



## **Kenelm Youth Trust**

Alton Castle & Soli Retreat Centres

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## **Alton Castle Abseil**

### **Standard Operating Procedure and Risk Assessment**

#### **Activity Specific - Abseiling**

##### **1. The Legal Context**

Below is the current position as viewed by AALA With regard to Alton Castle not holding an Adventurous Activities Licence for Abseiling.

“Use of climbing walls, abseiling towers and similar man-made structures designed for practising climbing techniques are excluded from licensing but this does not extend to other outdoor man-made structures such as disused railway viaducts.”

Reference L77 Page 24 Paragraph 22 Guidance from the Licencing Authority on the Adventure Activity Licencing Regulations 2004. Appendix 1 Further Information and Interpretation.

Further confirmed by a telephone conversation with Marcus Baily of AALS on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

##### **2. Method and safety**

The Abseil will be conducted in accordance with current best practice for this type of event; principally Participants will be safeguarded by an independent safety rope from the abseil rope which shall be releasable in the event of an emergency. See Risk assessment for further Risk control measures.

The Platforms are annually inspected by a local Scaffolding Contractor and a “handing over” certificate issued.

### **3. Instructor Guidelines**

Access to the South Tower is via the unfinished tower only (see the Senior Instructor for the Key)

The Minimum National Governing Body Qualification to lead this activity is: M.L.T.B. Climbing Wall Award + Abseiling Module or staff have had their competence confirmed by an appropriately qualified and experienced technical adviser.

Instructors are to work in pairs managing the Abseil, the group on the roof and verifying each other's actions.

A physical barrier must be in place to cordon off the landing area.

The Scaffolding Safety barriers are not to be removed until the tower is rigged and all Instructors working on the platform are safeguarded by a life line.

The Safe Working Load of the platform will be observed at all times – effectively this is no more than 4 people on the platform at once.

The Weight limit of participants is 100 kg or 16 Stone.

Instructors must log out all technical equipment from the stores, check for damage before and after use and embargo and report any defective equipment. Return all equipment to the stores after the session.

Instructors will ensure that activity participants are suitably clothed and equipped – Hair, Toggles, footwear, jewellery etc.

Instructors will ensure the wearing of approved helmets by all participants and supervisors; below the castle, approaching and during abseiling.

Be aware of personal safety whilst working close to the edge of the castle when preparing the abseil

#### 4 Generic risk assessment for abseiling activity

HAZARD	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	SEVERITY	IS THE RISK ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED BY:	FURTHER RISK CONTROL	RESIDUAL RISK
Fall from Castle edge	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Activity participants to be roped at cliff edge or otherwise protected by a life line on approach  Scaffold barrier to prevent leaning over crenulations	Participants attached whilst on platform	Low
Falling object	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Participants briefed not to look up on hearing 'Below!'  No unauthorised people in landing zone which is barrier off	Helmets worn by all participants and supervisors; below the crag, approaching and during Abseiling.	Low
Anchor Failure	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Anchor selection by competent staff.  Annual safety inspection of Platforms.	Correctly loaded backups used.	Low
Hair, jewellery or clothing trapped in equipment	Instructors & Participants	Slight Harm	Before climbing participants are asked to remove jewellery, tuck away hair, loose clothing and draw cords etc.	Releasable abseil deployed	Low
Stuck/Frozen tangled abseiler.	Instructors & Participants	Slight Harm	Systems, equipment used and training in extrication.	Releasable abseil deployed	Low
Equipment failure	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Procurement, monitoring, All Karabiners. Used have a screw gate	Chest or body harness used on those with ill defined waist.	Low

Cuts grazes rope burns pinches sprains etc.	Instructors & Participants	Slight Harm	Alert group to hazard of venue/ activity.	The speed of decent is / can be controlled by the Instructor to minimise rope burn	Low
Harnesses and helmets incorrectly fitted	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Participants fitted with equipment by a suitably experienced person	Instructor to check equipment prior to the abseil	Low
Inversion/fall	Instructors & Participants	Slight Harm	Instructors will provide clear instruction to avoid inversions Instructors to ensure correct use and fitting of equipment	Instructors to use chest harness where needed (i.e. oversized participants).	Low
Unauthorised access	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Access to and from the waiting pen is controlled by a suitably competent member of the residential team.	Two Competent members of the AC Team to be present at the top of the abseil. Access to the cordoned off landing area is managed by a team member.	Low
Asthma attacks and other medical conditions	Instructors & Participants	Harm	Medical conditions should have been pre-notified at time of booking	Confirmation that Participant has their medication with them	Low
Procedure for Barriers to be removed/replaced	Instructors & Participants	Fatal	Barriers only to be removed once the abseil system is set up and the Instructor has a safe system in place		Low

Risk assessment Conducted By / Qualification	Reviewed By	Date	Next scheduled review	Signed	Signed Off By
Dom Salter MLTB SPA	Dom Salter	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2019	May 2020		