



SUBJECT: Tree Top Challenge Self Belay Part 2

RISK ASSESSMENT REF: SB 02/2025/V1

WRITTEN BY: Operations Team/Health and Safety Team

REVIEWED BY: Jo McLaren, January 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE: January 2026

Risk Matrix								
Risk rating guidance	Likelihood (L)	5	5	10	15	20	25	Likelihood (L) x Severity (S) = Risk Rating (RR).
		4	4	8	12	16	20	
		3	3	6	9	12	15	
		2	2	4	6	8	10	
		1	1	2	3	4	5	
			1	2	3	4	5	
		Severity (S)						
Acceptability of risk guidance	High-risk: 15 – 25		High-risk activities should cease immediately. Further effective control measures to mitigate risks must be introduced.					
	Medium-risk: 8 – 12		Medium risks are an acceptable level based on the reduced likelihood after sufficient control measures are implemented					
	Low-risk: 1-6		Low risks are largely acceptable. Where it is reasonable to do so, efforts should be made to reduce risks further.					
Guidance. When completing a risk assessment, you should:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the persons at risk and the significant hazards. 2. Calculate an initial RR for the activity. 3. Identify risk control measures that reduce the risks to an acceptable level. 4. Calculate a revised RR - you should consider how much safer the task will be if the control measures are followed. Here, you should consider changing both the likelihood (L) and the severity (S) ratings. 							
Note. Ideally, you should look to reduce the risks so that the task can be classified as “low-risk”.								

Likelihood	Definition	Points rating
Inevitable	If the work continues as it is, there is almost 100% certainty that an accident will happen, for examples: A broken stair or broken rung on a ladder, Bare, exposed electrical conductors, Unstable stacks of heavy boxes	5
Highly likely	Will happen more often than not. Additional factors could precipitate an incident, but it is still likely to happen without this additional factor.	4
Possible	The accident may occur if additional factors precipitate it, but it is unlikely to happen without them.	3
Unlikely	This incident or illness might occur, but the probability is low and the risk minimal.	2
Remote possibility	There is really no risk present. Only under freak conditions could there be any possibility of an accident or illness. All reasonable precautions have been taken - This should be the normal state of the workplace.	1

Severity	Definition	Points rating
Very high	Causing multiple deaths and widespread destruction e.g., fire, course/building collapse.	5
High	Causing death, serious injury or permanent disability to an individual.	4
Moderate	Temporary disability causing injury (to member of the public, contractor or employees) or disease capable of keeping an employee off work for seven days or more and reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995).	3
Slight	Minor injury (to member of the public, contractor or employee), which would allow the individual to continue work after first aid treatment on site or at a local surgery. The duration of the stoppage or treatment is such that the normal flow of work is not seriously interrupted.	2
Nil	Very minor injury, bruise, graze, no risk of disease.	1

The Review Process. This risk assessment will be reviewed when it is suspected that the assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change.

In addition, it will be reviewed annually.

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This Risk Assessment covers all Challenge courses on a self-belay safety system. For Challenge courses using the continuous belay system, please refer to the continuous belay Risk Assessment

No.	HAZARD	L	S	RR	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROL MEASURES	FURTHER CONTROL MEASURES: reviewed annually to formulate Risk Reduction Plan	L	S	RR
	Falling objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> from the course onto the course 	3	3	9	Course users Employees Contractors Public	<p>Retainers and Lanyards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course users must attach or secure all loose items (such as cameras). When instructors are carrying out maintenance tasks at height, reasonable adjustments should be made. <p>Trees</p> All course trees visually checked during opening the course, for loose and broken branches. Deadwood should be removed where a risk to customers is present.		2	3	6
	Impact including: Course users swinging into something solid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the course At the landing (e.g., resulting in lower leg injury) Being struck by parts of the course (for example the Tarzan return system) Collision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Zip wires At Zip landing 	3	3	9	Course users Employees Contractors Public	<p>Course design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design of the course must take into consideration the possibility of impact problems. This is checked by the external inspection body during the inaugural inspection. Materials are finished to provide smooth, surfaces. Zip wires and landing areas are designed at an angle and sag to arrive at an optimum landing speed or appropriate braking mechanisms are installed. WRGs and swages are covered in protective material where they may cause harm. Landing sites are constructed to provide a soft and moveable surface of woodchip or wood peel. 		2	3	6

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective padding is provided where there is the possibility of collision. The zip braking spring is covered in rubber or foam protection. • Where required zip landing sites are fenced off to stop members of the public and children wandering into them. • Warning signs are in place to warn members of the public of the risk of collision. • Tarzan exit frames are used to ensure course users cannot collide with other course users on nearby elements and to control the Tarzan return system. • The speed of the Tarzan return system is monitored and further controlled by changing the mass of the weight, ensuring the return mechanism cannot hit course participants. <p style="text-align: center;">Operating Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landing areas are to be prepared (raked or dug) on a regular basis to ensure they comply with guidelines. • Only 1 course participant is allowed on a crossing or on the zip wire at any one time. <p style="text-align: center;">Provision of Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of suitable and sufficient information and training to course participants to ensure they are safe when crossing obstacles and descending zip wires. Written/digital Safety Rules and Advice which must be read by all course participants, Instructor/ 			
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						<p>Audio/Video Safety Brief given to all course participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety signage at the start of each zip wire. • Course participants recommended to wear appropriate footwear, with soles with good grip, closed toe and heel. Sandals not allowed. <p>Customer advice. Zip speeds are taken and recorded periodically to identify any changes in speed of landing.</p>				
	Entanglement in ropes nets, wires or chains and body parts trapped in moving parts of the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zip wire • Tarzan 	2	3	6	Course users Employees Contractors	<p>Course Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course designed to minimise the risk of entanglement or entrapment <p>Operating Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hair tied back, suitable clothing • Effective supervision • Regular patrolling <p>Information and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tarzan signage • Specific Tarzan training in safety brief 		1	3	3
	Unsuitable PPE: Incorrect assessment of loadings including premature failing or malfunctioning of PPE	3	3	9	Course users Employees Contractors	<p>See Part 1, “PPE Provision and Checks”</p> <p>Damage to PPE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No smoking or vaping whilst wearing harnesses • No use of chemicals near PPE (insect repellent, sun cream) • Records of materials 		2	3	6
	Slips and trips and uneven ground	2	3	6	Course users Employees Contractors Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways • Sturdy footwear recommended • Path surfaces reviewed and levelled • Design of course • Flat level platforms kept clear • Pre-opening inspection • Work area management • Cabins / offices kept clean and tidy • Tool storage areas • Decking and steps around the cabin 		1	3	3

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	Other Forest Users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyclists' collision • Traffic collision • Horses bolting • Dogs 	4	3	12	Course users Employees Contractors Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Awareness training • Instructors aware when leading groups • Communication with other organisations for e.g., FE, Landlords, other activity providers nearby etc. 		1	3	3
	Inappropriate clothing	2	3	6	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre booking and on arrival advice/checks · Refer to Footwear policy for agreed requirements by activity 		1	3	3
	Medical conditions ·Pre-existing injuries Pregnancy · Fatigue · Hearing and Visual impairment · Individual additional needs Other	2	2	4	Course users Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical, Disability, Pregnancy, Additional Support, Deaf Participants, Existing Physical Injuries Policies · • Risk Acknowledgement · Terms and Conditions · • Staff training · Safety Rules and Advice · Dynamic assessment of risk · Patrolling and observation · • Users advised to seek medical advice 		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>7</u>	Challenging Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbally abusive • <u>Physically abusive</u> • <u>Failure to follow rules</u> • Aggressive 	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	Course Users and Members of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Customer Conflict Policy • Staff Training • Exclusion from activity • Safety Rules and Advice • Terms and Conditions • Verbal warning, of session being cut short • Emergency Services 		<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>8</u>	Darkness causing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorientation • Inability to read safety signs 	2	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	Course users, Employees, Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful planning of session availability in line with sunset times • Torches available • Adequate supervision 		<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to see landing Impaired supervision 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff assistance Termination of the activity 				
<u>9</u>	Weather <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightning High Wind Ice and snow Extreme Cold Excessive Heat Mist and Fog 	<u>3</u>	3	<u>9</u>	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course closures and evacuations due to adverse weather policy Emergency Evacuation Procedure Suitable clothing guidance and uniform Communications and use of radios and phones Rest periods and breaks Training of staff and customers Monitor weather reports and forecasts Patrolling instructors' observations (Beaufort scale) Provision of water 		<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>10</u>	Inappropriate clothing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footwear Covered waists 	3	<u>3</u>	9	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre booking and on arrival advice/checks Refer to Footwear for agreed requirements by activity 		<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>11</u>	Inappropriate participant age/ratios/supervision	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre booking and on arrival advice/checks Refer to supervision policy for agreed requirements by activity 		<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Note 1: Where a control measure has been identified, it is only included once and not repeated under every serial number. Therefore, for a specific hazard identified, a control measure in a serial above may apply to that hazard.										
References: HSW Act, MHSW Regs, WAH Regs, PUWER, LOLER, PPE Regs, Workplace HSW Regs, H&S (Safety Signs) Regs, First Aid Regs, Occupiers Liability Act, European Standard for ropes courses EN 15567 Part 1 and Part 2, HSL "Guide to good practice in safety management of aerial ropes courses. AAIAC "UK Ropes Course Guide" (3rd edition), HSE Information Sheet Entertainment Sheet No 14 ,HSE 5 Steps to Risk assessment INDG 163 ,HSE A Guide to Risk Assessment requirements INDG 218 ,Go Ape Generic Risk Assessments										

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Go Ape operational and training systems. These include the following: Go Ape Operations on how to run a Go Ape Activity, Go Ape Training Manual including training and assessment policy, Practical Session plans and online training and Go Ape Company Handbook.

Control Measures. Where a control measure has been identified, it is only included once and not repeated under every subject. Therefore, for a specific hazard identified, a control measure noted above may apply to that hazard. (HSE RA guidance.)

Instructor Training. Go Ape staff must undertake relevant training and assessment programme specific to their role. They undergo training in accordance with the Go Ape Online Training Manual.