

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR GROUP SESSIONS.

A group session can be for many different types of groups; all adults, school groups, youth clubs, people with special needs... All of these groups are very different but similar hazards present themselves. It is up to the instructor/s to decide how best to manage a group. Training will be given to staff by AWCC in how best to do this. With some groups, particularly school groups working towards GCSE PE, the session is an instructional session where the clients are taught climbing and rope skills. The following hazards have been identified along with measures to reduce the amount of risk.

Number in group: 6 or more. Ratio of instructors to students is 1:7 maximum. Eight students would get two instructors.	Areas used: Top ropes, slab, tower, traverse wall and top ropes on lead walls.
Duration of session: 1 hour or 1 1/2 hours	Instructors: AWCC

HAZARD	CHANCE	OUTCOME	SCORE	MEASURES TO BE TAKEN
The client could slip, trip or interfere with other climbers while moving around the centre.	LOW	MED	LOW	The clients must be warned of any potential hazards such as ropes, steps, and equipment left lying around by other climbers... Children in particular must be kept with the instructor and not allowed to run off.
The clients could catch items of jewellery (eg. big earrings, rings...) or hair and cause injury to themselves.	LOW	MED	LOW	All jewellery must be removed at the start of the session and long hair must be tied back where it cannot get caught in anything.
Client suffers injury through improper use of facilities.	LOW	MED	LOW	Children in particular tend to like to "mess around" if not properly supervised. It is important that the following safety rules are enforced: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No running in the centre. Running can pose a risk to both the group member and other wall users. 2. The group must stay together at all times. 3. The Blue crash mats are out of bounds. Children love to do somersaults and WWF style wrestling with great potential for injury. 4. No one is allowed to climb the walls unless given the say so by the instructor.
The client slipping, or a hold spinning, while climbing and banging a limb or head against the wall.	LOW	MED	LOW	It is important that the client climbs only on the line of their rope. If this is not the case the client could pendulum. On walls where there is the slight risk of the client swinging or twisting into the wall this risk must be made clear along with prevention measures.
Falling awkwardly from the traverse wall.	MED	LOW	LOW	The clients must be made aware of the gap between the mats in the centre of the area. It is also important that the climbers are made to stay low on the wall to minimise the height of a potential fall.
The client falling from a climb due to an incorrectly fitted harness.	LOW	HIGH	LOW	The harnesses of the clients must be checked by the instructor at the beginning of the session and after any time it may have been removed (e.g. the client having been to the toilet).
The client falling from a climb due to an incorrectly tied knot.	LOW	HIGH	LOW	All AWCC instructors must be checked and approved by the management. The instructor must check all knots tied by the clients, as part of an instructional session.
The client falling due to incorrect belaying.	LOW	HIGH	MED	All AWCC instructors must be checked and approved by the management. If the client is much bigger than the instructor then a sand bag must be used. The instructor must check the belaying of all participants of the session and hold dead rope of all belayers until they have reached a satisfactory standard.
The client falling from a climb due to equipment failure.	LOW	HIGH	LOW	All equipment belonging to AWCC is checked regularly and its condition is logged in the equipment log. Any faulty equipment is either repaired or replaced.
Client injuring himself or herself by slipping or swinging during descent.	MED	LOW	LOW	It must be emphasised that the client is to walk down and not bounce down the wall. If the client does slip the instructor must halt the descent while they regain their balance and composure. If the client has trouble balancing, ask them to put a hand out in front of them so they will not bang their head.
Client damaging their fingers by holding the metal rings on the tower.	MED	LOW	LOW	It must be pointed out before attempting to climb the tower, that fingers must not be put in the metal rings as this can cause serious injury if a slip occurs. If the client does use the rings they must be reminded.

The client being injured during a fall from the bouldering wall.	HIGH	MED	MED	The instructor must make sure that no one walks or climbs beneath another climber on the bouldering wall. The instructor must either spot the client while they climb or make sure another participant of the session does so. It is important that children do not mess around and do not go on the crash mats and wall if not under supervision.
Client becoming "crag fast".	LOW	LOW	LOW	Occasionally the client may freeze up and not want to move up or down. In this situation first try to talk the client down by calming and reassuring them. If this does not work and there is another member of staff on the premises ask them to bring the big ladder. If the client is too high on the wall or there is no other member of staff working the rope can be ascended using a prussik knot or Gri Gri. This situation can usually be avoided by watching the clients on the traverse wall and on easy top roped walls and assessing their ability or any sign of nerves.

The above measures are outlined in the document "Guidelines for instructors carrying out a group session". This document is kept in the staff file where it is available to all members of staff. It is a document outlining best practice and should be followed by ALL AWCC INSTRUCTORS

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