



SILVERBAND LODGE ACTIVITY PLAN

ROCK CLIMBING



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.

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Activity Outline and Method

2. ENVIRONMENT **P 1-2**

Rock Environments	p 1
Location	p 1
Communication	p 2
Weather	p 2
Transportation	p 2

3. ACTIVITY **P 2-4**

Student Skills	p 2
Equipment	p 3
Clothing	p 4
Identification	p 4

4. PEOPLE **P 5 -7**

Staff	p 5
Experience and Qualifications	p 5
Supervision	p 6
Informed Consent	p 7
First Aid	p 7

5. RISKS **P 9-12**

Risk Register Matrix	p 9
Emergency Strategy	p 12

1. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Rock climbing is an adventure activity that offers mental and physical challenges.

The aims of Rock climbing are to;

- Accept and overcome challenge
- Extend personal boundaries
- 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

Rock climbing is generally conducted in half day sessions approximately 3 hrs long; either a morning or afternoon session

1. School staff / group representative must meet with their group at the designated area and time to be transported to the rock climbing site either by Silverband Lodge or the schools / groups own transport.
2. On arrival at the car park of the site you will be met by the Rockclimbing Instructor and 5-10 minutes will be spent briefing the participants about the nature and rationale of rock climbing as a challenge activity and what is expected from participants.
3. Participants will be briefed and fitted with personal equipment – harness and helmet
4. The Rock climbing Instructor will check each participant's equipment individually before heading to the foot of the cliff.
5. The Rock climbing Instructor will brief participants on safety of being in rock environments, appropriate clothing, action to be taken in the event of something falling from the cliff and methods of communication to be used during the activity.
6. Belay method will be thoroughly explained and demonstrated to all participants.
7. Participants will be given the opportunity to ask questions.
8. Participants will be required to demonstrate the correct belay technique before individuals will be allowed to belay a climber. Participants belaying will be closely supervised.
9. There will be roughly 2hrs to be directly involved in rock climbing, taking turns in rock climbing and observing. Depending on group size and conditions, participants may receive the opportunity to have an abseil if that is included in the session. All participants will be encouraged to participate to the extent of their own ability.

Approximately 15 minutes will be allowed at the end of the session for returning equipment, and a brief discussion on participant learnings.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Silverband Lodge conducts Rock climbing on real rock faces. All Silverband Lodge Rock Climbing Instructors have prior knowledge and experience of the local and surrounding area and are aware of the following information.

ROCK ENVIRONMENTS

The Rock Climbing Instructor will assess and inspect the designated climbing site and determine the appropriateness of the activity proceeding with regard to weather and other variables. If conditions deem the site unsafe, the activity will be either cancelled or relocated.

LOCATION

Rock climbing is conducted at several locations close to Halls Gap;

Location	Distance	Facilities	Bus Accessible	Distance from parking	Mobile Coverage
Grand Canyon	5kms from Halls Gap	Yes	Yes	500m	Yes
Watchtower Cliff	3kms North Halls Gap	No	Yes	300m	Yes
Bundaleer	12km west Halls Gap	No	Yes	300m	Yes
Summer Day Valley	35km North Halls Gap	Yes	Yes	700m	Yes

These locations are popular climbing sites and are preferred sites recommended by Parks Victoria. Any permits or notification to management will be made by Silverband Lodge.

These sites have been selected based on the following:

- Easy access to top and bottom of the climb
- Free from hazards
- Anchors are sound, obvious and easily accessible
- Climbs are of a suitable grade
- Safe, flat area for people not participating and for easy group management.
- Proximity to facilities and road access

The group's prior experience and current abilities will determine the site selection. Sites are chosen to give participants a chance to learn proper technique and gain confidence. Time spent will vary, depending on group size and prior experience.

COMMUNICATION

In the case of an emergency or extreme weather conditions, these sites provide a high level of access to communications and external assistance if required. There may be limited service at some sites but instructors will always be able to reach Emergency Services.

In the case of an incident at the rock climbing site, Silverband Lodge site based staff will be notified 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. Rock climbing is a weather dependent activity and therefore on days of extreme temperatures, high winds or very wet/cold conditions, the activity will not take place. It will be the responsibility of the Rock climbing Instructor to use his/her professional judgment to make this decision.

On **Days of Total Fire Ban** all groups will be required to remain on site.

TRANSPORTATION

In the case that Silverband Lodge will be transporting participants, transportation will adhere to the DET Vic. Guidelines and regulations.

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).
- Action to be taken in the event of something falling from the cliff.
- Protection of the natural environment and minimal impact practices.
- A discussion of the nature and rationale of challenge activities.
- Methods of communication to be used during the activity between climber and belayer.
- Sufficient information for participants to act in the case of emergency.

On conclusion of each rock climbing 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 Device: ensure participants can correctly manage steps of belaying

The Rock climbing 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 steps for safely belaying
- The position of the participants hands in relation to the belay device.
- Show the safety system and explain how it works.

EQUIPMENT

All Rock climbing Instructors are familiar with the safe use and maintenance of equipment used for rock climbing sessions.

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

- Immediately prior to commencing the activity
- Thoroughly each week as part of the maintenance schedule
- And a log of use of equipment is maintained

It is the responsibility of the Rock climbing 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 rock climbing site.

Ropes and Protective Equipment

All ropes and protective equipment (karabiners, slings, chocks, belay devices) are manufactured specifically for rock climbing and are used in accordance to manufacturers specifications.

System Setup

A minimum of three secure anchors are used for each climb setup. The 'heart' of the system is secured via 2 steel karabiners. Participants are connected into the system with a standard rethreaded figure of 8 knot. All Rock climbing Instructors are trained in the technique of facilitating an emergency rescue.

FIRST AID KITS

Rock climbing 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 climbing activity, participants will;

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

IDENTIFICATION

It is the responsibility of the user group 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 Rock climbing 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 school/group representative must be present at the activity at all times. In the event that a teacher/school/group representative is not available to be at the rock climbing site, the activity will be cancelled and schools/groups will be liable for any associated costs.

While Rock climbing Instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teacher/school/group representative will have overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students. The teacher/school/group representative will act on the advice of the Rock climbing Instructor regarding technical safety issues.

It is the responsibility of the accompanying teacher/school/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 **Rock Climbing Instructors** will either hold the following unit of competency from the Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package July 2019 or demonstrate equivalent experience:

Guide Top Rope Climbing Activities on Natural Surfaces SISOCLN304A

This will ensure Instructors are competent in:

- Instructing rock climbing in variable conditions.
- Their own ability and fitness to manage the activity.
- Providing support to climbers.
- Managing groups in outdoor settings.

And have knowledge of:

- Two rock climbing locations, including the one to be used
- Set up of secure and efficient top rope systems
- Rescue skills and techniques, including self-rescue relevant to single-pitch situations
- Site choice in relation to safety, environmental factors and outcome for the participant
- Rock climbing techniques
- Obtaining local weather forecasts and knowledge of specific local weather patterns
- Environmental and land-management issues

Responsibility of the Rock Climbing Instructor

The Rock Climbing 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.
- 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 / group representative / assisting instructor 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 Rock Climbing Instructor which may include monitoring the welfare and fitness of participants, assisting the Rock Climbing Instructor, first aid responsibility, the supervision and behavior of observers and adhering to safety instructions.

Assistant to the Instructor (may be the teacher/group/school 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 rock climbing sites are suitable for both primary and secondary age participants.

A minimum of two staff must be present for rock climbing. One staff member will be required to have the above qualifications as Rock Climbing Instructor and one Assisting Instructor, who will be either a staff representative of the school / group or another qualified instructor.

Single-pitch top belay	
Staff numbers	Student numbers
2	Up to 12
3	13–18
4	19–24
Single-pitch ground belay	
Staff numbers	Student numbers
2	1–12
3	13–18
4	19–24

Each rope/belay must be in close proximity and these ratios for one climber with a belayer and a backup belayer per rope/belay system.

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 representative 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/school/group representative to the activity.

FIRST AID

The Silverband Lodge staff 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/school representatives will be responsible for all student medical forms and for ensuring medical forms and any medications are taken to activity venue

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 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.

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
- Rock climbing is weather dependent and therefore in periods of extreme temperatures or high winds activity will not take place.
- Students not participating in rock climbing will be required to stay at camp unless schools/groups arrange for a staff member to be at the rock climbing site with the non-participating student/s.
- A school representative will need to be at the rock climbing site. In the event that a school/group representative is unavailable to be at the rock climbing 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 rock climbing site, the Rock Climbing Instructor will direct the activities of the rock climbers.
- All teachers / group/school 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.

RISK ASSESSMENT - ROCK CLIMBING & ABSEILING

The list below incorporates some of the risks associated with rock climbing & abseiling.

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
Participants fall from height leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-activity safety briefing on belay systems and cliff environment. Adequately qualified staff run all activities with approved instructor ratios. Direct supervision of students at all times by user group staff. All participants must wear correctly fitted helmets and harnesses. Participants will be briefed to remain at least two metres from the cliff edge. Anyone who is operating within two metres of the cliff edge must be on belay or tethered to a secure anchor. No persons will be present on top of the cliff face if they are not directly involved in abseiling. The Abseil Instructor is responsible to ensure participants are aware of the dangers and group leader / assistant will be responsible for ensuring participants remain in "safety zone" 	Satisfactory	Major	Rare
Participant misplaces footing causing the participant to slip or trip leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct footwear is to be worn. Participants are made aware of potential dangers All participants will remain in the designated "safe zone" when not immediately involved in the abseil. The designated "safe zone" chosen will be flat and large enough to accommodate the entire group comfortably. It is the responsibility of the Abseil Instructor to ensure the group understands the "safe zone" and the responsibility of the group leader / assistant instructor to ensure participants remain in the "safe zone" while not directly involved in the abseil. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Likely
Participant becomes entangled in descender caused by loose hair, clothing or jewellery leading to injury and panic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to remove all jewellery prior to activity. Participants to tie back long hair prior to abseiling. Clothing to be tucked in Ensure belay devices are free of potential entanglements prior to each abseil. Participants made aware of the potential dangers. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely

RISK ASSESSMENT - ROCK CLIMBING & ABSEILING

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating		
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood
Object (including rock) falls from cliff caused by loose rock or unsecure objects leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review site for loosed rock prior to abseiling. Do not drag ropes or other equipment which may dislodge rocks. Teach calls to warn of rock fall and appropriate protective response. Helmets must be worn at all times. Abseil Instructor will set up system before group arrives. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely
Excessive speed while descending causing rope burn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct and appropriate belay system will be used to ensure slow decent. Briefing will thoroughly explain the descending system to ensure participants understand how to control speed on their descent. Back up belay system will be in place and operated by qualified staff. Leather gloves are offered to participants to avoid rope burn. 	Satisfactory	Insignificant	Rare
Participant misbehaves causing potential danger to themselves and/or the entire group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are briefed and made aware of potential dangers within the rock environment. Behavioural expectations of participants are fully explained. Group leaders/assisting leaders to assist as per camp supervision protocols. In the event of no support, or behaviour that endangers the group, cancellation of the activity In the case that behaviour creates a situation where anyone is put in a potentially dangerous situation, the activity will be cancelled. The Abseil Instructor will be responsible for deciding if circumstances are such that the activity cannot be conducted in a safe manner. If this decision is made the activity will be stopped immediately. 	Satisfactory	Major	Unlikely
Damaged equipment causing failure of system or safety gear, leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ropes are checked by the Abseil Instructor immediately prior to the activity taking place All equipment is thoroughly checked weekly and as per scheduled maintenance checks. A log of use of equipment is maintained. All equipment meets relevant Australian Standards 	Satisfactory	Major	Rare
Poorly fitting safety equipment leading to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are briefed on how to correctly fit all safety equipment prior to abseiling. Each participant's gear is individually checked before leaving to go to cliff site to ensure proper fit. A range of sizes are available and in good condition. All equipment meets relevant Australian Standards 	Satisfactory	Moderate	Rare
Strong winds leading to discomfort and potential injury to participant's while abseiling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review weather condition prior to activity. Assess students' ability to cope with increasingly difficult conditions Cancel activity if appropriate. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely

RISK ASSESSMENT - ROCK CLIMBING & ABSEILING

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating		
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood
Exposure to extreme weather conditions including wet, cold and windy or heat and sun causing discomfort and potentially leading to illness such as hyperthermia, extreme sun burn, heat exhaustion or heat stroke.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review weather conditions prior to activity Monitor temperature and shorten, relocate or adjust activity as required Ensure adequate fluid intake Ensure appropriate, adequate clothing and protection against elements is worn before and during activity Observe participant's condition during activity. Consideration of wind chill factor if wind is present Cancel activity if conditions are such that activity cannot be conducted safely and participation will place participants in extreme danger. 	Satisfactory	Moderate	Likely
Participant or staff member is stung or bitten by ant, bee, spider etc, leading to swelling or anaphylactic reaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff are aware of any allergies, specifically anaphylactic students. Medications should be carried at all times in close proximity to participant. Evacuation procedure should be well known by staff. Communications will be carried and available at all times. Silverband Emergency Management Plan procedures will be followed. 	Satisfactory	Major	Unlikely

Site Assessments:

Rock Climbing and Abseiling is conducted at several locations close to Halls Gap.

These popular locations are preferred sites recommended by Parks Victoria. Parks Victoria guidance on the safety of these sites will be taken into account prior to use as per the conditions of our Licensed Tour Operators Certificate.

These sites have been selected based on the following:

- The soundness of and safe access to anchor points
- Take-off point is easily accessible and enables comfortable decent
- Belay points are higher than take off point
- Rock faces with easy angled slopes
- Safe, flat area below and on top of the abseil for people not participating and for easy group management.
- Proximity to facilities and road access

The group's prior experience and current abilities will determine the site selection. Sites are chosen to give participants a chance to learn proper technique and gain confidence. Time spent will vary, depending on group size and prior experience.

Location	Distance	Activity	Facilities	Bus Accessible	Distance from parking	Mobile Coverage
Delley's Bridge	1km North Halls Gap	Abseil	No	Yes	500m	Yes
Grand Canyon	5kms from Halls Gap	Rock Climbing & Abseiling	Yes	Yes	500m	Yes
Watchtower Cliff	3kms North Halls Gap	Rock Climbing & Abseiling	No	Yes	300m	Yes
Summer Day Valley	55km North Halls Gap	Rock Climbing & Abseiling	Yes	Yes	700m	Yes
Bundaleer	12 km	Rock Climbing & Abseiling	No	Yes	400m	Yes



RISK ASSESSMENT - ROCK CLIMBING & ABSEILING

Transport:

In the case that Silverband lodge will be transporting participants, transportation will adhere to the VICROADS licensing and registration requirements and DET guidelines and regulations. Supervision of participants while in transit is the responsibility of the visiting groups teachers / leaders.

Silverband lodge will ensure that an appropriate form of communication is available at all activity locations. While in transportation to Bundaleer mobile coverage may drop in and out. Communication with emergency services is ready available.