

Rock Climbing & Abseiling on Natural Surfaces

Adventure Activity Standards (AAS)

for
Organisations, Guides & Leaders
Conducting Adventurous
Activities for Participants
(Commercial or Non-Commercial)

Supported by



Government of South Australia
Office for Recreation and Sport



Introduction to AAS

The South Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) have been developed to assist organisations, guides and leaders to plan and undertake outdoor adventure activities with dependent participants. This document should be used as part of your organisation's risk management program.

Participants undertaking adventure activities may already have a degree of skill and experience in a particular adventure activity, and as such may be less dependent upon the group leader for guidance and instruction. In these situations, the AAS should be adapted to reflect the experience of group members and the particular situation of the adventure activity.

Regardless of the extent to which the AAS is adopted, each organisation, guide and leader has a duty of care to its participants to have completed a risk analysis of the activity, and developed a risk management approach to address potential and unexpected situations.

The AAS have been prepared with the involvement of a wide cross-section of South Australia's and Victoria's outdoor industry, and reflects minimal acceptable standards of behavior expected when planning and undertaking outdoor adventure activities with inexperienced and dependent participants.

Acknowledgement

In the development and implementation of AAS in South Australia, Recreation SA acknowledges the work of the Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc. in initiating, coordinating and developing AAS through many outdoor recreation groups within Victoria.

These AAS can now be adapted nationally across a number of outdoor adventure activities, and Recreation SA has reviewed and amended the content, in consultation with South Australian outdoor industry representatives, to reflect South Australia's legal, government, environmental, social, education and industry conditions.

The implementation of the AAS in South Australia is recognition of the State's commitment to national minimum industry standards for outdoor adventure activities.

Important disclaimer

The information contained in this publication has been gathered through widespread industry consultation. All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that it is accurate, relevant and current at the date of publication. Nevertheless, the Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) are only advisory and general in nature and should not be relied upon to meet individual or specific requirements. They are recommendations for voluntary application to adventure activity providers and participants. They are not binding on any person or organisation and have no legal force.

The AAS will not cover each and every circumstance of an adventure activity. Nor can they, when adhered to, entirely eliminate the risk or possibility of loss or injury. Consequently they should be used as a guide only. Whenever using the information contained in this publication or any AAS, all adventure activity providers should carefully evaluate the specific requirements of the intended adventure activity and the persons participating in it. If necessary, advice should be obtained from a suitably experienced and qualified professional person.

This publication and the information and the AAS it contains are made available on the express condition that the Government of South Australia (Office for Recreation and Sport) and Recreation SA, together with the authors, consultants and advisors who have assisted in compiling and drafting this publication and the AAS are not rendering professional advice to any person or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person as a consequence of reliance upon anything contained in or omitted from this publication.

Supported by members of Recreation SA's Outdoor Standing Committee representing:

- Department for Environment and Heritage
- Operation Flinders
- Bushwalking Leadership SA
- Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures
- Venture Corporate Recharge
- BCS Adventure Services
- Scouts SA
- The Association for Horsemanship Safety and Education
- Rock Solid Adventure
- With Good Company
- TAFE SA, Adelaide North

Managed by the AAS Steering Committee representing:

- Department of Education and Children's Services
- Department for Environment and Heritage
- Department for Families and Communities—Office for Youth
- Department for Families and Communities—Youth Adventure and Recreation Service
- Office for Recreation and Sport
- Recreation SA
- TAFE SA, Adelaide North
- Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures
- Venture Corporate Recharge
- South Australian Rock Climbing Education Association (SAREA)

Content provided by and endorsed by:

- South Australian Rock Climbing Education Association (SAREA)
- Climbing Club of South Australia (CCSA)
- Rock Solid Adventure
- Venture Corporate Recharge
- Wilderness Escape Outdoor Adventures
- Outdoor Adventure Skills
- Rock About
- Scouts SA Branch, Rock Climbing Activity Team
- TAFE SA, Adelaide North

Adventure Activity Standards: why have standards?

AAS are voluntary guidelines for undertaking adventure activities in a manner designed to promote:

1. **Safety** for both participants and providers
2. **Information** for providers against legal liability claims and criminal penalties
3. **Assistance** in obtaining insurance cover.

These AAS are **not** statutory standards imposed by law.

Basis of legal liability

Legal liability for personal injuries or property damage is primarily governed by the law of:

1. Contract
2. Negligence.

Although provisions of statutes such as the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)* and the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002* are also relevant.

Claims in contract

For there to be a claim in contract there must be a legally enforceable agreement (i.e. a contract) between the person who has suffered injury or loss and the provider against whom the claim is being made. For example, there is a contract between a provider and a client, where the provider agrees to provide services for payment. The contract can be in writing or oral, or both. The claim in contract can only be made by one party to the contract against the other party, unlike a claim in negligence, which is not so limited.

Apart from the express terms of the contract, the law will usually imply certain terms into a contract that require a service provider to do a number of things when providing that service. Those implied terms might include a requirement to provide competent guides and instruction, safe equipment, and a general requirement to exercise the degree of reasonable skill and care which is to be expected of a competent provider. Some of these terms will be implied by sections of the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)* and the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*.

If injury or damage occurs because the provider did not exercise reasonable care in the provision of the service, a Court can find there was a breach of the contract entitling a party to claim compensation (damages) for the loss or injury suffered.

Claims in negligence

Over recent years the law of negligence has undergone substantial legislative change in South Australia. These changes are set out in the *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)*.

The essential elements of a claim in negligence are:

1. a duty of care being owed by the provider to take reasonable measures for the safety of their clients/participants

2. a breach of this duty of care
3. the breach of the duty of care being a cause of the harm suffered by the participant.

A successful claim in negligence against a provider will result in an award of damages against that provider to compensate for the loss or injury thereby suffered.

Although the law does not automatically impose a duty of care, it is likely such a duty will be imposed when one party (the provider) assumes responsibility for another in the provision of adventure activities.

The duty of care is a legal requirement imposed by the courts on a provider to take reasonable care to protect a client or participant from foreseeable harm or loss.

If a claim is made and a court finds that a duty of care is owed, the court must then decide what is the appropriate level or standard of that duty of care, to determine if the provider has acted reasonably or alternatively has breached the duty of care. The standard of care is determined by all the relevant circumstances and the particular facts of each case. A court will have regard to the experience of the providers and the clients, the conditions at the time, and ultimately may seek the guidance from experts in the field. A court will find that the standard of care has not been met, (i.e. there has been a breach of the duty of care) if the evidence, on the balance of probabilities, establishes that the provider has not acted reasonably in the circumstances. If that conduct has caused loss and damage the provider will be liable to pay damages to compensate the party who has been injured or has suffered a loss.

For example, in an outdoor recreation activity some participants could find themselves in a situation suited to more advanced participants. There may be persons in the group who have been lead to believe by the provider that a certain skill level was not required and enrolled to join a group mis-described as being for 'beginners'.

If an accident occurred due to their inexperience, and these 'novice' participants were injured, it is possible that a legal action to recover damages might be based as follows:

- in the law of contract, against the provider, if it can be demonstrated that the provider incorrectly described the group as being for 'beginners'
- in the law of negligence, against the leader and guide, as well as the provider because of a failure to adequately instruct, advise and perhaps supervise the group.

The duty of care of the provider is higher than that placed on the ordinary citizen because the provider has agreed to provide services for a reward or assumed a responsibility of care for others, e.g. by holding him/herself out as experts or specialists who have agreed to take participants into potentially dangerous or remote situations.

Whilst not an exclusive list the following is a guide to the standards that should be addressed by any provider, guide, instructor, teacher or staff member:

- ensure the activity is appropriate for the skills and experience of the intended participants
- ensure the intended activity is appropriate given the known, expected and forecast conditions

- provide adequate staff/leader supervision
- provide competent and appropriately trained staff/leaders
- provide safe and properly functioning and adjusted equipment
- provide reasonable food and safe shelter (if relevant to the activity)
- provide reasonable guidance, instruction and direction to participants
- depending on the activity, have an adequate knowledge of the area in which it is to take place and be able to provide reasonable first aid, emergency backup and rescue.

The law will require the provider to protect participants from known hazards, but also from those risks that could arise (that is, those that the provider, instructor, teacher or staff member guide should reasonably have foreseen) against which reasonable preventative measures could be taken.

In these circumstances, in order to limit potential for legal liability and to minimize the risk of injury, each organisation needs to implement risk and safety management processes, which have identified foreseeable risks and put in place measures to control such hazards. For the same reasons, all providers, leaders or guides ought, as a minimum, to have completed appropriate first aid and activity specific training.

This is particularly so where the activity is a specialised one. In these circumstances, as a participant will be seen as relying on the expertise of the provider, leader or guide, a high duty of care will be imposed because they will be considered as having a responsibility for the control, guidance and protection of the participant.

Defences against claims by participants

No Negligence

The most obvious defence to a claim in negligence is for the operator to establish that he/she acted with all reasonable care in the circumstances: that is, was not negligent.

In attempting to do so the following questions must be considered:

- was the risk of harm foreseeable?
- was the risk not insignificant?
- would a reasonable operator have taken additional precautions that would have prevented the harm?

In determining whether a reasonable operator would have taken additional precautions a court will consider the following (amongst other relevant things):

- the probability that harm would occur if care were not taken
- the likely seriousness of the harm
- the burden of taking precautions to avoid the risk of harm
- the social utility of the activity that creates the risk of harm.

Voluntary Assumption of Risk

If it can be proved, on the balance of probabilities, that a participant was fully aware of and freely accepted the risk of suffering injury in an activity then this will be a defence to a claim in negligence. It will not be a defence, however, if the injury was caused by the inexperience or incompetence of the provider, defective equipment, inadequate supervision or instruction as it is highly unlikely that any participant would have consented to accept such risks.

If the risk of harm was an obvious one then there is a rebuttable presumption that the person who suffered the harm was aware of the risk.

Duty to Warn

A person who owes a duty of care to another person to give a warning, or other information in respect of a risk, satisfies that duty if reasonable care is taken to give that warning, or other information. This is potentially very important in the context of an Adventure Activity where it may be prudent for the provider to give all participants printed instructions and warnings (where appropriate) and obtain signed acknowledgements.

However, section 38 of the *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)* prescribes that there is no duty to warn of an 'obvious risk', or if there is an applicable code of practice in force under the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*. Further to this, the section does not apply if the plaintiff has requested advice or information about the risk from the defendant or if the defendant is required to warn the plaintiff of the risk either by law or pursuant to the code in force under the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*.

Contributory Negligence

If the accident was caused or contributed to by lack of reasonable care on the part of the participant then this will be a partial defence, according to the apportionment of responsibility made by the court between the provider and the participant. In cases of extreme acts of negligence by the participant, contributory negligence can be very high (e.g. 80–90%) and sometimes a complete defence.

Inherent Risks

A person is not liable in negligence for harm suffered by another person as a result of an inherent risk. An inherent risk is a risk of something occurring that cannot be avoided by the exercise of reasonable care.

Waiver to Sue/Exclusion of Liability Agreements

Amendments to the *Recreational Services (Limitation of Liability) Act 2002*, and the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cth)* enables providers of 'recreational services' to modify or exclude a duty of care owed to a consumer by the use of a waiver or limitation of liability. This will only apply where there is no registered code in relation to the recreational service. The amendment will only apply until 1 August 2007, after which time the only manner in which liability will be able to be modified with respect to a recreational service will be in accordance with a registered code.

Good Samaritans, Volunteers, Apologies

Good Samaritans

Under the *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)* (as amended) an individual who provides assistance, advice or care to another person in an emergency, where there is no expectation of payment by money or other means, will not be able to be sued for any injury or harm he/she causes if acting in good faith without recklessness (provided the good Samaritan's ability was not significantly impaired by alcohol or drugs).

Volunteers

Pursuant to the *Volunteers Protection Act 2001 (SA)* volunteers are protected from liability for injury to another when they are acting in good faith and without recklessness in the course of carrying out community work for a community organisation. This immunity does not operate if the volunteer's ability to carry out the work properly was impaired by drugs or the volunteer was acting outside the scope of activities authorised by the community organisation or contrary to instructions given by the community organisation.

Expressions of Regret

The *Civil Liability Act 1936 (SA)* provides that no admission of liability or fault is to be inferred from the fact that a person expressed regret in respect of the incident relating to the injury.

Limitation on claims for personal injury damages

Pursuant to the *Civil Liability Act 1936* (as amended) an injured person cannot obtain damages for pain and suffering unless the injured person's ability to lead a normal life was significantly impaired by the injury for a period of at least seven days or medical expenses of at least the prescribed minimum have been reasonably incurred in connection with the injury. The assessment of pain and suffering is assigned a scale value on a scale running from zero to sixty, sixty being the most severe form of injury.

The Act also imposes a cap on damages for pain and suffering of a maximum of \$241,500 (indexed annually) together with other limitations in respect of damages for mental harm, and claims for both past and future economic loss.

Applying the Adventure Activity Standards

Having suitable risk management programs and strategies in place, and ensuring the AAS are met, will minimise the likelihood of injury or loss. Evidence of compliance with such programs and the AAS may also assist in the legal defence of claims and in helping to establish that a provider and its leaders have acted reasonably in the circumstances (i.e. were not negligent). It is also likely such programs will assist providers in obtaining more favourable insurance arrangements.

Disclaimer

The above comments on legal liability in Contract and Negligence and defences and limitations thereto, including recent legislative changes, do not purport to be a complete and accurate description of the law on these topics. The State Government of South Australia (Office for Recreation and Sport) and Recreation SA, its servants and agents are not by these comments providing legal advice to any person, company or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person, company or organisation as a consequence of or in reliance upon anything contained in, implied by, or admitted in this document.

Contents

Activity description.....	12
Bouldering	12
Top Rope Climbing.....	13
Single Pitch Lead Climbing.....	13
Multi Pitch Lead Climbing	13
Multi Pitch Abseiling	14
Single Pitch Abseiling	14
Single Pitch Top Rope Guide (natural surfaces) Role Statement.....	15
Definition of terms used	15
Summary of abbreviations	15
1 Planning.....	16
1.1 Activity plan	16
1.2 Leader/guide selection.....	17
1.3 Pre-trip documentation	17
1.4 Risk management and emergency strategy	18
1.5 Restrictions to participation.....	18
2 Responsibilities of the trip leader/guide.....	19
2.1 Assistant to the trip leader	19
2.2 Competencies.....	20
2.3 Pre-activity briefing	25
2.4 First aid.....	25
2.5 Contingency	26
2.6 Communication and authority	27
2.7 Group management and ratios of guide/instructors to participants.....	27
2.7.1 Top rope single pitch.....	27
2.7.2 Multi Pitch Guiding (for more experienced participants)	27
2.7.3 Lead climbing instruction	28
2.7.4 Single pitch top belay abseil.....	28
2.7.5 Single pitch bottom belay system.....	28
2.7.6 Multi pitch abseiling	28
2.7.7 Waiting abseil participants	28
2.7.8 Assistant(s).....	29
2.8 Group size	29
3 Equipment	29
3.1 Equipment used by the group	29
3.2 Equipment used by the participants	29
3.3 Equipment used by the trip leader/guide.....	30
3.4 Equipment condition, maintenance and storage	30
4 Environment and conduct.....	30
Waste	30
Fire	31
Camping	31
5 Further information.....	32

Activity description

For the purposes of AAS, each activity will be described to place the appropriate AAS in context. Whilst AAS strictly apply to any organised group rock climbing and/or abseiling (also known as rappelling) trips involving dependent participants, commercial or not, it is important that the individual circumstances of each location and route be taken into account.

It should also be noted that this AAS for rock climbing and abseiling on natural surfaces is written primarily for novice to intermediate dependant groups participating on single pitch or basic multi pitch climbs/abseils on natural surfaces.

This AAS is referring to the independent activity of abseiling and not necessarily to the abseiling conducted by a rock climber to descend after a climb although clearly the abseiling AAS does have some relevance to the scenario of a climber.

In the majority of situations, abseiling involves descending by walking or 'bouncing' backwards. Some groups undertake forward facing (Geneva or rundowns) descents and where this is the case, the leader must consider the added risks. It must also be considered that standard harnesses are **not** designed to have an attachment on the back so specialist equipment is required for forward facing descents.

Bouldering

Bouldering may take place on natural rock and/or artificial structures. It involves rock climbing within 2 metres of the ground where adequate safety can be implemented by 'spotting' rather than requiring additional systems of harness, belay, ropes, etc.

Bouldering serves many purposes including warming up, introduction to climbing techniques and advanced skills training. The following are brief bouldering activity standards and are intended to be interpreted in conjunction with the following AAS.

Location

1. Areas with potentially hazardous ground areas (impact zones) must not be used for bouldering activities involving groups of dependant participants.

Procedure

1. The emergency strategy for bouldering activities must be consistent with that of the relevant climbing standards (natural surfaces and/or ACS).
2. Bouldering must not be conducted above 2 metres from the ground unless significant additional measures are undertaken to control a fall.
3. Constant supervision by a competent person must be provided with participants in constant visual contact at all times.
4. The ground surface must be considered adequate to minimise injury resulting from a fall and must have a uniform surface with no gaps (i.e. foam blocks, mattresses, and/or gymnasium pads with a single tarpaulin cover ensuring no spaces and spotting is strongly recommended).

5. Where point 4 is not possible in natural environments, participants must be 'spotted' and appropriate spotting techniques must be demonstrated and practiced before participation.

Top Rope Climbing

Top Rope Climbing may take place on natural rock and/or artificial structures. It involves rock climbing where the participant is safeguarded using systems involving ropes, harness and a belay system. In Top Rope Climbing the climbing rope is always above the climbing participant.

In Top Rope Climbing, there is only one pitch to climb and the belay system may be at the top of the pitch (top belay), through a pulley system at the bottom of a pitch (bottom belay) or by using a mechanical ascending device (self belay).

Top Rope Climbing may take place as a distinct climbing activity, for warming up prior to a lead climbing ascent, as an introduction to climbing techniques or for advanced skills training.

Single Pitch Lead Climbing

Single Pitch Lead Climbing may take place on natural rock and/or artificial structures. It involves rock climbing where the participant is safeguarded using systems involving ropes, harness and a belay system.

In Single Pitch Lead Climbing, there are two levels of participation, as the leader of the climb and as the second.

For the leader, the climbing rope is usually below the climbing participant and the leader places intermediate anchors or runners on the climb into which the climbing rope is clipped.

For the second, the climbing rope is usually above the climbing participant and is similar to top rope climbing, except that the second must also remove the runners placed on the climb by the leader.

In Single Pitch Lead Climbing, there is only one pitch to climb and the belay system will be at the bottom of a pitch while the leader climbs, and at the top of the pitch while the second climbs.

In Single Pitch Lead Climbing the climbing party may walk or scramble along an easy route away from the top of the cliff or they may abseil down the cliff using anchor points attached to the cliff.

Single Pitch Lead Climbing may take place as a distinct climbing activity, or for skills training prior to taking part in Multi Pitch Lead Climbing.

Multi Pitch Lead Climbing

Multi Pitch Lead Climbing usually takes place on natural rock. It involves rock climbing where the participant is safeguarded using systems involving ropes, harness and a belay system.

In Multi Pitch Lead Climbing, there are two levels of participation, as the leader of the climb and as the second.

For the leader, the climbing rope is usually below the climbing participant and the leader places intermediate anchors or runners on the climb into which the climbing rope is clipped. When at the top of the pitch the leader establishes a belay anchor system.

For the second, the climbing rope is usually above the climbing participant and must remove the runners placed on the climb by the leader.

In Multi Pitch Lead Climbing, there is more than one pitch to climb. The belay system will be at the bottom of a pitch while the leader climbs, and at the top of the pitch while the second climbs. The participants progress from one belay point on the cliff to another up the cliff.

In Multi Pitch Lead Climbing the climbing party may walk or scramble along an easy route away from the top of the cliff or they may abseil down the cliff using anchor points attached to the cliff.

Multi Pitch Abseiling

Multi Pitch Abseiling usually takes place on natural rock. It involves abseiling where the participant is guided using ropes, harness, a belay system and safety systems for abseiling.

When at the head of the pitch the leader establishes a belay anchor system, and checks the safety systems of the participants. The leader will determine which safety systems are appropriate for the type of abseiling pitch, and skill level of the participant. This may involve the participant having the primary responsibility for their own safety on the abseil.

In Multi Pitch Abseiling, there is more than one pitch to abseil. The participants progress from one belay point on the cliff to another down the cliff.

In Multi Pitch Abseiling the abseiling party may walk or scramble along an easy route away from the bottom of the cliff before walking back transport away from the activity site.

Single Pitch Abseiling

Single Pitch Abseiling takes place on natural rock and artificial surfaces, including building walls and purpose built structures. It involves abseiling where the participant is guided using ropes, harness, a belay system and safety systems for abseiling.

The leader establishes a belay anchor system, and checks the safety systems of the participants. The leader will determine which safety systems are appropriate for the type of abseiling pitch, and skill level of the participant. This may involve the participant having the primary responsibility for their own safety on the abseil.

The participants progress down the cliff or structure using the abseiling method and safety system determined by the guide.

In Single Pitch Abseiling on natural surfaces, the abseiling party may walk or scramble along an easy route away from the bottom of the cliff before walking back transport away from the activity site.

Single Pitch Top Rope Guide (natural surfaces) Role Statement

A Single pitch Top Rope Guide conducts single pitch climbing activities for participants on natural rock surfaces. The Guide is responsible for the selection of the site, equipment and safety systems suitable for the level of experience of the group. The participants have a shared responsibility for their own safety, within their level of experience of the activity.

Definition of terms used

Organisation: A group of persons organized for a particular purpose and assuming the role of providing a climbing activity (Activity Provider) being commercial (for profit) or non-commercial (not for profit/community group).

Participant: A person whose welfare is the responsibility of a guide or trip leader or instructor. (NOLRS 'Client')

Guide: A person who assumes the responsibility for a group of participants on an adventure activity 'climbing' with the intention to offer the experience of the activity and to satisfy the objectives of the trip (commercial or not).

Trip Leader: A senior guide who assumes the responsibility of the guide and co-ordinates the entire group 'including the guides' to satisfy the objectives of the trip (commercial or not).

Urban: Urban trips are defined in AAS as any trip which is at no point any more than 2 hours from emergency medical attention.

Remote: Remote trips are defined in AAS as any trip which is at any point more than 2 hours from emergency medical attention.

Emergency medical attention: Definitive medical attention being that of a medically qualified person (paramedic, doctor). This may be getting definitive medical attention to the injured participant/s or by getting the injured participant/s to definitive medical attention.

Summary of abbreviations

AAS	Adventure Activity Standards
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
NTIS	National Training Information Service
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
SRTA	Sport and Recreation Training Australia
NOLRS	National Outdoor Leaders Registration Scheme
Cth	Commonwealth

1 Planning

Before setting out, the planning section of the AAS contains the documented administrative aspects of AAS. It is here you will find the requirements that must be completed before undertaking any activity plan.

1.1 Activity plan

An activity plan is created by the leader/guide/organiser and outlines important information for the conduct of the program. Although land managers may not want all the information in the plan, the information should be available to them and leaders/guides of the group.

Site and route selection, group experience and equipment are the most important considerations when creating an activity plan for rock climbing and abseiling on natural surfaces. Organisations and leaders must select known sites that meet the objectives of the trip. To do this, the following considerations are to be included on any rock climbing/abseiling trip. On multi-day or remote climbing trips, copies of the activity plan should be left with a non-participating contact person.

An Activity plan shall contain the following:

1. Nature of group: level of learner, ability, age, size of group
2. Objectives: e.g. recreation, education, team-building, technical skill development, etc.
3. General logistics: date, start and finish time, location, group size, group names (if available), medical issues (if available), leader(s)/guide(s) names (if available), organisation, organiser
4. Activity description: e.g. safety talk, belay school, demonstration of climbing and belaying, top rope climbing, demonstration of abseiling, abseiling
5. Emergency plan: emergency equipment available, communication details, safe zone, emergency access, emergency contacts list: see below

In addition, the following is to be completed by participants prior to the conduct of the activity and carried by the trip leader:

6. Medical and emergency contact forms outlining contact details of participant, emergency contact details and details of any known medical conditions and recommended responses to any medical condition such as asthma.
7. Signed informed consent form (may be combined with medical and emergency contact form) which outlines the associated risks, asks for consent to obtain medical assistance and to perform any life-saving procedures as necessary, and outlines any organisational policies that participants are bound by. This consent form is to be signed after a thorough verbal briefing of the contents. On multi-day trips a copy of this information should be left with a non-participating contact person.

Considerations for Activity Plan:

- Alternative: Plan B

- Documented site-specific hazards
- Trip leaders must assess the chosen climbing site for any unexpected hazards and change the trip plan if necessary. Information of any new hazard must be made available within the organisation, to the climbing community and to the relevant land manager
- Land managers' requirements (access restrictions, group sizes, permit requirements, booking requirements).

1.2 Leader/guide selection

The leader and guide/s must have and be current in the required competencies to conduct the trip effectively, manage incidents and to satisfy the planned objectives. This is achieved by ratification by a recognised assessment body every three years.

The leader or guide on the trip must be familiar with the specific cliff being visited. Competencies and experience of the leader/guide must be commensurate to the climbing activity and selected routes.

1.3 Pre-trip documentation

Documentation is often seen as a chore and not a minimum requirement. There are however, certain details which a leader and/or organisation must be aware of to maximise safety. The following is agreed to be the minimum required documentation for rock climbing and abseiling on natural surfaces:

- Emergency strategy (including details set out in 1.4)
- In possession of appropriate permits or similar
- Participant's names, address and emergency contact details
- Planned start and finish time
- Does the participant suffer from any medical conditions likely to affect performance? (For example asthma (details of management plan required), diabetes, epilepsy, fainting/dizziness, specific allergic reactions, blood conditions which may effect bleeding/blood clotting, conditions effecting balance, recent or long-standing injuries (e.g. back, knee, ankle), disability or other relevant medical conditions (e.g. pregnancy, repetitive strain injury (RSI) and any relevant medication)
- Participants should provide signatures to acknowledge inherent risks following a clear briefing
- Participants should authorise any relevant emergency treatment by a medical officer if required (after a full explanation/brief)
- Participants under the age of 18 must have the signature of a parent/guardian.

It is a recommendation that leaders obtain details of Medicare numbers and ambulance membership if participants have them.

On any rock climbing and abseiling trip, all documentation must be readily accessible to the leader. On multi day or remote rock climbing and abseiling trips, copies should be left with a non-participating person.

Throughout the trip, the leader must take reasonable steps to account for any specific medical requirements documented by participants.

1.4 Risk management and emergency strategy

It is recommended that each group/leader/guide create a risk management plan that outlines in detail incidents that are likely to cause death or disabling injury in a rock climbing/abseiling setting. Following this identification of such risks, strategies to reduce, eliminate or transfer the real risk associated with the activity should be applied.

As the majority of climbing in South Australia is conducted on land managed by the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), the emergency management plan for the park being visited must be considered and included in the emergency strategy. These contain planned responses, relevant contact details among other essential information.

Although the focus should be on preventing incidents that cause death or disabling injury, each group shall have an emergency strategy outlined. This shall include any emergency strategy that is specific to the land manager.

Trip leader(s) guide(s) and an appropriate external contact, either within each organisation or otherwise, must be fully aware of the risk management plan and emergency strategy.

The trip leader shall communicate with the relevant external contact at designated time/s. Upon failure to do so the external contact shall notify the Police.

The emergency strategy for a climbing/abseiling trip must be specific to each site and must contain:

- Access and evacuation routes
- Assembly points where appropriate
- Emergency contact details (National Parks emergency number or after hours number) and how they are best contacted (mobile phone, satellite phone, radio)
- Specific communication requirements if needed.

1.5 Restrictions to participation

Operational restrictions to rock climbing and abseiling on natural surfaces include weather and restrictions as advised by the land manager or otherwise (including drought, fire, seasonal closure of sites).

Individual restrictions to rock climbing and abseiling on natural surfaces should apply to participants deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs which may affect performance and to participants who are unable or unwilling to follow instructions.

Participants' medical conditions should be considered when developing the activity plan.

2 Responsibilities of the trip leader/guide

This section includes all aspects of the activity plan that involve both the trip leader and the guide. This section covers the specific competency required for various types of rock climbing and abseiling (single pitch, multi pitch, etc) responsibilities on natural surfaces and covers basic requirements (first aid, ratios, etc).

The following are the responsibilities of a rock climbing/abseiling trip leader. Individual tasks may be delegated but the responsibility remains with the trip leader.

Whenever commencing any rock climbing/abseiling trip, it is the trip leaders responsibility to ensure that the level of knowledge, ability, skill and equipment of each participant is appropriate for the level of difficulty and complexity of the trip and to receive acknowledgement from all participants that he/she (as leader) has the role of leading the group.

Key areas of responsibility for the trip leader include:

- Complete trip plan
- Confirm group experience/capabilities match trip to be undertaken
- Appropriate management of hazards
- Ensure that the group has access to safe drinking water
- Check suitability, condition and use of all equipment prior to departure and on return
- Ensure to the best of your ability that group members do not get into situations beyond their capabilities
- Be aware of and comply with the land manager's guidelines including minimal impact, permits and restrictions
- Ensure a full brief is clearly carried out and understood by all guides and participants
- Ensure that any incidents are documented and reported
- Check first aid kit and communication equipment prior to trip
- Appropriately designate responsibility to guides
- Appoint appropriate non-participating contact persons to notify Police if not contacted by designated time/s
- Notify appropriate non-participating contact persons of safe return/completion
- Collect waiver forms signed by all participants where relevant.

2.1 Assistant to the trip leader

All persons acting as guide must support and assist the trip leader according to the trip plan and manage any incident or emergency according to the emergency strategy if the leader becomes injured or incapacitated.

2.2 Competencies

Due to the potential risks of injury in rock climbing and abseiling activities, and the need for leaders to be current in first aid, risk management and emergency response procedures, leaders and guides should be able to demonstrate attainment and currency of the following selected units from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). Different sets of units of competence relate to different roles and activities undertaken in the cliff environment.

A statement of attainment for these units is not compulsory. However the inclusion of this section is intended to provide a suitable benchmark describing the skills that a leader should have as described within the National Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package.

Generic

These units relate to the generic competency expected of any individual in a position of Leadership or Management in the outdoors.

Leadership and Management Skills

Code	Unit name
SRXEMR001A	Respond to emergency situations
SRXFAD001A	Provide first aid
SRXGRO001A	Facilitate a group
SRXGRO002A	Deal with conflict
SRXGRO003A	Provide leadership to groups
SRXRIK001A	Undertake risk analysis of activities
SRXINU002A	Apply sport and recreation law
SRXOHS001B	Follow defined OHS policy and procedures
SRXCAI003B	Provide equipment for activities
SRXFAC001B	Maintain equipment for activities

Outdoor Recreation Skills

Code	Unit name
SROODR002A	Plan outdoor recreation activities
SROODR005A	Guide outdoor recreation sessions
SROOPS002B	Plan for minimal environmental impact
SROOPS005B	Apply weather information
SRONAV002B	Navigate in difficult or trackless areas
SROOPS006B	Use and maintain a temporary or overnight site

Climbing Guide**Single pitch guide (restricted)**

It is the firm position of the ACIA that any climbing guide must be capable of basic lead climbing at a standard satisfying the requirements of SROCLN004A. As such, ACIA do not recognise this level of competency.

Code	Unit name
SROCLN007A	Guide climbing activities on natural surfaces (restricted), including the units:
SROCLN002A	Apply climbing skills on natural surfaces
SROCLN003A	Establish belays for climbing on natural surfaces
SROVTR001A	Perform vertical rescues

Single pitch guide (other)

For non restricted climbing, guides should have all of the restricted guide skills in addition to:

Code	Unit name
SROCLN008A	Guide lead climbing activities on natural surfaces (single pitch) Including the unit:
SROCLN004A	Apply lead climbing skills on natural surfaces

Multi pitch guide

Multi pitch guides should have the skills and experience of a single pitch guide in addition to:

Code	Unit name
SROCLN010A	Guide lead climbing activities on natural surfaces(multi pitch) Including the units:
SROCLN005A	Apply multi pitch lead climbing on natural surfaces
SROCLN006A	Establish belays for multi pitch climbing on natural surfaces
SROVTR002A	Perform complex vertical rescues

Single Pitch Guide (Restricted)

Specifically applicable only for routine top-rope climbing activities on a natural surface, where there are clearly defined operating procedures for the climbing site. Climbing sites must have easy access to the top and the bottom of the climb(s), be free from complex set up and/or operating issues, and be free from hazards. Anchors at the site should be obvious and easily accessible, and should be either fixed or natural.

Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Natural Surfaces)

Competent to enable them to work autonomously within a defined range of skilled operations. These should involve known routines, methods and procedures, where some discretion and judgment is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures and within known time constraints.

May work within clearly defined contexts conducting single pitch abseiling activities acting according to clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures and relevant

documented guidelines. Persons with this level of competence may only work at sites which:

- provide the opportunity for single pitch abseiling
- have natural and/or fixed anchors
- have been deemed as appropriate abseiling sites by a person with competencies equivalent to a multi pitch abseiling guide. (This analysis of suitability may result in the establishment of a recognized local abseiling site, or sites assessed and used by specific organisations).

A person with the level of competence defined as the minimum for a single pitch abseiling guide does not have the ability to adequately assess the suitability of a new abseiling site and its anchors.

Persons with this level of competence may also work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs (e.g. in multi pitch situations).

Leadership and Management Skills

Code	Unit name
SRXEMR001A	Respond to emergency situations
SRXFAD001A	Provide first aid
SRXGRO001A	Facilitate a group
SRXGRO002A	Deal with conflict
SRXINU002A	Apply sport and recreation law
SRXOHS001B	Follow defined OHS policy and procedures
SRXRIK001A	Undertake risk analysis of activities

Outdoor Recreation Skills

Code	Unit name
SROODR002A	Plan outdoor recreation activities
SROODR005A	Guide outdoor recreation sessions
SROOPS002B	Plan for minimal environmental impact
SROVTR001A	Perform vertical rescues
SROOPS003A	Apply weather information

Abseiling Specific Skills

Code	Unit name
SROABN003A	Apply single pitch abseiling skills on natural surfaces
SROABN004A	Establish ropes for single pitch abseiling on natural surfaces
SROABN007A	Guide abseiling on natural surfaces (single pitch)

Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Natural Surfaces)

A person designated as a Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Natural Surfaces) within the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS) has the competencies that enable them to operate within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and

others, as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature.

A person with this level of competence may perform a broad range of skilled applications. These may include the evaluation and analysis of current practices, development of new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.

Single pitch abseiling instructors may work independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different client groups. Persons with this level of competency have the ability to deal with complex, unpredictable and non-routine situations. Persons with this level of competence may only work at sites which:

- provide the opportunity for single pitch abseiling
- have natural and/or fixed anchors
- have been deemed as appropriate abseiling sites by a person with competencies equivalent to a multi pitch abseiling guide or instructor. (This analysis of suitability may result in the establishment of a recognised local abseiling site, or sites assessed and used by specific organisations).

Persons with this level of competence may also work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs (eg, in multi pitch situations).

A single pitch abseiling instructor requires single pitch abseiling guide competencies plus:

Code	Unit name
BSZ404A	Train Small Groups
SRXEMR002A	Coordinate emergency response
SREXGRO003A	Provide leadership to groups
SRXOHS002B	Implement and monitor the organisation's OHS policies, procedures and programs
SROABN008A	Instruct abseiling on natural surfaces (single pitch)
SROODR006A	Manage risk in an outdoor activity

Multi pitch abseiling guide (Natural Surfaces)

Competent to operate within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and others, as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature.

A person with this level of competence may perform a broad range of skilled applications. These may include the evaluation and analysis of current practices, development of new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.

Multi pitch abseiling guides may work independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different client groups. Persons with this level of competency have the ability to

deal with complex, unpredictable and non routine situations. Persons with this level of competence may work at sites which:

- have natural, fixed or artificial anchors
- are multi pitch
- have the potential to provide non-routine situations (e.g. adverse weather conditions, complex rescue situations).

A multi pitch abseiling guide requires single pitch abseiling guide competencies plus:

Code	Unit name
SRXEMR002A	Coordinate emergency response
SRXGRO003A	Provide leadership to groups
SRXOHS002B	Implement and monitor the organisation's OHS policies, procedures and programs
SROABN005A	Apply multi pitch abseiling skills on natural surfaces
SROABN006A	Establish ropes for multi pitch abseiling on natural surfaces
SROABN009A	Guide abseiling on natural surfaces (multi pitch)
SROODR003A	Plan outdoor recreation activities (advanced)
SROODR006A	Manage risk in an outdoor activity
SROVTR002A	Perform complex vertical rescues

Multi pitch Abseiling Instructor (Natural Surfaces)

A person designated as a Multi pitch Abseiling Instructor (Natural Surfaces) within NOLRS has the competencies to instruct clients in order that they may acquire abseiling skills or abseiling guiding skills to enable independent operation.

A person with this level of competence may instruct clients to achieve the following outcomes.

- abseiling participant (single pitch)
- abseiling participant (multi pitch)
- single pitch abseiling guide
- multi pitch abseiling guide

A multi pitch abseiling instructor requires single pitch abseiling instructor competencies plus:

Code	Unit name
SROODR003A	Plan outdoor recreation activities (advanced)
SROVTR002A	Perform complex vertical rescues
SROABN005A	Apply multi pitch abseiling on natural surfaces (multi pitch)
SROABN006A	Establish ropes for multi pitch abseiling on natural surfaces
SROABN010A	Instruct abseiling on natural surfaces (multi pitch)

All rock climbing/abseiling guides should be aware of the complexity of this activity and the importance of experience. As such, a personal log book should be maintained to record climbing experience at or above the level you guide and/or instruct.

Details of these units can be accessed free by logging on to the Department of Education, Science and Training, (DEST), National Training Information Service website at <www.ntis.gov.au>.

The above units are components of national training courses that encompass the specification of knowledge areas and skills relevant to the outdoor recreation industry and the application of that knowledge and skill to a standard of performance required in the workplace.

2.3 Pre-activity briefing

A briefing of all participants should take place for all participants, and should include the following:

- Leaders and guides introduction
- Use and fitness of equipment
- Information regarding risks associated with the activity
- Participant role in managing risks during the activity
- Participant response in the event of an emergency
- Verbal check of medical issues and relevant information regarding access to the first aid kit
- Outline of the activity
- Important logistics such as finish times, collection locations, etc.

2.4 First aid

Decisions on the level of first aid should be based upon the risk assessment and emergency strategy for this adventure activity. Leaders and guides should have the appropriate first aid skills commensurate with the planned activity, the skills of the group and the location of the activity, including remote areas.

When a climbing group is operating on a single pitch top rope scenario, at least one leader or guide must hold an approved Level 2 first aid certificate. The basic emergency strategy for this scenario must be included in the group briefing to ensure that all participants are aware who has this certificate in case of an accident.

Where the rock climbing group is operating on a multi pitch climb each leader/guide must hold an approved Level 2 first aid certificate and have access to an appropriate first aid kit.

The following list provides an overview of equivalent first aid training with South Australian providers St John Ambulance and Australia Red Cross.

Level 1: Basic First Aid (Resuscitation) involves basic skills and knowledge in order to recognise and provide immediate first aid for a range of common illnesses and injuries and minimise the severity of injury or sudden illness.

Leaders and guides with Basic First Aid should be able to:

- perform CPR (resuscitation)

- manage breathing emergencies: expired air resuscitation (EAR)
- control bleeding, wounds and bandaging

Level 2: Intermediate or Senior First Aid involves skills and knowledge to recognise and provide immediate first aid for a range of common illnesses and injuries and minimise the severity of injury or sudden illness.

Leaders and guides with Intermediate or Senior First Aid should be able to:

- perform CPR (resuscitation)
- manage breathing emergencies – expired air resuscitation (EAR)
- control bleeding, wounds and bandaging
- manage extremes of heat and cold
- manage injuries to bones, joints and muscles
- manage poisoning, bites and stings
- define the principles of first aid
- demonstrate knowledge of basic human anatomy
- recognise and manage both a conscious and an unconscious casualty
- perform effective CPR and expired air resuscitation (EAR)
- identify a range of common illnesses and injuries
- control bleeding and care for various types of wounds
- recognise and manage injuries to bone or soft tissue
- recognise and manage medical conditions that may need emergency care, including heart attack, stroke, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy
- use practical first aid skills using prepared and improvised materials
- demonstrate knowledge of first aid management for a range of common illnesses and injuries.

A comprehensive first aid kit appropriate to the level of first aid training must be easily accessible at the cliff at all times. Remote areas may require more advanced first aid skills such as Wilderness First Aid where leader and guides recognise, prevent and treat many illnesses and injuries prevalent in wilderness and remote locations.

2.5 Contingency

The organisation and structure of the program should allow for instructors, assistants, guides and participants to have an effective emergency response should any member be unable to fulfill their role. In this way, a group of novices should not be under the care of a single trip leader, instructor or guide unless they are trained and competent to manage any likely scenario that they find themselves in.

Where there is a single trip leader, instructor or guide with a group of inexperienced climbers there should be at least one competent assistant who can affect any pre planned emergency strategy should it be required.

2.6 Communication and authority

As for all outdoor activities involving group participation, all participants, guides and trip leaders must use agreed and understood communication (brief, calls, authority, directions, etc). It is essential that this system be devised before the trip and agreed as a component of the pre-trip briefing.

Every communication system requires a clear full briefing. This may be delivered differently according to organisational preference and, where relevant, the length and complexity of a trip but must include and is not limited to each and every element of the following:

- Introduction of trip leader, guides and objectives of the trip
- Strategies for conservation including flora, fauna and rubbish removal
- The nature of the activity, inherent risks, and communication requirements
- Correct use and fitness of equipment
- Group management throughout activity
- Explanation of how the climbing session will be managed (procedures and calls)
- Verbal health check for participants to voice concerns about their capabilities
- Explanation of required documentation including completion and signing of waiver (section 2)
- The extent to which participants should be informed of the emergency strategy is specific to each organisation, trip, location and group. The intention is to ensure that participants remain calm and act appropriately in the event of an incident or emergency. Details may or may not include who to look to, where to gather, how to contact emergency services, should they stay at location or move to other location, etc.

2.7 Group management and ratios of guide/instructors to participants

There are clearly situations where the leader/guide's judgement will dictate the requirement to vary the number of participants per leader/guide. Land managers may also suggest ratios that differ from the AAS and where these are within AAS they must be regarded as minimum standards.

2.7.1 Top rope single pitch

The recommended maximum ratio for top rope single pitch climbing is 1:4, with a ratio of up to 1:12 possible, with the use of an additional assistant with a group of 5–8, and a second assistant with a group of 9–12 may be manageable.

In all cases, each rope/belay must be in close proximity and these ratios are for one climber with a belayer and a backup belayer per rope/belay system.

2.7.2 Multi Pitch Guiding (for more experienced participants)

The recommended maximum ratio for multi pitch climbing is 1:4.

2.7.3 Lead climbing instruction

The recommended maximum ratio for teaching lead climbing is 1:2.

2.7.4 Single pitch top belay abseil

For any abseil utilising a top belay system with beginner/novice abseilers, there must be one leader to each abseiling participant (1:1).

Where participants have provided documentation/verbal evidence supported by a visual check the leader may deem participants to be competent belayers. They may then be permitted to belay with a backup belayer. Where this is the case the leader may supervise two independent descents/ropes with one competent belayer to each participant (1:6).

2.7.5 Single pitch bottom belay system

For any abseil utilising a bottom belay system with beginner/novice abseilers, there must be one leader at the top (dispatching) and one competent participant or leader at the bottom (bottom belayer or brake person) for each loaded rope (i.e. with an abseiler on the rope) (2:1). The competent person in the role of breaking must have provided documentation/verbal evidence supported by a visual check before the leader can deem them to be competent belayers.

2.7.6 Multi pitch abseiling

Multi pitch abseils are those for which the participants are required to be anchored at changeovers. Where a changeover occurs at an area considered to be large/safe and which has easy escape from the ledge, this is considered by AAS to be multiple single pitch abseils. For multi pitch abseils there must be two leaders to every six-abseiling participants (2:6). These abseils must be managed carefully to prevent overcrowding at the changeover and to ensure that the anchors are sufficient.

It is recommended that participants for multi pitch abseils have had some prior experience.

- Extra care must be taken to ensure constant and clear communication, appropriate supervision and suitable site/route selection.
- The leader must remain at the site of the activity at all times during the activity session.

The following apply as a minimum ratio of leader(s) to participants in various scenarios.

2.7.7 Waiting abseil participants

The leader of the abseil session must ensure that all waiting participants remain in a designated safe area and are appropriately supervised by a responsible adult. Adult participants may be expected to be responsible for themselves.

The following ratios apply only to participants in the process of abseiling. Additional participants waiting or in transit during the session must be supervised independently.

2.7.8 Assistant(s)

Any assistant or persons assisting the leader in the provision of an climbing/abseiling session must provide documented, visual and/or verbal evidence of learning and/or competency for the role, which they are required to undertake (spotting, belaying. etc).

2.8 Group size

For the safety of both the group and the environment, the maximum group size for a climbing trip involving a dependant group must be 12 participants under supervision.

Larger groups may be given consideration, provided the carrying capacity of the area used has been demonstrated to be adequate. Alternatives to larger groups are to use a range of climbing sites or splitting the group into different activities, such as bushwalking, bird watching, flora and fauna studies.

The total group size at any one site should not exceed 20 without the land manager's approval.

3 Equipment

Equipment requirements vary with the objectives of the trip plan and the environmental conditions likely to be endured. When planning equipment requirements for a climbing trip it is important to plan ahead as much as possible for all eventualities taking into account any appropriate information including forecast weather conditions.

3.1 Equipment used by the group

As rock climbing and abseiling is essentially an individual activity, it is common for all equipment to be allocated to the participant (see 3.2) or the leader/guide (see 3.3) so there is no requirement for group equipment.

3.2 Equipment used by the participants

The following equipment requirements apply to all dependant participants:

- Helmet specifically designed for rock climbing/abseiling and which adheres to UIAA, CE or equivalent must be worn throughout the activity session
- Harness specifically manufactured for rock climbing/abseiling and which adheres to UIAA, CE or equivalent must be used
- Clothing should be appropriate to the requirements of the rock climb/abseil and weather conditions
- The participant must carry any personal medication and the trip leader and guide/s must understand the requirement
- Appropriate footwear must be worn both to access the rock climbing/abseiling area (where relevant) and for the climbing session
- An appropriate and established descending device must be used when abseiling
- It is recommended that gloves are worn by all participants during abseiling.

3.3 Equipment used by the trip leader/guide

The following equipment requirements apply to all leaders /guides conducting dependant group climbing activities:

- Helmet specifically designed for rock climbing/abseiling and which adheres to UIAA, CE or equivalent must be worn through out the activity session
- Harness used must be specifically manufactured for rock climbing/abseiling and which adhere to UIAA, CE or equivalent
- Ropes and all protective equipment (karabiners, slings and chocks) must be manufactured specifically for rock climbing/abseiling and used according to the manufacturers' specifications and accepted climbing practice (e.g. dynamic ropes)
- An additional rope, equivalent to the longest pitch should be accessible for rescue, should it be required
- A rescue pack of pulleys, ascenders, and a belay device should be accessible for rescue, should it be required
- Emergency communication equipment (Mobile Phone, Radio, EPIRB if in remote area, etc.)
- First aid kit

3.4 Equipment condition, maintenance and storage

- All equipment used in climbing activities must be used, maintained and stored according to manufacturers' specifications where applicable
- All equipment used must be checked before and after each trip
- It is recommended that all issued equipment be carefully washed after each trip where relevant, e.g. helmets, shoes, clothing, etc. All harnesses must be supplied in a clean and serviceable condition.

It is essential that where appropriate (where equipment is stored and issued by the organisation) a log of all equipment use and maintenance be kept current.

4 Environment and conduct

The leader, guide and organising body should be satisfied that participants are aware of their responsibilities (as members of the group) to ensure areas of scenic or recreational significance, special scientific or archaeological sites, and the natural environment are respected, and that the requirements of land managers are adhered to.

The following strategies, which effectively minimize disturbance to natural and cultural values, represent acceptable conduct for the long-term sustainability of both the activity and the environment.

Waste

Rubbish: It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that no rubbish or introduced matter is left as a result of the group's activity in an area. This particularly

applies to all food or drink packaging, food scraps and activity equipment. Leaders should plan to carry rubbish receptacles sufficient to enable all group-generated rubbish to be removed from the area. Where practicable, leaders should encourage participants to remove rubbish left by previous users.

Human waste: Faecal wastes are to be managed and disposed of in line with environmental regulations and land manager directions. This means that where toilet facilities are provided, these must be used. Where camping is permitted and no toilet facilities are available, toilet wastes must be buried at least 100 metres from a watercourse. If it is not feasible to bury wastes or to bury them at least 100 metres from a watercourse (e.g. narrow river valley, cliff areas), group leaders should plan to use equipment (e.g. 'poo-tubes') that enable the wastes to be removed and disposed of at a facility designed for this purpose.

Fire

Fire Bans: In most parks, the fire danger season in South Australia usually extends from 1 November to 30 April, depending on seasonal conditions. No wood fires are permitted in parks during this time. Some parks have year round bans on wood fires. Open flames are banned in all parks on days of extreme fire danger. These are declared by the Country Fire Service (CFS). Parks may be closed to visitors on Total Fire Ban days. The onus is on the leader to check the fire ban status for the area they are visiting. Phone or visit the Department for Environment and Heritage or CFS Office for more details.

Camp Fires: Native vegetation within reserves is protected. In non-reserve areas, dead trees and fallen logs play an important role in the environment. In some parks, wood fires are prohibited or restricted. Gas or liquid fuel stoves are preferable. Where fires are permitted they must be:

- lit in existing fireplaces where possible or in a properly constructed fireplace or pit (minimum 30cm deep and a maximum of one metre wide) and returned as closely as practicable as it was
- cleared of flammable vegetation for at least three metres around the fireplace or pit
- kept to a minimum size necessary for cooking, minimising disturbance to the surrounding area
- attended at all times
- extinguished with water
- avoided if fuel is scarce
- avoided if at all unnecessary or where doing so will not comply with the minimal impact approach.

Camping

- Camp at established campsites where possible
- Make campsites away from water resources (at least 20 metres from any stream) and allow animals undisturbed access
- Use floored tents with poles
- No trenches around tents

- Use toilet facilities where available
- Avoid using any soaps or detergents. If they must be used, use only biodegradable soaps and detergents. Dispose of washing water at least 50 metres from any water source
- Wash all soil from camping and personal equipment and vehicles before leaving home or moving between locations, in order to avoid transporting seeds or soil-borne pathogens such as phytosphthora.

In addition, participants are also expected to:

- try to avoid tracks and other areas which will be intrinsically more prone to erosion, especially with larger groups
- use boot washing and or hygiene stations to assist in the prevention of phytosphthora
- make reasonable efforts to minimise the impact of the group on others
- assist other parties in difficulty providing this action does not adversely effect the safety of the group
- be diplomatic with other groups and other recreational users of the area
- try to minimise noise.

5 Further information

Australian Climbing Instructors Association (ACIA), www.acia.com.au

Professional Association of Climbing Instructors (PACI), www.paci.com.au

SAREA, www.climbingclubsouthaustralia.asn.au/sarea/index.html