

VINEY HILL CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE CENTRE

RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

HIGH ROPES ACTIVITIES

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DOCUMENT APPROVAL

Review	Reviewed By	Approved	Signature	Next review due
All Sections	Jon Holden Centre manager	Jun 2026		Jan 2027

1.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Required standard
Local safety management document	This document supports, but does not replace, competent technical judgement by the Centre Manager, Senior Instructor, technical adviser and instructor on the day.
Competence and authorisation	High ropes activities may only be led by staff who are competent, current, first aid trained and signed off for the specific element and operating system being used.
Challenge by choice	Participants should be encouraged but never coerced. The educational value of the activity must not depend on tolerating avoidable risk or distress.
Stop condition	The activity must stop, be adapted or be replaced if staff competence, ratios, PPE, rescue equipment, weather, participant behaviour, medical suitability, inspection status or supervision cannot be assured.
Inspections and records	Pre-use visual checks, periodic competent inspections, annual external inspections, PPE records, defects, quarantined equipment, incidents, near misses and rescue practices must be recorded.
Safeguarding and public control	The HRC area is controlled by staff. Non-participants and visitors must remain outside the operational area unless helmeted and directly supervised.
Compatibility	Only approved PPE and systems compatible with the course, manufacturer instructions and the local operating procedures may be used.
Review trigger	Review this document after any fall, suspension incident, rescue, PPE defect, equipment drop, participant injury, near miss, inspection failure, manufacturer safety notice or change in national/technical guidance.

DYNAMIC OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Trigger	Required response
Stop / do not start IF	Lightning or thunder is forecast/observed; wind is outside site limits or makes control/rescue unreliable; snow/ice/fog/torrential rain makes the course unsafe; PPE/rescue kit/first aid/communication is missing; the course has not been checked; a participant cannot understand or follow critical safety instructions; a harness or helmet cannot be fitted correctly.
Pause and reassess IF	Participant becomes distressed, cold, exhausted, ill or suspended for longer than expected; ropes cross/tangle; belay station becomes disorganised; public enter the area; equipment behaves unexpectedly; a near miss or dropped object occurs.
Emergency escalation	Stop all affected elements, make the scene safe, account for all participants, provide first aid/rescue, call 999 if required, contact the Centre, preserve equipment after serious incidents and complete incident/near-miss review before re-use.

2.0 PARTICIPANT & PUBLIC SAFETY

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Scope	Applies to all High Ropes Challenge activities at Cross Meadow, including climbing wall, abseil, QuickJump/freefall, Gladiator Challenge, Jacobs Ladder, All Aboard and Leap of Faith.
Minimum lead competence	ERCA Instructor Award for the HRC or element-specific sign-off by the Centre Manager/Senior Instructor/Technical Adviser, with appropriate climbing/ropes qualification where used; current first aid; current site induction.
Assistant competence	In-house trained and approved assistants may support group management, belaying and ground supervision only within their signed-off role and under the lead instructor.
Ratio and supervision	Default maximum: 1 instructor to 12 participants plus responsible adult, with lower ratios for SEND, disabled groups, challenging behaviour, multiple elements, poor weather or new staff. Maximum 4 groups may operate on the HRC at one time if supervision remains effective.
Admission controls	Minimum age 8 years, minimum height 1.1m, maximum weight 120kg unless manufacturer/site limits are stricter. No participation under the influence of alcohol/drugs, with recent fractures, where harness cannot fit correctly, or where critical instructions cannot be followed.
Medical controls	Review medical forms and current injuries. Pregnancy, heart/spinal conditions and other relevant medical concerns require conservative decisions, especially for QuickJump/freefall and high-impact/dynamic elements.
PPE	Centre-approved helmet and harness for all participants. Chest harness/additional connector used where required by element/SOP. Instructor checks fit and attachment before ascent and re-checks after breaks or removal.
Location	Purpose-built High Ropes Challenge at Cross Meadow. Access controlled via designated gates/routes; reception/instructor mobile for communications; emergency access through double gate.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Fall from height	Participants Staff	Potential fatal or serious injury.	Only signed-off staff operate elements. Correct helmet/harness fitted and checked. Approved attachment systems used. Instructor controls critical clipping/tie-in/lowering. Belay stations briefed, supervised and backed up. No participant starts until instructor confirms system is safe.	Low/ Medium
Incorrect PPE fit or incorrect attachment	Participants	Harness inversion, fall, suspension or injury.	Instructor fits/checks harness and helmet. Long hair tied back, jewellery/loose items removed, clothing suitable. Chest harness or additional connector used where specified. Attachment checked by instructor before leaving ground/platform.	Low
Dropped objects/equipment falling from height	Participants Staff Public	Head injury or serious impact.	Helmets worn by all inside HRC. Loose items removed from pockets. Equipment clipped/controlled. Non-participants outside drop zones. Staff manage tower/platform items and do not leave kit unsecured.	Low

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Belay error, slack rope or rope crossing	Participants Belayers	Longer fall, impact with structure or ineffective lowering.	Belay demonstration and practice before use. Belayers clipped into station where applicable. Instructor tails ropes, supervises continuously and performs all lowering except where SOP allows otherwise. Ropes kept tight; backup knots/friction used at specified points.	Low/ Medium
Panic, refusal, emotional distress or freezing at height	Participants	Distress, delayed rescue, unsafe movement.	Challenge by choice explained. Instructor uses calm coaching, avoids pressure and initiates rescue/lower-off where required. Group briefed to encourage without pressuring.	Low/ Medium
Medical event at height	Participants	Deterioration while suspended or on platform.	Medical information reviewed before activity. Participation adapted or refused where risk is unacceptable. Rescue kit and trained rescue staff available. Emergency plan known.	Low/ Medium
Weather exposure: lightning, wind, snow/ice, fog, heat/cold	Participants Staff	Loss of control, slips, hypothermia/heat illness, lightning strike.	Weather checked before and during session. Course closes for thunder/lightning, snow/ice, thick fog, high wind or torrential rain. Wait at least 40 minutes after last thunder/lightning before resuming. Clothing/hydration/sun protection managed.	Low
Structural failure, hidden defect or vandalism	Participants Staff	Serious/fatal injury.	Pre-use visual checks by instructor, quarterly competent inspection, annual external inspection, manufacturer updates implemented, defects isolated and recorded. Course remains locked/derigged when not in use.	Low
Unauthorised access	Participants Public	Unsupervised fall or injury.	Perimeter fencing, locked tower, removed access holds/sections, derigging and secure storage. Instructor controls gate/stairs/platform access.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Pre-session authorisation	Confirm group size, ages, medical/SEND needs, activity elements, staffing, instructor sign-off, rescue competence and responsible adult role. Check booking information and communicate admission controls to group leader.
2. Opening checks	Complete opening checks: course visual inspection, ground conditions, weather, PPE, rescue kit, first aid, communication, security gates and element-specific setup. Do not open an element with defects or missing rescue arrangements.
3. Participant briefing	Explain boundaries, helmets, harnesses, no loose items, hair/jewellery, listening to instructions, challenge by choice, belay rules, platform rules, what to do if worried/stuck and stop signals.
4. PPE fitting and checking	Fit helmet and harness. Check waist/leg loops, buckles, helmet chinstrap and suitability of clothing. Re-check after toilet/rest breaks or if PPE is removed or adjusted.
5. Delivery	Use one element per group unless supervision remains effective. Instructor positions to see and control critical points. Belay/lower-off and attachment checks remain under instructor control.
6. End of session	Account for participants, remove PPE, inspect kit, quarantine defects, record incidents/near misses, secure/derig elements and update logs.

3.0 OPENING, CLOSING, SECURITY & INSPECTION

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Opening responsibility	In general, facility opened by two competent instructors. Opening checks include course visual inspection, PPE, rescue equipment, first aid station, communications, weather, access/security and element setup.
Inspection regime	Pre-use visual inspection before each session; quarterly inspection by competent persons holding ERCA Maintenance and Inspection Certificate; annual external inspection; manufacturer safety updates implemented.
PPE records	PPE logged, visually checked before use, inspected at least 6-monthly by competent PPE inspector or more frequently if required by use/manufacturer/exceptional event. Defective or contaminated PPE quarantined.
Security	Course derigged/secured after sessions. Tower door locked, perimeter fencing/gates secured, climbing wall fencing replaced, holds/sections for Leap/All Aboard/Jacobs/Gladiator removed or secured where applicable.
Environmental closure	Close during high winds, lightning/thunder, snow, ice, thick fog, torrential rain or any condition affecting rescue/communication or footing. Wait at least 40 minutes after last thunder/lightning before reopening.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Opening by insufficient staff	Participants Staff	Unsafe work at height, missed checks.	Use two instructors where required; tasks at height outside normal operation undertaken by minimum two instructors. Follow site setup method and belay ladder access where specified.	Low
Missed defect during opening	Participants Staff	Use of damaged structure/PPE.	Structured opening checklist; visual inspection of course, anchors, ropes, gates, ground and rescue equipment. Defects isolate element/course.	Low
Unauthorised use after hours	Public Guests	Unsupervised fall/injury.	Derig, lock tower, secure gates/fencing, remove access holds/sections and secure equipment store.	Low
PPE contamination or degradation	Participants Staff	Equipment failure or skin/chemical issue.	Quarantine PPE affected by chemicals, sunscreen, insect repellent, bodily fluids or exceptional events; inspect before re-use. Store clean, dry, away from sunlight.	Low
Weather changes during session	Participants Staff	Slips, loss of control, lightning risk.	Monitor weather continuously. Stop and evacuate before conditions become unsafe; do not wait until rescue becomes difficult.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Pre-opening	Confirm staff competence and rescue cover. Check weather forecast and current conditions. Review bookings, ratios, medical/admission issues and elements to be used.
2. Site opening	Unlock access, check perimeter, ground conditions, tower access, gates, signage and exclusion zones. Remove/replace security fences and removable elements only using approved method.
3. Equipment checks	Check PPE, belay devices, ropes, connectors, slings, first aid station, rescue kit and communication. Quarantine defects immediately.
4. Operational monitoring	Monitor elements, belay stations, platforms, weather, participant condition and public access throughout session.
5. Closing	Derig/secure all elements, replace fences/locks, remove access sections, store PPE dry and tidy, update records and report defects/incidents.

4.0 RESCUE & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Rescue competence	During operation, an instructor with ERCA Generic Rescue Award or site-approved rescue competence must be available. Rescue practice takes place periodically and after equipment/procedure changes.
Rescue kit	Rescue kit checked, stored ready for immediate use and inspected by competent PPE inspectors.
First aid and emergency access	First aid station checked before opening. Emergency services can access via double gate; staff know location and access route.
Suspension and casualty care	Rescue prioritises rapid safe recovery, airway/breathing/circulation, protection from further harm and prevention of prolonged suspension.
Reporting	Serious incidents may require RIDDOR reporting and equipment/scene preservation. Centre Manager/Senior Instructor to decide with trustees/technical adviser as required.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Stage	Procedure
1. Stop and secure	Instructor calls stop, secures belay/element, prevents further participants starting and accounts for the group.
2. Assess	Identify casualty location, consciousness, breathing, injury mechanism, suspension time and immediate danger. Do not rush into a rescue that creates further casualties.
3. Rescue/lower	Competent rescue instructor uses approved rescue system. Maintain communication and reassurance. Lower/evacuate casualty to safe area if safe to do so.
4. First aid	Administer first aid. Treat suspected spinal injury, head injury, fracture, breathing difficulty, chest pain, shock or prolonged suspension as serious.
5. Call 999	Call 999 for serious injury/illness, unconsciousness, suspected spinal injury, rescue beyond staff competence, prolonged suspension, significant fall or any concern. State Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre, Cross Meadow High Ropes Challenge.
6. Site control	Other groups moved away or course closed. Send staff/adult to meet emergency services. Open access gate. Keep witnesses safe and calm.
7. Aftercare and reporting	Quarantine equipment involved, preserve scene if serious, record times/actions/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor, complete incident/near-miss form and review before re-opening.

5.0 CLIMBING WALL (Sloping & Vertical)

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	Two climbing faces approximately 13m high with ground-based belay stations. Participants climb routes using holds and are lowered by the instructor when they reach the top or choose to stop.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121. Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222.
Minimum competence	CWI/ERCA with HRC in-house training, shadowing, observation and sign-off; current first aid.
PPE	Centre-approved helmet and harness. Attachment by figure of eight on bight with stopper/carabiner or rethreaded figure of eight with stopper as per SOP.
Specific controls	Bouldering/traversing restricted to agreed height, generally no more than 1m above ground with spotter. Backup knot in dead rope when climber feet reach top eye bolts/approximately 2.5m as per local SOP.
Participants at once	Up to 4 climbers at a time where belay supervision remains effective.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Bouldering/traversing too high	Participants	Fall to ground.	Clear height limit, spotter, instructor supervision; no unsupervised climbing on tower.	Low
Loose/spinning holds	Participants Staff	Falling object or fall from hold.	Visual check before use and periodic hold inspection; loose holds reported and route/area closed until addressed.	Low
Incorrect belaying/slack rope	Participants	Fall/impact.	Belay demonstration and practice; instructor tails ropes and controls lowering; backup knots/friction as SOP; belayers clipped where required.	Low/Medium
Slipping or swinging into wall	Participants	Bruising, ankle/knee impact, panic.	Route briefing, controlled ascent/descent, tight rope, slow lowering and helmets.	Low
Helmet suspension/entanglement while lowering	Participants	Neck/throat injury or distress.	Slow lowering, visual monitoring of climber, hair/jewellery control, rescue training and immediate stop if entangled.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Setup	Inspect wall, holds, anchors, ropes, belay devices, ground area and rescue kit. Close off any damaged route.
2. Briefing	Explain climbing boundary, belay team roles, no climbing until told, no loose items, safe descent and communication.
3. Climbing	Instructor attaches/checks participants, maintains supervision of belay station and rope tension, limits bouldering height and manages one route at a time per belay station.
4. Lowering	Instructor controls lowering. Check landing zone clear and lower slowly, watching for helmet/hair/clothing entanglement.
5. Close	Remove ropes or secure according to closing procedure; inspect PPE and record defects.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

6.0 ABSEILING

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	Vertical abseil face shared with QuickJump. QuickJump and abseiling must not take place at the same time. Maximum 2 participants abseiling at a time from the internal tower access, with instructor controlling safety rope.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121 . Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222 .
Minimum competence	ERCA/CWI or equivalent with site-specific abseil sign-off, releasable system competence and current first aid.
PPE	Helmet and approved harness. Hair tied back and loose clothing/jewellery controlled. Use additional harness/chest system if required by local SOP.
Specific controls	Abseil rigged as releasable; safety rope controlled by instructor at all times; top gate/platform controlled; landing area kept clear.
Participants at once	Maximum 2 participants at a time, only where supervision and rope separation are effective.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Hair, clothing or fingers caught in descender	Participants	Entrapment, burns, panic.	Releasable abseil system; clear demo; hair tied back; hands positioned correctly; instructor controls safety rope and monitors descent.	Low
Participant lets go or descends too fast	Participants	Fall or impact.	Safety rope controlled by instructor at all times; speed controlled; participant never relies solely on own braking ability.	Low
Slip/impact on wall	Participants	Bruising, ankle or knee injury.	Demonstrate body position and descent; slow controlled lower if needed; helmets worn.	Low
Awkward landing	Participants Staff	Sprains/falls.	Landing zone clear, descent speed controlled, instructions on feet down/knees soft, staff monitor bottom area.	Low
Concurrent QuickJump use	Participants Staff	Collision/confusion.	Abseiling and QuickJump never operate simultaneously on shared face; clear signage/communication.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Setup	Confirm QuickJump not operating. Rig abseil and safety rope as approved releasable system. Check anchors, ropes, devices, rescue kit and landing zone.
2. Briefing	Demonstrate descent, hand positions, feet/body posture, communication, landing and what to do if hair/clothing becomes caught.
3. Top control	Control stair/tower gate access. Attach/check participants before approaching edge. Maintain calm, challenge-by-choice approach.
4. Descent	Instructor controls safety rope and descent speed. Stop immediately if entanglement or distress occurs.
5. Close	Derig or secure ropes, inspect devices/ropes and record defects or incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

7.0 FREEFALL

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	QuickJump/freefall uses the vertical face shared with abseiling. Participant climbs internal tower, is attached to the QuickJump device and steps from the platform, experiencing a short freefall before controlled descent.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121. Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222.
Minimum competence	ERCA/specific QuickJump operational sign-off, manufacturer guidance familiarisation and current first aider.
PPE	Approved harness and helmet; if separate chest harness used, sling connector also used as specified. All attachment checks completed by instructor.
Specific controls	Participant weight must be within manufacturer/site limits, currently 20-120kg. Device visually checked before use and inspected/serviced in line with manufacturer requirements.
Participants at once	1 participant at a time. Abseil not operated simultaneously on shared face.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Participant outside weight range	Participant	Device may not function correctly.	Check weight range before participation; do not use if outside 20-120kg or manufacturer/site limit. Sacels at bottom of tower.	Low
Device malfunction or overdue inspection	Participant	Serious/fatal injury.	Pre-use visual check; quarterly checks; external/manufacturer inspection/service as required; remove from use if defect, abnormal behaviour or overdue inspection.	Low
Incorrect clipping to harness	Participant	Fall or serious injury.	Only trained signed-off instructor attaches device; verbal/visual buddy check by instructor; attachment point and connector checked before jump.	Low
Participant grabs platform/structure or hesitates	Participant; instructor	Arm/shoulder injury, collision or distress.	Clear commitment briefing: step/jump away, arms position, do not grab. Instructor manages readiness and can decline participation.	Low/Medium
Awkward landing	Participant	Ankle/knee injury.	Demonstrate landing position, keep landing area clear, supervise descent and stop others entering drop zone.	Low
Dropped item from tower	Participants Staff	Head injury.	Loose items removed; helmets; tower kept tidy; no phones/items on platform unless controlled by staff.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Setup	Confirm abseil face is not in use. Check device, attachment, landing zone, rescue kit, communication and inspection/service status.
2. Admission check	Check age/height/weight, medical concerns, harness fit, confidence and understanding. Refuse where limits or safety instructions cannot be met.
3. Briefing	Explain what will happen, position, stepping/jumping commitment, no grabbing, landing posture and stop procedure.
4. Attachment and jump	Instructor attaches device, conducts final check and controls access to edge. Participant jumps only on instructor command.
5. Close	Record any abnormal device behaviour, participant injury/distress or near miss. Remove device from use if there is any doubt.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

8.0 GLADIATOR CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	Up to 4 participants climb a vertical obstacle course of ladders, tyres and cargo net before being lowered to the ground by the instructor.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121. Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222.
Minimum competence	ERCA/CWI with Gladiator site-specific sign-off and current first aid.
PPE	Helmet, approved harness and separate chest harness. Participants tied/attached to rope as per SOP.
Specific controls	Backup knot in dead rope when climbers hands reach the top of the bottom obstacle/ladder poles. Instructor monitors rope paths to prevent weaving and entanglement.
Participants at once	Up to 4 where ropes, belay stations and supervision remain effective.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Participants too close together	Participants	Crush injuries, fingers trapped, kicks.	Brief spacing, route discipline and communication; instructor controls progress and number on element.	Low
Entanglement through obstacles	Participants	Rope burns, trapped limbs or difficult lowering.	Brief to stay on own side, do not weave through ropes/wires, instructor monitors continuously and pauses if rope path becomes unsafe.	Low/Medium
Slack rope/rope stretch causing ground impact	Participants	Serious injury.	Instructor supervises belay and ensures no slack; backup knots as SOP; instructor controls lowering.	Low
Detached from rope or incorrect knot	Participants	Fall from height.	Instructor ties/checks approved knot/connector before ascent and rechecks if adjusted.	Low
Over-exertion	Participants	Strain, fatigue, panic.	Warm-up, suitable pacing, allow rest/withdrawal and lower-off if exhausted.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Setup	Inspect obstacle, ropes, belay devices, PPE and rescue kit. Confirm ladder/tyres/net condition.
2. Briefing	Explain route, spacing, not holding ropes/wires, avoiding entanglement, communication and lower-off.
3. Ascent	Instructor controls starts and spacing. Stop if ropes weave, participants cross lanes or group becomes overloaded.
4. Lowering	Instructor lowers individually, maintaining rope control and watching for entanglement.
5. Close	Remove/secure access sections if required and record equipment defects.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

9.0 JACOBS LADDER

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	Wire and timber ladder challenge where spacing between timbers increases with height. Participants climb cooperatively and are lowered by instructor.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121. Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222.
Minimum competence	ERCA/CWI with Jacobs Ladder site-specific sign-off and current first aid.
PPE	Helmet, harness and separate chest harness.
Specific controls	Backup knot in dead rope when climbers feet reach Pole 3; additional/replacement backup knots recommended at Poles 5 and 7 as per local SOP.
Participants at once	Up to 4 where ropes and group management remain effective.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Participants working too close	Participants	Crush/finger injuries.	Brief teamwork, spacing and safe hand placement; instructor controls progress.	Low
Entanglement between timber/rope/wire	Participants	Rope burns, trapped limbs or panic.	Participants stay on side, avoid wrapping limbs, instructor monitors rope paths and lowers if unsafe.	Low/ Medium
Slack rope/rope stretch	Participants	Impact with ground/timber.	Belay supervised, no slack, backup knots at specified heights, controlled lowering.	Low
Detached/incorrect tie-in	Participants	Fall from height.	Instructor ties/checks approved connection before ascent.	Low
Over-exertion or inability to continue	Participants	Strain/distress.	Warm-up, encourage rests, lower off promptly where needed.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Setup	Inspect timber, wires, ropes, anchors, PPE and rescue kit. Remove from use if timber/wire/attachment defect found.
2. Briefing	Explain cooperation, hand/foot placement, no pulling on other ropes, staying on own side and how to request lowering.
3. Climb	Control number on element. Tie backup knot at Pole 3 and further knots as appropriate. Maintain tight ropes.
4. Lowering	Lower slowly, monitor for limb/rope entanglement and keep landing area clear.
5. Close	Secure removable lower section and inspect/report any damage.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

10.0 ALL ABOARD

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	Vertical climbing challenge where up to 4 participants climb a fixed pole to a small platform. Participants may balance together before being lowered.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121. Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222.
Minimum competence	ERCA/CWI with All Aboard site-specific sign-off and current first aid.
PPE	Helmet, harness and separate chest harness.
Specific controls	One participant climbs the pole at a time to reduce rope crossing and collision risk; trapeze/bar secured where relevant; ropes untwisted during descent.
Participants at once	Up to 4 on element/platform if instructor judges group size and behaviour suitable.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Multiple participants climbing together	Participants	Rope crossing, collision, ineffective belay.	Instructor allows one person at a time to climb pole and controls rope lanes.	Low
Ropes crossing/twisting on descent	Participants	Entanglement, rope burns.	Brief participants to untwist ropes before/during descent; instructor manages descent one at a time if needed.	Low
Hitting pole or trapeze/bar	Participants	Impact injuries.	Check bar/trapeze secured; control lowering route; brief position and do not swing excessively.	Low
Participants holding others ropes	Participants	Rope burns, poor control.	Brief to hold own rope only and keep hands clear of moving ropes.	Low
Detached/incorrect tie-in	Participants	Fall from height.	Instructor ties/checks approved connection and chest harness integration before ascent.	Low
Over-exertion/crowding on platform	Participants	Strain, slips or panic.	Limit numbers, lower participants early if tired/distressed, maintain challenge by choice.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Setup	Inspect pole, platform, attachments, bar/trapeze, ropes, belay station and rescue kit.
2. Briefing	Explain one-person climb, platform behaviour, rope untwisting, holding own rope and descent instructions.
3. Climb/platform	Instructor manages sequence and platform numbers. Do not allow crowding or unsafe behaviour.
4. Descent	Lower under instructor control with clear rope lanes and safe landing area.
5. Close	Remove/secure holds/rungs as per security procedure and record defects.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

11.0 LEAP OF FAITH

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity description	Participant climbs a vertical pole to a platform and jumps for a trapeze bar that can be set at different distances. Activity may be done by one or two participants.
Location	High Ropes Challenge, Cross Meadow, Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre. Access via Low Ropes side route or Cross Meadow gate as appropriate.
Nearest telephone	Reception / instructor mobile / radio.
Nearest hospital	Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3HY, 0300 4212121. Major injuries: Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN, 0300 4222222.
Minimum competence	ERCA/CWI with Leap of Faith site-specific sign-off, competence in belay/lowering and current first aid.
PPE	Helmet, harness and separate chest harness.
Specific controls	One person climbs at a time. Trapeze secured before participant leaves ground. Bar position set appropriately. For double leap, participants must release together.
Participants at once	1 or 2 participants as per local SOP and instructor judgement.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Multiple participants climbing/pole collision	Participants	Rope crossing, impact or ineffective belay.	One person climbs at a time unless specifically operating double leap at platform stage; instructor controls sequence.	Low
Participant hits pole after jump	Participant	Moderate injury.	Bar placement correct, toes over platform edge, jump briefing, tight rope and controlled lower.	Low/Medium
Trapeze not secured or moves unexpectedly	Participants	Missed catch/collision.	Trapeze/bar secured before participant leaves ground; instructor checks position.	Low
Double leap participants release at different times	Participants	Wrist/arm/shoulder injury.	Clear briefing and countdown; use double leap only with suitable participants.	Low
Holding other participant ropes	Participants	Rope burns or poor control.	Brief to hold own rope only and keep clear of moving ropes.	Low
Detached/incorrect tie-in	Participants	Fall from height.	Instructor ties/checks approved connection before ascent.	Low
Fear/refusal on platform	Participant	Distress or delayed operation.	Challenge by choice; calm coaching; lower participant if they do not wish to jump.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

STAGE	PROCEDURE
1. Setup	Inspect pole, platform, trapeze/bar, ropes, belay systems and rescue kit. Set bar distance appropriate to group.
2. Briefing	Explain climb, platform, toes over edge, jump commitment, no grabbing structure, release instruction and double-leap timing if used.
3. Climb and jump	Instructor controls sequence and rope tension. Participant jumps only when safe and ready.
4. Lowering	Instructor controls lower. Watch for rope twisting and keep landing zone clear.
5. Close	Secure/remove holds/bar/low access as per security procedures and record defects.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Immediate actions	Stop the element and secure belay/rope systems. Account for participants and isolate the affected area. Do not move injured casualties unless required to prevent further harm.
Rescue	Use trained ERCA rescue/in-house rescue procedure and rescue kit. Maintain communication with casualty. Lower or evacuate under instructor/rescue lead control.
Escalation	Call 999 for serious injury, suspected spinal injury, prolonged suspension, unconsciousness, chest pain, breathing difficulty or any rescue beyond staff competence. Open emergency access gate and send a person to meet emergency services.
After incident	Quarantine involved PPE/equipment, preserve scene where appropriate, record facts/witnesses, inform Centre Manager/Senior Instructor and complete incident/near-miss review before re-opening.

12.0 CRATE STACK

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC signed-off instructor by technical adviser or appropriate CWI/RCI/ERCA/rope competence for the site-specific system; current first aid. Only authorised staff may rig/use the system.
Assistant competence	Assistants briefed on crate passing, exclusion zones, belay support and emergency roles. They do not rig or supervise belaying unless authorised.
Instructor ratio	Default 1:12 plus responsible adult, with instructor directly supervising belay/lowering and activity area. Add support for larger groups or challenging behaviour.
Location of activity	Purpose-built crate stack area at VHCAC. Vehicle barriers/gates/cones used to prevent vehicle movement into activity area.
PPE and equipment	Helmets, sit harness and chest harness where specified, ropes, connectors, belay system, crates, crate pole, exclusion barriers/signs, first aid access.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Fall from height / belay failure	Participants	Potential serious injury.	All climbers attached to safety rope before climbing. Harness, knot/carabiner and system checked by instructor. Instructor manages belay and lowering; no slack. Backup knot added at agreed height. Ground anchor/semi-direct system used as specified.	Low/ Medium
Crates/tower falling onto participants	Participants Staff	Impact injury.	Exclusion zone maintained. Crate passers stand clear after passing. Tower knocked down in a controlled manner before lowering unless instructor decides otherwise for safety. Helmets worn in area.	Low/ Medium
Landing/tripping on crates	Participants	Sprains/falls.	Landing area cleared before lowering. Loose crates kept tidy and away from walking routes.	Low
Incorrect PPE, knots or connectors	Participants	Serious injury.	Instructor conducts pre-climb checks: helmet, harnesses, tie-in, carabiners, belay device, rope path, anchors and pockets emptied.	Low
Weather, wind, thunder, tree/cable hazards	Participants Staff	Loss of control or falling objects.	Visual check of trees/cables before use. Stop for thunder/lightning, high winds or unsafe ground conditions.	Low/ Medium
Public/vehicle access to activity area	Participants Public	Collision or struck by crates.	Area fenced/roped with warning signs. Vehicle barriers/gates shut and cones used. No unauthorised access to activity area.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Authorisation	Only authorised staff rig/lead. Confirm technical adviser sign-off and that equipment is in date and recorded.
2. Set-up	Stop vehicle access, set exclusion zone, inspect trees/cables/anchors/ropes/crates and rig system as approved.
3. Briefing	Explain helmets, harness checks, belay roles, crate passing, tower collapse plan, no hard items in pockets and stop command.
4. Delivery	Instructor directly supervises belay/lowering. Limit tower to approved maximum height. Keep crate pole horizontal when not in use.
5. Lowering and reset	Clear landing area; knock tower down before lowering unless managed exception. Reset crates and re-check system regularly.
6. Close down	Remove ropes and replace pilot/tracer lines if required by procedure, sign equipment back in, report defects/incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.