



LIVE THE OUTDOORS

## SILVERBAND LODGE ACTIVITY PLAN

# HIGH ROPES COURSE



*This document has been prepared with reference to the Department of Education and Training Victoria 'Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors' and the Australian Adventure Activity Standards. These were accessed online [here](#) and [here](#) at the date of the most recent update.*



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In consultation with user groups, Silverband Lodge designs

and delivers a broad range of experiential learning programs at Silverband Lodge sites and beyond.

From self-led on site activities, to multi day adventure expeditions, Silverband Lodge staff will assist in program design and delivery for all ages and abilities.

Programs are designed in response to the desired outcomes of each user group and will always be appropriate to the age, skills and experience of attending participants.

Program design will sequence activities to provide the best possible outcome and each activity offered in the program will be conducted in accordance with the following activity plan.



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## 1. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

The High Ropes Course is an adventure activity that offers individuals the opportunity to experience mental and physical challenges.

The aims of the High Ropes Course are to:

- Accept and overcome challenge
- Extend personal boundaries
- Build trust between participants
- Care for fellow participants
- Become familiar with the use of safety techniques including safety equipment and harnesses
- Respect individual choices
- Have fun
- Engage in an exciting and exhilarating activity



This activity is not aimed at excellence in skill acquisition but rather improvement in performance.

### ACTIVITY OUTLINE AND METHOD

High Ropes Course is generally conducted in half day sessions approximately 3 hrs long: either a morning or afternoon session. Silverband Lodge High Ropes Course Instructor will meet with the group in the designated area prior to commencing activity.



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- 1.** The High Ropes Course Instructor will accompany the group to the high ropes course site.
- 2.** On arrival at the High Ropes Course, the instructor will brief the group on the aims and objectives of the activity and what is expected of them during the session.
- 3.** Participants will be instructed on how to correctly fit harnesses and helmets. All participants and teachers / group leaders are encouraged to be involved at this point.
- 4.** Instructor/s will check participants gear individually and readjust where required.
- 5.** Participants will be briefed on the safety aspects of the high ropes course and the skills they will require to safely participate and belay fellow participants.
- 6.** Instructor will demonstrate proper belay technique and ask students to be involved in demonstration.
- 7.** Participants will be given the opportunity to ask questions.
- 8.** One student will be asked to volunteer to climb one element of the course. The instructor will explain what will happen if someone did fall, how to descend correctly and emphasize the need for participants to support and encourage each other.
- 9.** There will be a number of elements for participants to complete which the Instructor will decide on in relation to a number of factors.
- 10.** At the end of the session the group will be asked to remove gear together in a particular order, ready for the next group.
- 11.** After returning gear, the Instructor will facilitate a brief discussion allowing the participants to share what they achieved from the session.



## 2. ENVIRONMENT

All Silverband Lodge High Ropes Course Instructors have prior knowledge and experience of the local and surrounding area and are aware of the following information.

### LOCATION

Silverband Lodge has 2 High Ropes Courses. Both High Ropes Courses were professionally built by Ropes Courses Unlimited. The first course was constructed during November 1999. The course was revamped and rebuilt in November 2009. The second course was constructed during April 2003. Both were constructed using the most up to date technology. The courses are a series of individual elements using a ground belay system. The High Ropes Course is used only under the supervision of Silverband Lodge High Ropes Course instructors.

The group's prior experience and current abilities will determine which course and elements are used. Elements are chosen to give participants a chance to gain confidence. Time spent will vary, depending on group size and prior experience.

### COMMUNICATION

In the case of an emergency or extreme weather conditions, the high ropes courses are located onsite where access to communications and external assistance is readily available.

In the case of an incident at the high ropes course, Silverband Lodge site-based staff must be notified so they are able to assist as needed. Silverband Lodge staff will always be contactable via telephone communication and further available for situations requiring a vehicle.

### WEATHER

The weather conditions are assessed in preparation for each session and closely monitored throughout the session. Variable weather conditions are possible through all seasons. The High Rope course is a weather dependent activity and therefore on days of extreme temperatures, high winds or very wet/cold conditions, altering or cancelling the activity will be considered. It will be the responsibility of the High Ropes Instructor to use his/her professional judgment to make this decision.

### TRANSPORTATION

Silverband Lodge will not be transporting participants as High ropes is on site activity.



### 3. ACTIVITY

#### STUDENT SKILLS

Regardless of prior experience, an activity briefing will be conducted with each group to provide participants with the following information.

- Identify the role of the instructor.
- Expectation of participants to act responsibly towards other participants, the public, the environment and for safety reasons.
- Appropriate clothing (see below).
- Protection of the natural environment and minimal impact practices.
- A discussion of the nature and rationale of challenge activities.
- Method of climber attachment to belay system
- Methods of communication to be used during the activity between participants and belayer.
- Sufficient information for participants to act in the case of emergency.

On conclusion of each high ropes session a de-brief discussion will be facilitated by the instructor covering the following points:

- How did it feel to overcome the challenge at hand?
- Extending personal comfort zones.
- Respect for others freedom of choice.

**Safety Equipment** will be explained so that participants understand the importance of correctly fitting their own equipment.

**Harnesses:** correctly fitted and secured

**Helmets:** ensure correct fit and placement

**Belay Devices:** correct use and understanding of how it works.

The High Ropes Course Instructor will demonstrate and thoroughly explain the correct method for using the belay device and the way in which the entire system works, with specific attention drawn to:

- The correct body posture for safely descending.
- The position of the participants hands in relation to the belay device.
- Correct method of belay and back-up belay.
- Show safety mechanisms and why ropes are used.

Before climbing, the instructor or assisting instructor must visually check the climbers harness, helmet for correct fit and check participants tie in to belay. Each participants belay technique will also be assessed.

#### EQUIPMENT

All High Ropes Course Instructors are familiar with the safe use and maintenance of equipment used for High Ropes Course sessions.

All equipment used is of AAAS standard (or equivalent) and checked:

- Immediately prior to commencing the activity



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- Thoroughly each week as part of the maintenance schedule
- And a log of use of equipment is maintained

It is the responsibility of the High Ropes Course Instructor to

- Check first aid equipment prior to activity
- Check communication equipment prior to activity
- Ensure all required equipment is provided in working order and onsite at activity
- Check the suitability of clothing and equipment used by participants

### **Helmets & Harnesses**

All helmets and harnesses are of AAAS standard (or equivalent). All participants will be supplied with and must wear helmets for whole the session. Observers and photographers must also wear helmets whilst they are on or near the high ropes course site.

### **Ropes and Protective Equipment**

All ropes and protective equipment (karabiners, pulleys, belay devices) are manufactured for use on High Ropes activities and are used in accordance to manufacturers specifications.

### **Rescue Equipment**

Appropriate harnesses are worn by instructors at all times and rescue equipment set close by to ensure rescues will be conducted efficiently.

## **FIRST AID KITS**

High Ropes Instructors maintain an appropriate First Aid qualification from a recognized training organization and carry first aid kits at all times.

## **CLOTHING**

While equipment and clothing is weather dependent when participating in the High Ropes activity, participants will:

- Wear loose clothing
- Wear sturdy shoes at all times
- Tie hair back
- Empty pockets
- Not chew gum

## **IDENTIFICATION**

It is the responsibility of the user group leader/teacher to manage the group effectively ensuring all participants are accounted for at all times.



## 4. PEOPLE

### STAFF

A minimum of two staff members must be present for this activity, one with responsibility for activity instruction and the other able to assist the instructor.

At times High Ropes Course Instructors used by Silverband Lodge are sub-contracted from a local outdoor activities provider. All instructional staff used by Silverband Lodge maintain current Working With Children's Checks.

#### School / Group Representative

As per the DET VIC. Safety Guidelines, a registered teacher or group representative must be present at the activity at all times. In the event that a teacher/group representative is not available to be at the High Ropes site, the activity will be cancelled and schools / groups will be liable for any associated costs.

While Silverband Lodge High Ropes Course Instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teacher/group representative will have overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students. The teacher/group representative will act on the advice of the Silverband Lodge High Ropes Course Instructor regarding technical safety issues.

It is the responsibility of the accompanying teacher/group representative to read this document in order to familiarise themselves with the activity at hand and their responsibilities.

### EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

As a minimum all **High Ropes Course Instructors** will either hold the following unit of competency from the Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package [July 2015] or demonstrate equivalent experience:

Supervise a High Ropes session SISOCRP404A

- Leading high ropes sessions in variable conditions.
- Their own ability and fitness to manage the activity.
- Providing support to participants.
- Managing groups in outdoor settings.

And have knowledge of:

- Set up of secure and efficient belay teaching systems.
- Rescue skills and techniques.
- Site choice in relation to safety, environmental factors and outcome for the participant
- Techniques for completing high ropes course elements
- Obtaining local weather forecasts and knowledge of specific local weather patterns



## Responsibility of the High Ropes Instructor

The High Ropes Course Instructor will also be responsible for the following:

- Instructing the activity in a safe manner
- Monitoring the welfare and fitness of participants
- Ensuring safety procedures are clearly communicated to participants
- Undertake a head count prior to, during and after the activity
- Record near miss incidents and accidents and submit them to Silverband Lodge Manager.
- Ensure all documentation has been completed and collated
- Inform Assisting Instructor of their roles in the behavior, supervision and instructions of participants.
- Brief accompanying teacher / assisting instructor / group representative of what procedures to follow should the lead instructor become incapacitated for any reason.

## Responsibility of Assisting Instructor

The assisting instructor of the activity will generally not be required to have the same skill level as the leader. The Assisting Instructor will carry out tasks as directed by the High Ropes Instructor which may include monitoring the welfare and fitness of participants, assisting the High Ropes Instructor, first aid responsibility, the supervision and behavior of observers and adhering to safety instructions.

**Assistant to the Instructor** (may be the teacher/group representative) and must:

- Have experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- Be able to assume a supervisory role during the activity
- Have the ability to participate competently in emergency response procedures
- Be available to confer with the instructor to establish the emergency response and supervision responsibilities should the lead instructor become incapacitated for any reason.

## SUPERVISION

Supervision is a critical factor in managing risk in the outdoors. The high ropes course sites are suitable for both primary and secondary age participants.

A minimum of two staff must be present for High Ropes. One staff member will be required to have the above qualifications as High Ropes Course Instructor and one Assisting Instructor, who will be either a staff representative of the school or another qualified instructor.

Each belay transfer will be directly supervised by the Instructor or assisting instructor.

The minimum supervision ratio will be:

High elements	
Staff numbers	Student numbers
2	1–12
3	13–18
4	19–24



The allocation of staff should be based on:

- age, maturity and gender of students
- ability and experience of students
- individual needs
- group dynamics of the student group
- experience, qualifications and skills of staff
- location conditions.

The teacher / group leader in charge is responsible for the supervision strategy that must be endorsed by the school council / group as part of the excursion approval process. Staff members will supervise students according to that strategy.

## **INFORMED CONSENT**

Schools / groups are responsible for obtaining informed consent from parents/guardians of students prior to the activity. A list of participants, medical forms and parental authority should accompany the teacher/group representative to the activity.

## **FIRST AID**

The High Ropes instructor will have a minimum of the following current (within 3 years) first aid qualification or equivalent:

HLTAID011 Provide First Aid

and a current (updated within 12 months) Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) qualification or equivalent:

HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

Teacher/group representatives will be responsible for all student medical forms and for ensuring medical forms and any medications are taken to activity venues.

A first aid kit will be located at the activity site. Additionally each group is required to supply their own first aid kit. Silverband Lodge and contracted staff with first aid training will administer first aid under the following circumstances:

- In an emergency situation
- If the designated school / group representative is unable
- If the group's designated first aider cannot be located or in difficulty

All staff / group members with known medical conditions that might compromise the group's risk management plan should make accompanying staff aware of this condition. Be aware that issues of confidentiality will be involved in any such disclosure.



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## 5. RISKS

### RISK ASSESSMENT

A detailed risk assessment is conducted of this activity, which is attached to this document and reviewed annually, or as required.

### HOW TO

Where applicable, the relevant 'How To' should be read in conjunction with this Activity Plan.

### EMERGENCY STRATEGY

- On arrival User groups will be provided with a copy of the Silverband Lodge Emergency Management Plan.
- Mobile phone communication is available at all sites. Emergency vehicle available at all times.
- Participant names, addresses, details, permission forms, medical forms are held by teacher / group representative at activity site
- Any special medical issues are known by teacher / group representative and any students with potential medical conditions are monitored during the activity
- High Ropes Course sessions are weather dependent and therefore in periods of extreme temperatures or high winds activity will not take place.
- A school / group representative will need to be at the high ropes course site. In the event that a school / group representative is not available to be at the high ropes course site the activity will be cancelled and schools / groups will be liable for any associated costs.
- A person will be nominated to monitor the behaviour of students at the high ropes course site, the high ropes course leader will direct the activities of the participants.
- All teachers / group representatives / assistants to the instructor will be briefed on the emergency strategy and supervision responsibilities should the lead instructor become incapacitated for any reason. This person would be expected to seek appropriate assistance if required.



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## RISK ASSESSMENT - HIGH ROPES (INCL LEAP OF FAITH) & INITIATIVES

The list below incorporates some of the risks associated with high ropes & initiatives.

Please note: the list below is not all encompassing and some associated risks may not have been identified.

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating		
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood
Fall from height leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thorough briefing on correct belay practice.</li><li>• Participants climbing the high ropes are connected to a safety line at all times.</li><li>• Direct supervision of participants at all times by group leaders.</li><li>• All participants and observers to wear correctly fitted helmets and harnesses.</li><li>• Silverband Lodge lead instructor to have adequate qualification and induction to high ropes activities.</li></ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Rare</b>
Participant misplaces footing causing the participant to slip or trip leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correct closed footwear is to be worn.</li><li>• Participants are made aware of potential dangers</li><li>• The designated "safe zone" chosen will be flat and large enough to accommodate the entire group comfortably.</li></ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Likely</b>
Participant or staff member is stung or bitten by ant, bee, spider etc., and leading to swelling or anaphylactic reaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure group leaders are aware of any allergies, specifically anaphylactic students.</li><li>• Medications should be carried at all times in close proximity to participant.</li><li>• Evacuation procedure should be well known by staff.</li><li>• Communications will be carried and available at all times.</li></ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Likely</b>
Participant becomes entangled in belay caused by loose hair, clothing or jewellery leading to injury and panic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants to remove all jewellery prior to activity.</li><li>• Participants to tie back long hair prior to activity.</li><li>• Clothing to be tucked in</li><li>• Ensure belay devices are free of potential entanglements prior to each climb.</li><li>• Participants made aware of the potential dangers.</li></ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>
Fear / Psychological Damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the participant 'freezes' on the leap of faith it is normally possible to talk them through.</li><li>• Pre-activity planning will consider if at height elements, including the leap of faith, is suitable for the maturity and ability of the group.</li><li>• Full body harnesses are worn by instructors at all times and rescue equipment set close by to ensure rescues will be conducted efficiently.</li></ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Likely</b>



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## RISK ASSESSMENT - HIGH ROPES (INCL LEAP OF FAITH) &amp; INITIATIVES

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating		
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood
Object falls from height leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach calls to warn of objects falling and appropriate protective response.</li> <li>Ensure students shoes laces are done up and fastened</li> <li>Helmets must be worn at all times.</li> <li>Instructors will set up systems before group arrives.</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>
Student belay skills are inadequate and cause an accident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure proper technique is taught and understood.</li> <li>Direct supervision should be present for participants not confident in their ability.</li> <li>Instructor must be in visual contact with all belaying groups</li> <li>Instructor should directly supervise all descents.</li> <li>Second and third belayer must be used.</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>
Participant misbehaves causing potential danger to themselves and/or the entire group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are briefed and made aware of potential dangers within the environment.</li> <li>Behavioural expectations of participants are fully explained.</li> <li>Group leaders / assisting leaders to assist as per camp supervision protocols.</li> <li>In the event of no support, or behaviour that endangers the group, cancellation of the activity</li> <li>In the case that behaviour creates a situation where anyone is put in a potentially dangerous situation, the activity will be cancelled.</li> <li>The lead instructor will be responsible for deciding if circumstances are such that the activity cannot be conducted in a safe manner.</li> <li>If this decision is made the activity will be stopped immediately.</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>
Damaged equipment causing failure of system or safety gear, leading to injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All ropes are checked by the instructor immediately prior to the activity taking place</li> <li>All equipment is thoroughly checked weekly as per scheduled maintenance checks.</li> <li>A log of use of equipment is maintained.</li> <li>Annual Ropes Course inspection to be carried out by licenced Industry expert</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Rare</b>
Strong winds leading to discomfort and potential injury to participant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review weather condition prior to activity.</li> <li>Assess students' ability to cope with increasingly difficult conditions</li> <li>Cancel activity if appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>
Exposure to extreme weather conditions including wet, cold and wind or heat & sun causing discomfort and potentially leading to illness such as hypothermia,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review weather conditions prior to activity</li> <li>Monitor temperature and shorten, relocate or adjust activity as required</li> <li>Ensure adequate fluid intake</li> <li>Ensure appropriate, adequate clothing and protection against elements is worn before and during activity</li> <li>Observe participant's condition during activity.</li> <li>Consideration of wind chill factor if wind is present</li> </ul>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Likely</b>



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## RISK ASSESSMENT - HIGH ROPES (INCL LEAP OF FAITH) & INITIATIVES

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating		
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood
hyperthermia, sun burn, heat exhaustion or heat stroke.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cancel activity if conditions are such that activity cannot be conducted safely and participation will place participants in extreme danger.</li></ul>			

### **Site Assessment:**

Silverband Lodge has 2 High Ropes Courses. Both High Ropes Courses were professionally built by Ropes Courses Unlimited and are checked annually to adhere to CRC stands. The first course was constructed during November 1999. The course was revamped and rebuilt in November 2009. The second course was constructed during April 2003. Both were constructed using the most up to date technology. The courses are a series of individual elements, including a Leap of Faith, using a ground belay system. The High Ropes Course is used only under the supervision of qualified Silverband lodge High Ropes Course instructors.

The group's prior experience and current abilities will determine the amount of time spent on the activity, depending on group size and prior experience. In the case of an emergency or extreme weather conditions, the high ropes courses are located onsite where access to communications and external assistance is readily available.

Silverband conducts initiative activities onsite. All Silverband Lodge initiatives instructors have prior knowledge and experience of the local and surrounding area. In the case of an emergency or extreme weather conditions, these sites provide high level of access to communications and external assistance if required.