

Risk Assessment: Low Ropes and Caving

Reviewed: August 2021

Next Review Date: August 2022

Assessment undertaken by: Chris Martlew, Chief Instructor

L = LOW M = MEDIUM H = HIGH

Hazards	Effects	Who is effected	Risk		Methods to Avoid/Reduce Risk
			Likelihood	Consequences	
Low Ropes					Low Ropes
Falling off element, slipping off platform	Shock, head injuries, broken limbs, cuts, bruising, grazing	Individual	H	L	Clear safety brief given by trained instructors. Instructors are to supervise and check helmets. Appropriate footwear must be worn. Bark chippings on the floor act as a fall breaker. The lead instructor is to ensure all participants are being spotted correctly.
Tripping	Minor injuries	All	H	L	Group discipline to be maintained. Clear safety brief given by instructor. No running in in the low ropes area.
Overhanging / falling branches	Head injuries, cuts, bruising	All	L	M	Correctly fitted/checked helmets. Remove overhanging/loose branches.
Damage unsuitable equipment	Cuts, grazes, rope burn, splinters, falling	All	L	M	Pre-use equipment checks carried out by instructors. Elements to be checked regularly ever 8 weeks. Equipment fitted, supervised and checked by instructors. Unserviceable equipment is dealt with accordingly. Any rough parts on the wooden elements to be sanded to prevent any splinters. Balance Beams and Elements found to be unserviceable must be labelled and brought to the attention of the senior instructor.
Weather – rain/sun	Increased potential for slipping/falling	All	L	M	Elements are to be checked prior to the session and cleaned where necessary. Participants are encouraged to wear long sleeved clothing, trousers and any further layers/waterproofs as required.
Spotters not paying attention	Falls, shock, injury	Individuals	M	M	Instructor to have clear lines of sight across whole activity. Visiting staff to assist in monitoring/spotting.
Insect bites	Stings, allergic reactions, anaphylactic shock	Individuals	L	L/M/H	Have any personal medication available.
Bird droppings	Illness, disease,	Individuals	L	M	Keep equipment clean –Wash hands after activities.

Hazards	Effects	Who might be affected	Risk	Avoid/reduce risk	
Tunnels			Likelihood	Consequences	Tunnels
Panic, fear of dark, claustrophobia	Injury to self/panic attack	Individuals	M	L	Clear safety brief given by instructor. Instructor to ensure that no participant is unduly pressured into entering the system. A serviceable torch will be provided. The head torches fade slowly when the batteries run low so help to avoid panic. Children can try caving in the dark but can turn their lights on if needed. Escape hatches to be opened by instructor if needed. Instructor to provide assistance to participants in the tunnels if required.
Getting stuck in the Caves	Panic, injury to self, bruising and grazing	Individuals	L	L	Oversized participants not to be encouraged/allowed into the tunnel. A serviceable torch will be provided. The tunnels are designed so that no body will slide downhill and become stuck in a constriction. Instructors trained to help and coach a stuck participant. Instructors to limit the number of children in each tunnel to help prevent anyone getting stuck.
Slipping in the tunnel/ Banging their heads/ Head injury	Shock, head injury, cuts, grazing, bruising	Individuals	L	L	Clear safety brief given by instructor which will include the layout of the tunnels and to be careful around the Stalactite. Instructors are to supervise the fitting of Helmets, Kneepads, torches and check they are fitted appropriately. Appropriate footwear must be worn. Tunnels to be inspected prior to the session and cleaned when necessary.
Damaged/unsuitable equipment	Cuts, grazes, splinters, panic	All	L	L	Pre-use equipment checks to be carried out. Equipment fitting supervised and checked by instructors. Elements to be checked regularly ever 8 weeks. Elements are to be inspected prior to the session and cleaned where necessary. Elements are ERCA inspected once a year. Unserviceable equipment dealt with accordingly. Tunnels or items found to be unserviceable must be labelled and brought to the attention of the senior instructor.
Weather, rain and Sun	Increased potential for slipping. Hypothermia	All	L	L	Participants are encouraged to wear long sleeved trousers, extra layers and waterproofs when necessary. The hatches can be opened to reduce the heat and increase ventilation in the tunnels if they become too hot inside.
Insects and rodents	Bites, shock, infection, illness	Individuals	L	M	Tunnels are to be inspected prior to the session and cleaned when necessary.

					Tunnel covers to be shut when not in use. Have any personal medications available.
Caving structure collapse	Death, crush injury, entrapment	Group	L	H	Don't allow group to climb on the fibreglass tunnels. Escape hatches situated at regular intervals in case of emergency.
Falling from the Blue tunnel or getting landed on from above.	Shock, head injury, cuts, grazing, bruising	Individuals	M	L	Children told to come down feet first saying "I'm coming down" to warn others of them descending from the blue tunnel. Participants to ensure that they are careful when emerging above or below other participants. Instructors to limit the number of participants in the tunnels. Helmets, torches and kneepads to be worn at all times.