Ensure that you and your members are aware of the Cardiff University Students’ Union Emergency Procedures – these can be found on ‘committee resources’ on cardiffstudents.com. * **All incidents, accidents and near misses** are required to be reported / recorded to the Activities department as soon as possible after the event. |

1. **IMPLEMENT THE CONTROL MEASURES** detailed in this assessment and communicate the findings to members via Operating Procedures. A template can be found on ‘committee resources’ on cardiffstudents.com.

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| **What do you need to tell your members / the participants following this assessment? Where can they find your Operating Procedures?**  Make them aware of where to find the risk assessment (web page), this is also where the operating procedure will be.    Ensure that members are aware of the risks associated with abseiling. |

1. **Review**

All safety-related documents must be reviewed each year by incoming committees and activity leaders. They also need reviewing in the event of a serious accident / incident or should any hazards / control measures change.

Each time this document is reviewed or updated, please complete and sign the below. Within the document, please note any additions with the date it was updated in brackets.

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| **NAME** | **COMMITTEE POSITION** | **REVIEW DATE** |
| Rebecca Carman | Secretary | 15/09/2024 |
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1. **Activities Department Contacts for Student Groups**

Athletic Union – [AthleticUnion@cardiff.ac.uk](about:blank)

Guild of Societies – [Societies@cardiff.ac.uk](about:blank)

Volunteering – [Volunteering@cardiff.ac.uk](about:blank)

1. **Enjoy your activity!**