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Abseiling and

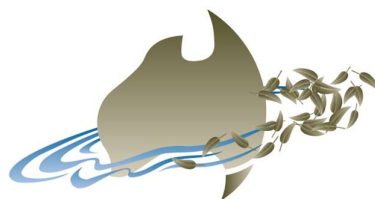
Climbing

Australian

Adventure Activity

Good Practice Guide

Guidance for abseiling, climbing and bouldering
on natural and *artificial surfaces*.



**Outdoor Council
of Australia**

Representing the
Outdoor Sector Nationally

16

17 Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

18 We acknowledge the *Traditional Owners* of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection
19 to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and
20 present.

21

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24

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29 Australian Adventure Activity Standard and the Good Practice Guides are a guide only. *Activity providers*
30 and any other person accessing the documentation should consider the need to obtain any appropriate
31 professional advice relevant to their own circumstances, including the specific adventure activities and
32 needs of the *dependent participants*.

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35 current, correct or complete and is not a definitive statement of procedures. Outdoor Council of Australia
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37 Guides as and when required. *Activity providers* should make independent inquiries as to the correctness
38 and currency of the content and use their own skill and care with respect to their use of the information.

39 The Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practice Guides do not replace any statutory
40 requirements under any relevant State and Territory legislation and are made available on the express
41 condition that Outdoor Council of Australia together with the authors, consultants, advisers and the
42 Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee members who assisted in compiling, drafting
43 and ratifying the documents:

- 44 ○ are not providing professional or legal advice to any person or organisation; and
- 45 ○ are not liable for any loss resulting from an action taken or reliance made on any information or
- 46 material contained within the Australian Adventure Activity Standard, Good Practice Guides and
- 47 associated documents.

48 Version details

Version	Date	Details
1.0	23 Sept 2019	Version one release.
2.0	2026	

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50

52 Foreword

53

54 "When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees;
55 even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no
56 need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening."

57 **Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM**

58

59 The Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practice Guides are designed to ensure effective,
60 responsible, sustainable and safe delivery of adventure activities to *dependent participants*. They can help
61 people across the outdoor sector to develop appropriately managed adventure activities which enhance
62 individuals and our communities, while protecting the environment and culturally significant places. In
63 doing this, these documents can help ensure that people will continue to enjoy the benefits of adventure
64 activities well into the future.

65 Best wishes for all your adventures.

66 The Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee.

67 Creation

68 The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and accompanying Good Practice Guides (GPGs) were
69 developed through a national project and launched in 2019. They drew together, and built upon, the vari-
70 ous state and territory-specific adventure activity standards that had previously operated across Australia,
71 replacing a fragmented set of arrangements with a single, nationally consistent voluntary framework. The
72 original development drew on the input of a wide range of outdoor and adventure activity experts with ex-
73 tensive experience, supported by expert advisory groups and informed by open consultation across *activity*
74 *providers*, education authorities and other stakeholders.

75 The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges the members of the various focus groups, industry consul-
76 tation, working groups and expert advisors for their work and contributions, and thanks the State and Terri-
77 tory Governments for funding the original development.

78 The AAAS and GPGs are now maintained by the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA). They are subject to
79 comprehensive review at least every five years, with targeted reviews undertaken in response to serious
80 incidents, fatalities, relevant court decisions, or material changes in regulation or practice. Reviews are
81 overseen by the Steering Committee and conducted in accordance with the AAAS Review and Update
82 Methodology — a pragmatic, mixed-methods process combining legislative and regulatory analysis, cur-
83 rency checking of cited standards and instruments, stakeholder consultation, data-informed *risk assess-*
84 *ment*, and structured expert input through the Expert Advisory Group, followed by open public consultation
85 before endorsement.

86 The first comprehensive review under this methodology was undertaken in 2025–26. The review was facili-
87 tated, and the Standard and Good Practice Guides drafted, by The OREAS Group Dr David Marsden for and
88 on behalf of the Outdoor Council of Australia. The Outdoor Council of Australia gratefully acknowledges the
89 contributions of all who took part in the review:

- 90 ○ Dr David Marsden (PhD), Lead Consultant (The OREAS GROUP)
- 91 ○ Lori Modde, Project Sponsor (OCA Chair)
- 92 ○ the members of the AAAS Steering Committee, who provided governance, direction and endorse-
93 ment of the reviewed documents;

94 Lori Modde, OCA Chair, Outdoors NSW, ACT
95 David Marsden, Lead Consultant, The OREAS Group
96 Andrew Atfield, Tasmania Government
97 Andrew Knight, Outdoors Victoria
98 Dom Courtney, Outdoors Queensland
99 Jodie Freund, South Australian Government
100 Katie Brown, Outdoors WA
101 Mitchell Hardy, NT Government
102 Neil Le Febvre, Outdoors WA

- 103 • the members of the Expert Advisory Groups, who contributed specialist knowledge and reviewed
104 drafts across the Core and activity Good Practice Guides; and
- 105 • the *activity providers*, education authorities, peak bodies and individuals who contributed through
106 public consultation, focus groups, and submissions.

107 Further details of the creation and review of the AAAS and GPGs can be found at www.australianaas.org.au,
108 where updates are also published.

109 Funders

110 The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges and thanks the State and Territory Governments for fund-
111 ing the original development and 2026 review.

112

113	Table of Contents	
114	Preface.....	6
115	1 Introduction.....	10
116	2 Management of Risk.....	11
117	3 Planning.....	11
118	4 Diversity, equity and inclusion.....	13
119	5 Participants.....	13
120	6 Environment.....	23
121	7 Equipment and logistics.....	26
122	8 Responsibilities and roles.....	31
123	Glossary.....	33
124	Acronyms.....	37
125	Appendices.....	37
126	Detailed Contents.....	53
127		
128		
129	List of Figures	
130	Figure 1.1: Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides	9
131	Figure W.2: Fall factors.....	53
132		
133		
134	List of Tables	
135	Table N.1: Activity variants and leader technical requirements	38
136		

137 Preface

138 About these documents

139 The Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS) and related Good Practice Guides (GPGs) are an industry
 140 good-practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of outdoor adventure activities
 141 with *dependent participants*.

142 The AAAS and related GPGs provide guidance on responsible activity delivery, including safety and respect
 143 for the environment, cultural heritage and other users. They are not a full legal compliance framework.

144 Activity *providers* are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice in relation to their
 145 obligations and duties in delivering adventure activities and should reference the relevant laws to the area
 146 in which they intend to undertake the adventure activity.

147 Dependent Participants

148 A *dependent participant* is a person who is owed a *duty of care* by the *activity provider* and who wholly or
149 partially on the provider's systems, processes and operational practices for the support, supervision,
150 guidance or instruction needed to take part in an activity. In most cases this means a participant who
151 reasonably relies on the provider for their safety. The degree of dependence may vary over the course of
152 an activity.

153 Considerations for determining whether a person is a *dependent participant* may include, but are not
154 limited to:

- 155 ○ whether the organisation is providing a service or product to the person
- 156 ○ whether the organisation owes the person a *duty of care* in the circumstances
- 157 ○ whether the person reasonably relies on the provider for the support, supervision, guidance or
- 158 instruction needed to participate safely.

159 Considerations for determining the **level of dependence** may include, but are not limited to:

- 160 ○ the foreseeable level of competence of the participant in the activity, and the degree of reliance
- 161 this creates on the provider's work system, including reliance on *activity leaders*
- 162 ○ the foreseeable level of self-reliance of the participant to reasonably manage their own safety
- 163 ○ the variation, or possible variation, in the degree of dependence or self-reliance throughout the
- 164 activity
- 165 ○ the individual context, nature and circumstances of the activity
- 166 ○ the relevant circumstances and particular facts relating to the responsibilities assumed by the
- 167 provider.

168 Does the Standard and Good Practice Guides apply to me?

169 The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and associated Good Practice Guides (GPGs) are
170 primarily designed to support activity *providers* conducting lead or supported adventure activities involving
171 *dependent participants* with the aim of delivering safe, responsible and well-managed experiences. Each
172 *provider* must determine, based on their specific circumstances, whether the participants they work with
173 are dependent and/or their level of dependency on the provider's systems and operations. Providers
174 should use the AAAS and relevant GPGs to ensure that the activities they lead are planned and delivered in
175 accordance with the Standard.

176 Australian *providers* operating internationally can use the AAAS and GPGs as a benchmark for safe practice,
177 while complying with the laws and relevant standards of the jurisdiction in which the activity is conducted.
178 Legal advice should be obtained where activities cross jurisdictions.

179 *Activity providers* include outdoor education and adventure businesses, schools, universities, TAFEs, camps,
180 clubs and organised "meet-up" groups, youth organisations, not-for-profits, and community-based
181 organisations that deliver adventure activities to *dependent participants*. An individual may also be an
182 *activity provider* where they hold the ultimate legal *duty of care* to participants. "The Standard" and the
183 GPGs apply to a provider as a "whole organisation" rather than to "specific roles" within it.

184 Some providers may have their own standards or guidelines appropriate to their *duty of care*. These should
185 be reviewed periodically to ensure current *duty of care* expectations are met, and "the Standard" and the
186 GPGs may assist with such reviews.

187 Are they legally binding?

188 The AAAS and GPGs are not legal requirements. However, they may refer to specific laws and regulations
189 which may be legally binding on activity *providers*. Some *land managers* and other organisations may
190 require compliance. This may be as a condition of obtaining a licence, permit or other permission, or some
191 other condition (e.g. a contract).

192 Under Australian common law and relevant legislation, *providers* have a legal *duty of care* towards
 193 *dependent participants* in some circumstances. In broad terms, the legal duty requires *providers* to take
 194 reasonable care that their actions and omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury to *dependent*
 195 *participants*.

196 It is important to be aware that adventure activities in Australia operate within a complex legal landscape.
 197 *Activity providers* must understand the obligations that apply to them and seek independent professional
 198 and legal advice where any obligation is unclear.

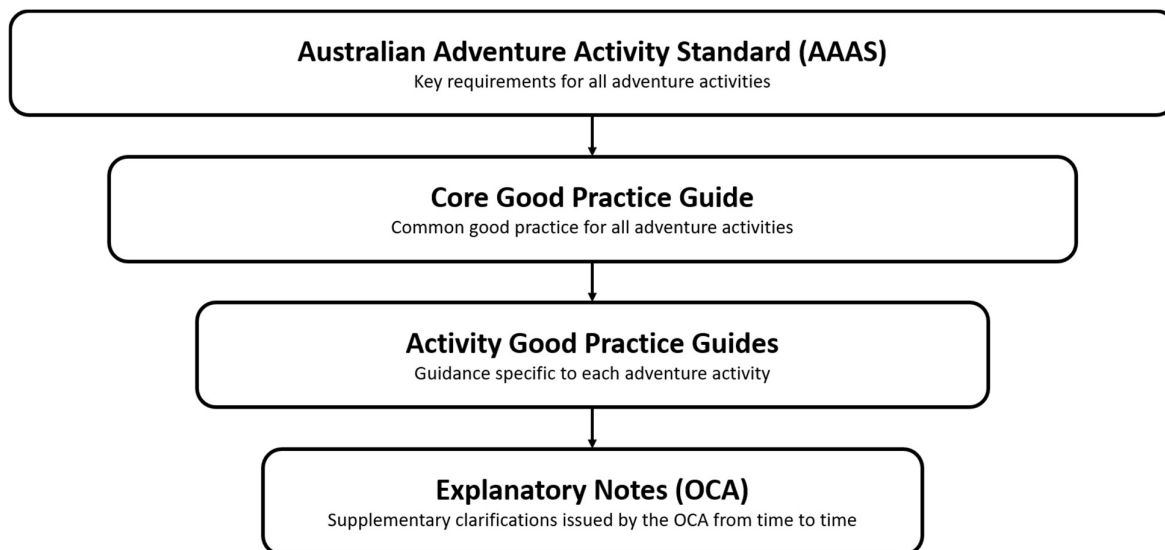
199 The following obligations include, but are not limited to, those set out in detail in Appendix A — Principal
 200 legal obligations, grouped by the function each obligation performs:

- 201 ○ Work health and safety — the foundational legal duty for the majority of providers, including the
 202 primary *duty of care*, officers' due-diligence duty, consultation, safe systems of work, and
 203 notifiable-incident reporting.
- 204 ○ *Duty of care*, negligence and consumer protection — the common law *duty of care*, the Civil
 205 Liability Act (or equivalent) of each state and territory, and the Australian Consumer Law.
- 206 ○ Protection of children and vulnerable persons — Working with Children and Working with
 207 Vulnerable People schemes, Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Schemes.
- 208 ○ Transport of participants — land, water and air — heavy vehicle, road transport, domestic
 209 commercial vessel, recreational marine and civil aviation obligations.
- 210 ○ Land access, environment and cultural heritage — park, Crown land and reserve licensing, the
 211 EPBC Act, Aboriginal cultural heritage law(s) and/or regulation(s), and biosecurity duties.
- 212 ○ Information privacy, equity and employment — the Privacy Act and Australian Privacy Principles,
 213 anti-discrimination law(s) and/or regulation(s), and the Fair Work Act and relevant award.
- 214 ○ Substances, food and licensed items — medicines and poisons, food safety, liquor and tobacco,
 215 and firearms obligations.
- 216 ○ Activity-specific licensing — fisheries and recreational fishing licensing, and animal welfare duties.

217 Appendix A is an orientation only and is not exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice, and the relevant
 218 law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the jurisdiction(s) of operation must in each case be determined and
 219 complied with.

220 Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

221 The guidance for adventure activities comprises several related documents. For any activity, the AAAS (the
222 Standard), the Core GPG, the relevant activity GPG, and any applicable Explanatory Notes issued by the
223 Outdoor Council of Australia, from time to time, should be consulted.



224

225 *Figure 1.1: Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides*

226 The documents present cumulatively more specific information. Providers should determine how they use
227 the AAAS and GPGs based on their context and need, and are encouraged to draw on them when
228 developing and reviewing their standard operating procedures. Activity providers are encouraged to obtain
229 independent professional and legal advice on their obligations and to reference the laws relevant to the
230 area in which they operate.

231 Interpretation of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

232 The following words and phrases are used in all documents and have specific meanings:

233 **Must:** used where a provision is mandatory, if the provider is to operate fully in accordance with AAAS or
234 GPGs. (This is equivalent to the keyword “shall” used in other voluntary standards e.g. Standards Australia,
235 other International Standards Organisations (ISOs) etc.)

236 **Should:** used where a provision is recommended, not mandatory. It indicates that the provider needs to
237 consider their specific situation and decide for themselves whether it applies or is relevant. A “should”
238 statement describes good practice. Departure from a “should” statement does not of itself establish a
239 breach of duty — a provider may meet its obligations by other means appropriate to its context — but
240 providers should be able to explain the basis for a different approach.

241 **Can/cannot:** indicates a possibility and capability.

242 **May/need not:** indicates a permission or existence of an option.

243 **But are/is not limited to:** used to indicate that a list is not definitive and additional items may need to be
244 considered depending on the context.

245 The following formatting is used throughout:

246 Defined words are in italics. They are defined in the Glossary.

247 Examples are in smaller italic 9-point font.

248 In document references are underlined. References are to section heading titles.

249 External web or Australian AAS & GPG document links are dotted underline italic.

250 1 Introduction

251 This document is to be used together with Core Good Practice Guide.

252 This Good Practice Guide must be read together with, and after, the AAAS (the Standard) and the *Core GPG*,
253 which contain mandatory provisions and context essential to safe planning and delivery of this activity.

254 1.1 Abseiling

255 Abseiling is descending vertical or near vertical *natural surfaces* or *artificial surfaces* using ropes and
256 descending friction devices to manage the descent. It is also known as rappelling. Abseiling can occur on a
257 single-pitch or multi-pitch. In most situations, abseiling involves descending a rope by walking backwards
258 down a vertical or near vertical surface. *Forward abseiling* descents are also possible.

259 1.2 Climbing

260 Climbing is ascending, traversing or descending vertical or near vertical *natural surfaces* or *artificial*
261 *surfaces*. The term *rock climbing* is also used for climbing on *natural surfaces* and at times used to describe
262 climbing on *artificial surfaces*. For the purposes of this Good Practice Guide (GPG) climbing may also include
263 ascending a fixed rope and climbing in indoor climbing facilities (e.g. climbing gyms).

264 There are three types of climbing covered in this GPG: *top-rope climbing*, *lead climbing* and *bouldering*.

265 Top rope climbing is conducted on a single *pitch*.

266 *Lead climbing* is further separated into *traditional climbing* and *sport climbing*. It can be conducted
267 on a single *pitch* or *multi-pitch* and may include aid climbing.

268 *Bouldering* is a form of climbing activity, limited in height and for which fall safety can be achieved
269 by the provision of an impact absorbing system, by a *spotter* providing control of a fall or by a
270 combination of these measures.

271 Climbing or abseiling without a means of a *belay system* is considered unacceptable, except for where a
272 climber is *bouldering* within a reasonable *fall height*.

273 1.3 Exclusions

274 Activities that are not covered by this GPG are:

- 275 • challenge ropes course activities
- 276 • 'slack lining' or 'high lining'
- 277 • climbing involving mountaineering and ice climbing
- 278 • improvised roping activities during bushwalking on difficult or trackless terrain
- 279 • activities associated with camping while on overnight or extended activities.

280 1.4 Related activities

281 Abseiling and climbing is also engaged in as a component of associated activities including *canyoning* or
282 *caving*. In these cases, the relevant associated GPG must be used in conjunction with this GPG.

283 *Challenge course* activities, refer to Challenge Course GPG.

284 Where *bushwalking* occurs to access climbing and abseiling sites, then the Bushwalking GPG must be
285 complied with.

286 Where camping occurs associated with abseiling or climbing, the Camping GPG must be complied with.

287 2 Management of Risk

288 *Risk management* in outdoor and adventure settings is highly context-specific. In natural environments
289 there is an almost infinite range of combinations of participants, purpose, weather and local conditions,
290 and every provider differs in structure, size, philosophy and operating environment. *Risk management*
291 therefore cannot be a 'tick-the-box' exercise or a 'one size fits all' approach; risk systems should be flexible,
292 adaptive and highly responsive to the circumstances of each activity, drawing on recognised frameworks
293 such as AS ISO 31000:2018 and AS ISO 4980:2023.

294 The section guides providers to build a risk system that fits their own structure and operating environment
295 rather than copying another organisation's. A volunteer-led club might apply it as a lightweight but
296 documented plan with strong dynamic assessment in the field; a commercial operator might use it to
297 underpin a formal, audited *risk management* system. In every case it directs the provider to make risk
298 thinking flexible, adaptive and responsive to the actual circumstances of each activity.

299

300 2.1 Management of risk

301 *See Core GPG (2 Management of Risk).*

302 2.2 Context Matters

303 *See Core GPG (Management of Risk).*

304 2.3 Risk management framework and process

305 *See Core GPG (Management of Risk).*

306 2.4 Risk management plan

307 *See Core GPG (Management of Risk).*

308 2.5 Dynamic risk assessment

309 *See Core GPG (Management of Risk).*

310 2.6 Incident reporting

311 *See Core GPG (Management of Risk).*

312 3 Planning

313

314 Sound planning is what turns intent into safe and consistent delivery. Clear management and approval
315 processes help a provider manage risk, with the people responsible for approving processes, plans and
316 procedures varying according to the organisation's context. Good planning considers the purpose of the
317 activity, the people involved, group size, the cultural and environmental values of the place, and what to do
318 when conditions change or things go wrong.

319 Here the guidance helps a provider translate intent into a repeatable, defensible process. Approval roles
320 can be scaled to context — a single coordinator in a small operation, or a tiered sign-off structure in a larger
321 one. The material can shape activity-plan templates, prompt early engagement with *Traditional Owners*
322 and *land managers*, and ensure emergency planning and field documentation are in place and reviewed
323 before participants arrive.

324 3.1 Management and approval of activities

325 *See Core GPG (Planning).*

326 3.2 Activity plans

327 Activity plan considerations should include but are not limited to:

- 328 • aims and objectives of activity
- 329 • participants involved including but not limited to:
 - 330 ○ group size
 - 331 ○ relevant items listed in participant sections
- 332 • environmental conditions
- 333 • the site environment including but not limited to:
 - 334 ○ the intended route to the site
 - 335 ○ the access to start & finish locations and throughout the activity
 - 336 ○ identifying site specific hazards and risks
 - 337 ○ surface type, stability and soundness of any features and anchors
 - 338 ○ characteristics of the route(s) e.g. difficulty, height, pitch, overhangs
 - 339 ○ availability and features of *waiting areas*
 - 340 ○ relevant items listed in environment sections
- 341 • the equipment requirements including but not limited to:
 - 342 ○ the expected weight of equipment need to be carried
 - 343 ○ relevant items listed in equipment sections
- 344 • the leadership requirements including but not limited to:
 - 345 ○ supervision requirements specific to the site
 - 346 ○ competencies required by *activity leaders*
 - 347 ○ relevant items listed in leadership sections.

348 *See Core GPG (Planning) for the general requirements and further detail.*

349 3.3 Group size

350 *See Core GPG (Planning). Group size for this activity is addressed under Participants in this guide.*

351 3.4 Cultural, environmental and historical values

352 *See Core GPG (Planning).*

353 3.5 Emergency management planning

354 Also refer to Core GPG - Emergency management planning.

355 A *non-participating contact* should be used as part of the emergency management plan for all activities,
356 and must be used if providing activities in *remote areas* or where there is only one *activity leader*.

357 Events must be treated as an emergency where a person is hanging in a harness and is:

- 358 • unconscious or
- 359 • is unable to continue to progress either up or down for an extended period of time.

360 Emergency management plans must include:

- 361 • guidance on *trigger points* for considering the possibility of 'harness hang syndrome' occurring
- 362 • appropriate actions to follow where 'harness hang syndrome' is suspected, including but not
- 363 limited to the relevant first aid treatment.

364 The use of relevant rescue systems and procedures must be practiced periodically.

365 Where there is only one *activity leader*, the emergency management plan must have arrangements that
366 allow participants an adequate and appropriate communication system if the leader becomes
367 incapacitated.

368 *See Core GPG (Planning) for the general requirements and further detail.*

369 3.6 Activity leader required documentation

370 *See Core GPG (Planning).*

371 4 Diversity, equity and inclusion

372 Adventure *activities* are delivered by, and for, people of diverse identities, abilities, cultures, life
373 experiences and circumstances. Recognising that diversity, and providing equitable opportunities for safe
374 and meaningful participation, is fundamental to safe and effective practice.

375 In practice this section guides providers to design activities that include rather than exclude, applying
376 across interactions between leaders, participants and others encountered during an activity. A provider can
377 use it to review enrolment and communication practices for barriers, build cultural and psychological safety
378 into leader briefings, and ensure complaint and review mechanisms are visible and accessible. It is intended
379 to be read alongside the Participants and Responsibilities sections rather than in isolation.

380 The recommendations in this section apply alongside, and inform the application of, the subsequent
381 sections of the Core, including without limitation 5 Participants, 5.3 *Vulnerable participants*, 5.5 Privacy of
382 information, j2pqeh53snxp3zsexu8e3ee94.3 Cultural safety, 4.4 Psychological safety and dignity, and 8
383 Responsibilities and roles. Those sections continue to apply in their own terms; where requirements
384 overlap, the more onerous applies.

385 4.1 Diversity of participants and leaders

386 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

387 4.2 Inclusive practice

388 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

389 4.3 Cultural safety

390 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

391 4.4 Psychological safety and dignity

392 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

393 4.5 Information, communication and consent

394 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

395 4.6 Leader competence

396 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

397 4.7 Concerns, complaints and review

398 *See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).*

399 5 Participants

400 Every activity depends on the people taking part, and on the information and support they receive before
401 and during it. Pre-activity information and communication help potential participants, parents or legal
402 guardians and client organisations make an informed decision about taking part, and continue through
403 consent, acknowledgement of risk, and the care of those who may be vulnerable. Supporting participants
404 well — from first enquiry to supervision in the field — is central to safe and respectful practice.

405 Its purpose is to help a provider ensure people know what they are signing up for and are appropriately
406 supported once they arrive. Pre-activity information can be adapted to the audience and activity,
407 participation restrictions set defensibly, and additional safeguards put in place for *vulnerable participants*
408 and minors. The supervision guidance lets a provider calibrate direct versus *indirect supervision* to the
409 activity, environment and group.

410 5.1 Information provided pre-activity

411 Pre-activity information should clearly communicate:

- 412 ○ expectations and activity conditions

413 An appropriate pre-activity assessment should be conducted to ensure participants have the necessary pre-
414 requisite skills & knowledge to undertake the activity.

415 See *Core GPG (Participants)* for the general requirements and further detail.

416 5.2 Participant health and wellbeing

417 See *Core GPG (5 Health and wellbeing)*.

418 5.3 Supervision and management during the activity

419 5.3.1 Overview

420 Appropriate supervision must be provided at all times during the activity.

421 The number of participants permitted to actively participate in an activity must be limited to the number
422 the *activity leaders* can provide with *direct supervision* to deal with all aspects of the activity.

423 Spectators or participants currently *non-actively participating* should be located in a *waiting area* that
424 reduces the likelihood:

- 425 • of a fall from height
- 426 • being struck from a falling object and/or
- 427 • they interfere with the conduct of the activity.

428 Spectators or participants currently *non-actively participating* should where necessary be supervised
429 independently.

430 5.3.2 Abseiling and climbing group size

431 Considerations when determining group size must include but are not limited to:

- 432 • site capacity
- 433 • site related legislation or regulation
- 434 • the time allowed to enable all participants in the group to complete the activity is sufficient and
- 435 realistic and does not compromise safety
- 436 • having appropriate supervision for *non-actively participating* participants
- 437 • considerations for determining group size outlined in Core GPG.

438 5.3.3 Recommended supervision

439 Considerations for determining supervision requirements may include but are not limited to:

- 440 • characteristics of the site
- 441 • the *belay system* used
- 442 • participant training progression and competence
- 443 • supervision requirements of participants who are waiting
- 444 • time for the *activity leaders* to allow all participants to undertake the activity being sufficient and
- 445 realistic
- 446 • general considerations for determining supervision requirements outlined in Core_GPG.

447 The supervision requirements and ratios for programs that train/teach participants to become guides or
448 instructors should be determined on a case-by-case basis, according to the progress of those participants
449 towards being fully independent guides or instructors themselves.

450 5.3.4 Participants that are non-actively participating

451 Consideration must be given to the type of supervision participants require when *non-actively participating*
452 (i.e. who are waiting to undertake the activity).

453 In cases where participants who are *non-actively participating* require *direct supervision*, that supervision
454 must be provided by an *activity leader* not providing *direct supervision* of an activity or by a *responsible*
455 *person* as appropriate.

456 5.3.5 Abseiling supervision

457 Adequate supervision must be provided for participants both actively and *non-actively participating*.

458 The following supervision recommendations are based on participants who are *non-actively participating*
459 are either:

- 460 • capable of self-managing their own safety in a *waiting area* based on instructions provided or
- 461 • are under the supervision of either another *activity leader* not providing *direct supervision* of the
- 462 activity or a *responsible person*.

463 Recommended supervision for participants actively abseiling and/or belaying, for single pitch or multi-pitch
464 on natural or *artificial surfaces*:

- 465 • *top-belay* with guide or instructor belaying at top:
 - 466 ○ 1 x abseil guide/instructor to 1 x *belay system* in use.
- 467 • *top-belay* with participants used as belayers at top, with backup belayers, while in close proximity
- 468 to each other:
 - 469 ○ 1 x abseil guide or instructor to a maximum of 2 x *belay systems* in use.
- 470 • *bottom braking*:
 - 471 ○ 1 x abseil guide/instructor dispatching at top and 1 x abseil guide/instructor/assistant
 - 472 guide at the base to a maximum of 1 x active *belay system* in use.
- 473 • *self-belay* (note: is context dependent based on an appropriate learning progression):
 - 474 ○ 1 x abseil guide/instructor to maximum 2 x *belay systems* in use.
- 475 • *multi-pitch abseil*:
 - 476 ○ 1 x abseil guide/instructor dispatching at top and 1 x abseil guide/instructor to establish
 - 477 the lower belay station to a maximum of 1 x active *belay system* in use.
- 478 • *multi-pitch abseil* that is a series of 'single pitch abseils', where all pitch changeovers occur at an
- 479 area that does not require a *belay system* or *direct supervision* of participants to protect from a fall
- 480 from height:
 - 481 ○ 1 x abseil guide/instructor to 1 x *belay system* in use.

482 5.3.6 Climbing supervision

483 Adequate supervision must be provided for participants both actively and *non-actively participating*.

484 Unless the belayers and climbers are assessed for *competence* they should be considered *dependent*
485 *participants* and suitable supervision as recommended below is used.

486 The following supervision recommendations are based on participants who are *non-actively participating*
487 are either:

- 488 • capable of self-managing their own safety in a *waiting area* based on instructions provided or
- 489 • are under the supervision of either another *activity leader* not providing *direct supervision* of the
- 490 activity or a *responsible person*.

491

492 Recommended supervision for participants actively climbing and/or belaying:

493 **For single-pitch on natural or artificial surfaces:**

- 494 • *top-belay* with belayer at the bottom, with participants as belayers and backup belayers, while
495 climbs in close proximity to each other:
 - 496 ○ 1 x *climbing guide*/instructor to maximum of 2 x *belay systems* in use
 - 497 ○ 1 x *climbing guide*/instructor and 1 assistant guide to maximum of 3 x *belay systems* in
498 use.
- 499 • *top-belay* with belayer at the top, with participants as belayers and backup belayers, while climbs
500 in close proximity to each other:
 - 501 ○ 1 x *climbing guide*/instructor supervising belaying and 1 x assistant *climbing guide*
502 supervising tying in (at the base) to a maximum of 2 *belay systems* in use.
- 503 • *auto-belay top-belay* on *artificial surface* with climbs in close proximity:
 - 504 ○ 1 x *climbing guide*/instructor to a maximum of 8 x *belay systems* in use.
- 505 • *lead climbing* with participants as belayers and backup belayers, while climbs in close proximity to
506 each other:
 - 507 ○ 1 x *climbing guide* /instructor to a maximum of 2 *belay systems* in use.
- 508 • *self-belay* (note: is context dependent based on an appropriate leaning progression):
509 ○ 1 x *climbing guide*/instructor to maximum 2 x *belay systems* in use.

510 **For multi-pitch on natural or artificial surfaces:**

- 511 • *climbing guide*/instructor leading climbs; participants belaying:
512 ○ 1 x *climbing guide*/instructor to a maximum of 4 participants.

513 **5.3.7 Bouldering supervision**

514 Adequate supervision must be provided for participants both actively and *non-actively participating*.

515 The number of climber's that can be supervised while *bouldering* must be based on the:

- 516 • the *competence* of the *spotters*
- 517 • the ability and need for providing *direct supervision* or *indirect supervision* of both the climber(s)
518 and *spotter(s)*
- 519 • the available distance separating multiply climber's *bouldering*
- 520 • the site considerations including hazards within the *fall zone*.

521 **5.4 Activity management during activity**

522 **5.4.1 Knowledge of site**

523 The knowledge and experience of the activity site that *activity leaders* require before leading participants at
524 that site, should be considered when allocating *activity leader* roles.

525 **5.4.2 Activity information provided to participants**

526 The information required must be determined prior to the activity.

527 Required information must be provided at the appropriate time before or during the activity.

528 Opportunities for participants to ask questions and have concerns addressed must be provided.

529 Where there is only has one *activity leader*, the group must be briefed on what action to take to enact the
530 emergency management plan if the *activity leader* becomes injured or incapacitated.

531 Activity information that should be provided to participants includes but is not limited to:

- 532 • the plan for running the activity
- 533 • who is controlling the activity and who to ask for guidance
- 534 • relevant participant responsibilities

- 535 • site specific hazards and risks
- 536 • the correct fitting of personal equipment and this is to be checked before use
- 537 • the correct use of the *belay systems* and other any other fall protection systems
- 538 • the correct use of the activity's systems
- 539 • an appropriate technique(s) for the activity
- 540 • the release procedures for *belay system* or other system
- 541 • communications systems and requirements
- 542 • any other relevant activity information or procedures.

543 **Climbing specific activity information**

544 Activity information that should be provided to participants climbing includes but is not limited to:

- 545 • the activity information listed above
- 546 • method for “falling off” and “recovering to the climb”
- 547 • procedures for exiting at the top or being lowered back to the start.

548 5.4.3 Falling objects

549 Procedures to minimise the possibility or impact of falling objects must include but are not limited to:

- 550 • checking the site and anchors prior to use
- 551 • ensuring helmets are worn where relevant as per the Equipment section
- 552 • designating *waiting areas* that reduce the expose to falling objects
- 553 • briefing participants on potential hazards and how to avoid dislodging objects
- 554 • briefing participants on the appropriate action and warnings to give if an object does fall
- 555 • managing groups so that the groups and individual's exposure within potential fall areas is
- 556 minimised
- 557 • minimising movement between areas that are located above other people
- 558 • supervision of participants while they are located above other people.

559 Procedures to minimise the possibility or impact of falling objects should include but are not limited to:

- 560 • placing belay areas wherever possible so that they are not directly under the climber
- 561 • where allowed, remove loose objects that are likely to fall prior to running the activity
- 562 • managing spectators and other people moving through the area.

563 5.4.4 Falls from height

564 Considerations for the likelihood of a fall from height should include but are not limited to:

- 565 • how close to the edge people are
- 566 • the slope of the surface being stood on
- 567 • the stability and grip of the surface being stood on
- 568 • obstacles that need to be negotiated
- 569 • abilities of participants including the ability to follow instructions.

570 To protect from a fall from height, procedures must include checking participant(s):

- 571 • equipment is correctly fitted before they need to rely on the *belay system*
- 572 • correct attachment to the *belay system*, abseil system and/or other safety systems.

573 Checking equipment and attachment must not be delegated to the participants themselves, unless they
574 have demonstrated *competence* in the procedure(s).

575 To reduce the potential for and/or severity of falls from height, procedures must include:

- 576 • ensuring ropes are of a sufficient length for the *pitch*
- 577 • remove unnecessary slack in *belay system* before use

- 578 • monitoring the correct use of *belay systems*
- 579 • monitor attaching to anchors or *belay systems*
- 580 • monitor belay rope(s) to keep them at the appropriate length
- 581 • monitor *belay systems* to remove unnecessary slack in belay ropes
- 582 • providing appropriate instruction to mitigate risks caused by the stretch in *dynamic rope*.

583 To reduce the potential for and/or severity of falls from height, procedures should include:

- 584 • designating what areas that are not to be entered
- 585 • designating *waiting areas*
- 586 • designating areas that can only be accessed when attached to the *belay system*
- 587 • checking correct attachment to the *belay system*, safety or other systems
- 588 • anchoring the *belayer* where the *belay system* relies substantially on the *belayers* weight to arrest
- 589 a fall and the weight of the abseiler or climber is greater than that of the *belayer*.

590 Consideration must be given to the need for separately *spotting* climbers when starting their ascent, until
 591 such time the climber reaches a *fall height* where the *belay system* will fully operate to stop their fall before
 592 they touch the *fall zone*. (Refer bouldering specifics section During activity – Bouldering.)

593 5.4.5 Swinging falls

594 To reduce the potential for injury or damage to participants or equipment consideration should include but
 595 is not limited to the possibility of participants:

- 596 • taking a route on an angle that creates the potential for a pendulum swing if control is lost
- 597 • swinging or falling against or across hard, abrasive or sharp objects.

598 5.4.6 Entanglement and snags

599 The *activity leader(s)* should monitor belay rope(s) to keep them at the appropriate length and tension, to
 600 prevent the possibility of a slack rope becoming entangled or snagged.

601 To avoid entanglement in ropes and devices:

- 602 • long hair must be secured to stop it being able to be entangled
- 603 • loose jewellery (e.g. bracelets and necklaces) should be removed or secured
- 604 • loose clothing and drawstrings should be secured.

605 To avoid being caught or snagged, where there is such a risk:

- 606 • rings should be removed or tapped over
- 607 • body piercings should be removed or taped over.

608 5.4.7 Anchors and the belay & activity systems

609 Anchors must be sufficient to protect a fall.

610 Procedures to ensure that all systems function as intended must include but are not limited to:

- 611 • *anchor systems* are assessed as suitable to support the intended loads
- 612 • *anchor systems* and equipment are suitable for the activity, site and participants
- 613 • appropriate knots and connections are used
- 614 • regular inspection of all anchors and connections where practicable
- 615 • operating procedures and checks used will prevent unplanned disconnection of any part of the
- 616 system
- 617 • checking attachment to and disconnection from the system during the activity.

618 Where a *belay system* requires a belayer, either the belayer must be:

- 619 • a *competent* belayer; or
- 620 • under *direct supervision* of an *activity leader*.

621 5.4.8 Abseil backup systems

622 An effective backup must be used. The remaining content describes what an effective backup looks like in
623 different contexts.

624 The abseil system must use at least one belay method to protect the abseiler if they lose control of the
625 descent.

626 Belay methods include but are not limited to a *top belay* system, *bottom braking* or a *self-belay* system.

627 Equipment and systems to affect a rescue must be available.

628 Considerations for using a *top belay* system should include but are not limited to:

- 629 • any stretch in the *belay system* still allows it to effectively protect a fall
- 630 • the likelihood of the abseiler spinning and twisting the belay and abseil ropes together (e.g. free
631 abseiling, abseiling over overhangs).

632 *Bottom braking* is a higher-risk practice and must not be the default backup method.

633 Where it is used, the provider must be satisfied the following risks are managed:

- 634 • reduced redundancy with single-rope protection (including carabiner gate-failure)
- 635 • the participant becoming trapped in the descender
- 636 • the belayer being struck by falling objects
- 637 • insufficient communication or miscommunication between the dispatcher and belayer

638 A bottom-belayed abseil should have:

- 639 • compliance with the AAAS and this GPG
- 640 • a second rope available for rescue at the top of the pitch
- 641 • line of sight and effective communication between dispatcher and belayer
- 642 • braking that will not pull the participant into danger
- 643 • no unprotectable sharp edges
- 644 • a sound reason not to *top belay*

645 Considerations for using a *self-belay* system (e.g. prussik brake) as the belay method to protect the abseiler if
646 they lose control of the descent should include but are not limited to:

- 647 • the abseiler being *competent* in operating the *self-belay* system
- 648 • having available equipment and systems to affect a rescue
- 649 • the stretch in the *belay system* is too great for a *top belay* system or *bottom braking* system to
650 effectively protect a fall.

651 5.4.9 Forward abseiling

652 Some risks associated with *forward abseiling* are different to backwards abseiling and require additional
653 *risk management* practices. *Forward abseiling* can cause significant discomfort to the abseiler.

654

655 Sit harnesses must only be used when they:

- 656 • have manufactures endorsement for use in *forward abseiling*
- 657 • are fit for purpose
- 658 • are fitted as per manufactures instructions and not in reverse
- 659 • fit the abseiler correctly
- 660 • will retain the abseiler if they become inverted.

661 A full body harness must be used when a sit harness is not suitable.

662 The connection to the *belay system* in every case must be checked by a *competent* person, as the abseiler is
663 unable to fully inspect the connection located behind them.

664 The abseiling system used must allow a rescue to be swiftly completed without requiring the abseiler to
665 assist.

666 A *self-belay* system must not be used as the belay method to protect the abseiler if they lose control of the
667 descent when *forward abseiling*.

668 *Forward abseiling activity leaders* must:

- 669 • have experience in *forward abseiling*
- 670 • competent in handling the additional complexities when completing *forward abseiling*.

671 Additional considerations for *forward abseiling* should include but are not limited to:

- 672 • having an appropriate learning progression for the participant
- 673 • any pre-existing medical conditions
- 674 • the abseil site including the length of abseil and slope
- 675 • the equipment used, including its impact on the speed of descent
- 676 • the pre-activity information and briefings provided.

677 5.4.10 Multi-pitch activities

678 A pre-activity check and ongoing monitoring must be used to confirm that the activity follows and uses the
679 correct route and belay station locations.

680 At pitch or ledge transitions where a fall is possible, participants must remain secured (e.g. by a safety line
681 or equivalent system).

682 Participant management practices should be used to prevent overcrowding at belay stations.

683 Participants should have:

- 684 • prior experience in the activity or the opportunity to try a single pitch of the activity, before being
685 committed to completing a *multi-pitch* activity
- 686 • the *competence* in using basic skills to temporarily operate out of line of sight or communication of
687 an *activity leader*.

688 Procedures must enable appropriate communication between groups at each *belay system*.

689 Additional pre-activity information should include but is not limited to the method of transferring from the
690 activity *belay system* to a fixed anchor and back to the activity *belay system*.

691 5.4.11 Activity leader fatigue and repetition

692 Considerations in managing *activity leader* fatigue and task repetition risks should include but are not
693 limited to:

- 694 • group sizes and the number of groups
- 695 • role rotation

696 • suitable breaks.

697 This applies particularly to repetition in multi-activity programs, for example repeatedly dispatching
698 students on a climbing tower over several hours.

699 5.4.12 Activity leader positioning

700 The *activity leader* must be positioned to provide the level of supervision required (direct or indirect), to
701 maintain awareness of those operating the safety system (e.g. the belayer) and to effect a timely rescue if
702 required.

703 5.4.13 Communication

704 A system of clear & unambiguous verbal or non-verbal communications must be used to manage the
705 activity.

706 Where the primary means of communication may be ineffective (e.g. wind or moving water), a secondary
707 system (such as line of sight, radios or whistles) must be available.

708 5.4.14 Participants belaying or spotting

709 Considerations for when participants operate *belay systems* or *spotting* should include but are not limited
710 to:

- 711 • participants are willing and capable
- 712 • appropriate training is provided
- 713 • the need for ongoing monitoring to ensure:
 - 714 ○ correct technique is used
 - 715 ○ attention to the task is maintained
 - 716 ○ equipment is used correctly
- 717 • can appropriately communicate with the climber or abseiler
- 718 • backup systems to support the belayer (e.g. backup belayer).

719 5.4.15 Bouldering

720 Safety considerations when bouldering should include but are not limited to:

- 721 • the hazards within the *fall zones*
- 722 • the possibility of falling objects
- 723 • whether the surface has holds on vertical, inclined and/or overhanging surfaces
- 724 • the body orientations of the person bouldering that the holds permit
- 725 • the need for *spotting*
- 726 • possible use of padding to protect from hazards in the *fall zone* and/or hard landings
- 727 • the supervision required.

728 *Spotting* should be used while participants are *bouldering on natural surfaces*.

729 An appropriate helmet should be worn when *bouldering* and *spotting* on *natural surfaces*.

730 Where participants are spotting they must be instructed and appropriately supervised.

731 5.4.16 Single activity leader working independently

732 Where a single *activity leader* working independently relies on a *belayer*, the belaying and/or spotting
733 provided must be an effective backup (see [7.5.8 Abseil backup systems](#)). Such a leader must have a backup
734 means of communication and of summoning assistance, and participants must be briefed on what to do if
735 the leader becomes incapacitated. Additional procedures that should be considered include:

- 736 • assessment of the participants *competence* to operate the *belay system*
- 737 • the use of a backup *belayer*
- 738 • appropriate selection of the climb route difficulty to minimise the possibility of the *activity leader*
739 falling while climbing.

740 When a single *activity leader* working independently is *lead climbing* or doing *multi-pitch* climbing activities,
741 a procedure for pre-attachment of *dependent participants* to the required systems must be used prior to
742 the *activity leader* leaving to establish the next belay station.

743 5.5 Pre-activity communication

744 See Core GPG (*Participants*).

745 5.6 Participation restrictions

746 See Core GPG (*Participants*).

747 5.7 Vulnerable participants

748 See Core GPG (*Participants*).

749 5.8 Privacy of information

750 See Core GPG (*Participants*).

751 5.9 Activity leader to participants ratios

752 See Core GPG (*Participants*).

753 5.10 Activity briefing

754 See Core GPG (*Participants*).

755 6 Environment

756 Environmental conditions can directly affect the safety of an activity, and everyone involved shares
757 responsibility for protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the places they visit. Weather, fire, water,
758 terrain, wildlife and the requirements of *land owners* and managers all shape what can be done safely and
759 respectfully. Providers must actively identify, reduce and manage both the risks the environment poses and
760 the impact an activity has upon it.

761 For providers, the guidance encourages planning around the localised, in-situ conditions at the specific time
762 and place of an activity, rather than relying on general assumptions. The trigger-point approach can set
763 clear go/no-go and modification thresholds, fire and severe-weather planning can be aligned with the
764 relevant guidance material, and *land manager* requirements confirmed. Activity-specific detail is expected
765 to come from the relevant activity GPG, with this section providing the common baseline.

766

767 6.1 Environment related planning

768 6.1.1 Natural surfaces

769 Any approved installation of permanent artificial anchors in *natural surfaces* must be undertaken by
770 appropriately *competent* person.

771 Any approved modification or removal of *natural surfaces* must be undertaken by an appropriately
772 *competent* person.

773 Safety considerations for *natural surfaces* should include but are not limited to:

- 774 ○ stability of the cliff face
- 775 ○ stability of features (e.g. loose rocks)
- 776 ○ availability of anchors or natural features to use for anchors

- 777 ○ safety requirements for access and egress including the likelihood of a fall from height before and
- 778 after participation
- 779 ○ climatic conditions and weather events or conditions
- 780 ○ ability to retrieve ropes without dislodging or causing rockfalls.

781 6.1.2 Artificial surfaces

782 Permanent *artificial surfaces* constructed specifically for use in activities must comply with relevant
 783 construction standards which may include but is not limited to:

- 784 ○ AS 2316.1.1:2021 Artificial climbing structures and challenge courses Part 1: Fixed and mobile
- 785 artificial climbing and abseiling walls
- 786 ○ AS 3533.1-2009: Design and construction
- 787 ○ AS 3533.1-2009/Amdt 1-2011: Design and construction
- 788 ○ AS 3533.2-2009: Operation and maintenance
- 789 ○ AS 3533.2-2009/Amdt 1-2011: Operation and maintenance
- 790 ○ AS 3533.3-2003: In-service inspections
- 791 ○ EN 795: Personal fall protection equipment – anchor devices
- 792 ○ National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards

793 Temporary *artificial surfaces* should comply with either permanent *artificial surfaces* relevant requirements
 794 or be assessed by a *competent* person that it is fit for purpose for the activity.

795 Compliance with the AS 2316.1.1:2021 Australian Standard may include but is not limited to inspection,
 796 testing and maintenance requirements.

797 6.1.3 Weather information

798 Refer [Appendix T Weather information](#).

799 Refer to the *severe weather* guidance note for current severe-weather triggers and actions, including heat-
 800 related and water-crossing/flooding guidance.

801 6.1.4 Severe weather triggers

802 *Trigger points* must be based on warnings and forecasts from recognised weather information services (e.g.
 803 the Bureau of Meteorology) considered alongside actual weather conditions; providers should consider
 804 information from more than one reputable weather model or service.

805 The *risk management plan* and emergency management plan should include guidance on *trigger points* and
 806 associated actions for:

- 807 ○ *severe weather* warnings
- 808 ○ severe thunderstorm warnings
- 809 ○ coastal waters wind warnings
- 810 ○ tropical cyclone advice: watch and warning
- 811 ○ extreme cold temperature
- 812 ○ extreme hot temperatures.

813 Actions for weather triggers may include but are not limited to:

- 814 ○ cancellation of activity
- 815 ○ evacuating to a safe location
- 816 ○ avoid locations effected by tides or surf
- 817 ○ avoiding areas that have the potential for *flash flooding*
- 818 ○ preparations to avoid the risks associated with lightning
- 819 ○ preparations to avoid the risks associated with blizzards
- 820 ○ moving to areas that are protected from strong winds and/or hail
- 821 ○ managing risks of flying or falling items during strong winds.

822 6.2 Bushfire, prescribed fire and fire danger

823 *See Core GPG (6 Bushfires/fire danger).*

824 6.3 Water crossings and flooding

825 Areas subject to current flood warnings should be avoided.

826 During *severe weather* or thunderstorms or when they are forecast, areas likely to experience *flash flooding*
827 should be avoided.

828 Where access to or from the activity involves extended travel on foot, refer to the *Core GPG* and the
829 Bushwalking Good Practice Guide for water-crossing and flooding guidance.

830 6.4 Environmental conditions, safety and impact management

831 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

832 6.5 Bushfires, prescribed fire and fire danger

833 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

834 6.6 Tree safety

835 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

836 6.7 Drinking water safety

837 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

838 6.8 Food safety

839 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

840 6.9 Wildlife safety

841 Procedures should be in place to minimise the risks associated with wildlife that may be encountered, both
842 to participants and to wildlife.

843 In the context of abseiling and climbing this may include, for example, avoiding disturbance of nesting
844 raptors and other nesting birds during nesting seasons.

845 The types of wildlife encounters that may need to be considered include but are not limited to:

- 846 ○ bees
- 847 ○ hazardous plants (e.g. stinging nettle)
- 848 ○ nesting birds
- 849 ○ snakes
- 850 ○ spiders
- 851 ○ wasps.

852 Considerations in reducing the above wildlife encounters may include but are not limited to:

- 853 ○ briefing participants in how to respond to encounters
- 854 ○ conducting a site assessment before use
- 855 ○ using alternative locations if necessary.

856 *See Core GPG (Environment) for the general requirements and further detail.*

857 6.10 Environmental sustainability procedures

858 *See Core GPG (6 Env. sustainability (App L)).*

859 6.11 Land owner and/or manager requirements

860 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

861 6.12 Water environments

862 *See Core GPG (Environment).*

863 7 Equipment and logistics

864 The right equipment, well chosen and well maintained, is fundamental to safe delivery. Equipment
865 requirements differ from one activity and context to another, spanning personal and group gear, first aid
866 and medication, communications and transport. Deciding what is genuinely needed, keeping it fit for
867 purpose, and organising the logistics around it are everyday responsibilities for any provider.

868 It helps a provider decide what equipment is genuinely needed, who is responsible for it, and how it is kept
869 fit for purpose. The framework can drive equipment checklists matched to each activity, inspection and
870 maintenance schedules appropriate to scale, and communications and first aid provisions matched to the
871 remoteness and risk of the activity. It supports consistent logistics decisions without imposing a single
872 equipment list on every provider.

873 7.1 Framework for equipment requirements

874 *See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).*

875 7.2 Equipment requirements

876 Procedures must be in place to ensure appropriate clothing for the expected and foreseeable weather
877 conditions is available.

878 Procedures must be in place to ensure appropriate footwear for the expected and foreseeable terrain is
879 used.

880 Footwear must be fit for purpose.

881 All equipment that forms part of the safety system must be manufactured for use in, and be fit for purpose
882 in, the context of the activity (e.g. certified to a relevant standard for climbing or abseiling).

883 The use of twin or half ropes may depend on the individual provider's policy and procedures.

884 *Activity leaders* must be able to effect a timely rescue from any point of height using the equipment carried
885 for the activity, which may be the activity equipment itself rather than a separate kit. The capability and
886 equipment required to effect a rescue must be readily accessible at the activity site.

887 Procedures must be in place to ensure a drinking water supply is available.

888 Example equipment lists can be found in [Appendix](#).

889 *See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics) for the general requirements and further detail.*

890 7.3 First aid equipment and medication

891 *See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).*

892 7.4 Communications equipment

893 See Core GPG (*Equipment and logistics*).

894 7.5 Use of equipment

895 7.5.1 Equipment use

896 All equipment must be used with reference to the manufacturers' instructions.

897 Training in the use of equipment used must be provided to *activity leaders* and participants.

898 Before use, the compatibility between and correct functioning of all equipment must be confirmed.

899 An appropriate helmet for protection from falling objects must be worn for

- 900 • all climbing except bouldering on *natural surfaces*
- 901 • all abseiling on natural and *artificial surfaces*
- 902 • when in an area identified as requiring a helmet due to a falling objects risk.

903 An appropriate helmet should be considered when:

- 904 • climbing or bouldering on *artificial surfaces*
- 905 • bouldering on *natural surfaces*.

906 Consideration must be given to if a helmet needs to be worn when *non-actively participating*.

907 Considerations regarding the wearing of helmets must include:

- 908 • the hazards and risks of falling objects (e.g. rock fall, equipment being dropped, falling climber etc.)
- 909 • the hazards and risks of head impact against a surface (e.g. the head hitting: the climbing wall, a
910 feature like an overhang roof, a hard surface in the *fall zone*, an obstacle in *fall zone*, a person in the *fall*
911 *zone* etc.)
- 912 • what hazards the helmet design can provide protection for (e.g. if intent is to protect both impact
913 of a falling object and a lateral blow, the helmet used should be designed for that purpose).

914 An appropriate harness must be used.

915 7.5.2 Equipment loading

916 _Appendix_3_EquipmentEquipment must be selected and loaded within its rated capacity and used in
917 accordance with the manufacturers' instructions, including allowance for the expected peak load and any
918 additional load arising during a rescue.

919 7.5.3 Connections

920 Connection methods, equipment and systems used must be periodically reviewed.

921 Considerations when determining connection methods, equipment and systems should include but are not
922 limited to:

- 923 ○ the type of anchor or anchors being used
- 924 ○ the redundancy available should an anchor fail
- 925 ○ what needs to be attached to the harness (e.g. direct connection to rope or a descender device)
- 926 ○ the experience and context of who is completing the connection of the rope to the harness or
927 descender device
- 928 ○ the availability of a *competent* person to supervise or check the connection that is completed by a
929 participant.

930 7.5.4 Connectors and practices relating to use

931 Carabiners must be used so that no load is intentionally across the minor axis or gate.

932 The risk of connectors becoming undone (for example through vibration, or a rope becoming unclipped)
933 must be managed through, but not limited to, system design, equipment selection and regular inspection.
934 The type of connector used must be suitable for the task.
935

936 The risk of accidental disconnection leading to an uncontrolled fall must be managed, particularly where
937 connections are completed by participants without *direct supervision*. Connections must be stable and
938 secure and suitable for the context and the participants' capability. Acceptable methods include, but are
939 not limited to, tying in with a rewoven figure-eight (or the rope alone), two methods of connection
940 providing redundancy, or a 'three-way' *auto-locking* connector; the method chosen must suit the task.

941 The connection of the belayers harness to 'belay devices' must use either a *locking* carabiner or *auto-*
942 *locking* carabiner.

943 Where a participant completes a connection, a *competent person* must check it; or where a *competent*
944 *person* cannot check it, a method providing redundancy must be used.

945 7.5.5 Chest harnesses

946 The risk of a person inverting or not being retained by a sit harness must be managed (for example with
947 very young participants, certain body shapes, where inversion is intended or likely, or in forward-facing
948 abseils). A combination chest-and-sit harness or a full-body harness is one option for managing this risk; a
949 chest harness must only be used in combination with a sit harness.

950 7.5.6 Other equipment use considerations

951 _6.1_Equipment_requirements_6.2_Use_ofThe risk of a dynamic fall being taken onto static equipment
952 must be managed — *dynamic rope* must be used for the belay rope when *lead climbing*, when a *fall factor*
953 is likely to approach or exceed 0.3, or where lanyards are used at or above anchor height.

954 The risk of unsuitable participant-supplied equipment must be managed; any participant-supplied
955 equipment must comply with the equipment requirements and a procedure for this should be developed.

956 Where a risk of hand injury (e.g. burns) exists, wearing gloves should be considered.

957 7.5.7 Rescue systems and rigging for rescue

958 *Anchor systems* and *belay systems* must be rigged for a timely and effective rescue.

959 Considerations in rigging systems for rescue must include but are not limited to:

- 960 ○ load direction
- 961 ○ load magnitude
- 962 ○ ability to lower the person
- 963 ○ ability to conduct sideways hauls
- 964 ○ ability to enable an *activity leader* to complete a *contact rescue*
- 965 ○ ability to raise the person.

966 7.6 Transport

967 *See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).*

968 7.7 Maintenance of equipment

969 Maintenance and inspection of climbing and abseiling equipment is a critical control that helps ensure
970 every component of the safety system remains serviceable, compatible and fit for purpose.

971 All equipment must be checked that it is serviceable before, during and after each activity or before being
972 used, and any equipment that is not serviceable must be removed from use and reported for repair or
973 replacement.

974 All equipment should be inspected periodically that it is serviceable.

975 Appropriate procedures must be in place for inspections and determining the time periods between
976 inspections.

977 All anchors on *artificial surfaces* used should be periodically inspected as per any relevant '*artificial*
 978 *surfaces*' construction standard by an appropriately *competent* person.

979 Considerations for how regular the assessment of all anchors occurs may include but are not limited to:

- 980 ○ the characteristics of the site
- 981 ○ how many people use the site and how regularly
- 982 ○ any manufacturers' recommendations where relevant
- 983 ○ the equipment being used.

984 Equipment and inspection records must conform with any legislative or regulatory requirements.

985 A record of inspection of anchors on *artificial surfaces* must be maintained.

986 An equipment record should be maintained.

987 Where used, an equipment record should record but is not limited to the:

- 988 ○ item individual identifier
- 989 ○ age (e.g. date of manufacture)
- 990 ○ date of inspections
- 991 ○ recommended or maximum lifespan.

992 A retirement of equipment policy should be developed.

993 Considerations for a retirement of equipment policy may include but are not limited to:

- 994 ○ type of use
- 995 ○ frequency of use
- 996 ○ prevailing conditions when used
- 997 ○ actual deterioration, wear and tear
- 998 ○ extreme usage events or patterns (e.g. impacts, 'catches')
- 999 ○ age
- 1000 ○ years in service
- 1001 ○ manufactures recommendations.

1002 See *Core GPG (Equipment and logistics)* for the general requirements and further detail.

1003 7.8 Storage of equipment

1004 Activity equipment must be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations or
 1005 instructions.

1006 Where no manufacturer's recommendations exist, considerations for storage of equipment may include
 1007 but are not limited to:

- 1008 ○ equipment is clean and dry
- 1009 ○ the storage is free from harmful chemicals
- 1010 ○ the storage is free from damp conditions
- 1011 ○ the storage is free from environmental exposure including Ultra Violet (UV) light and avoids
 1012 extremes of temperature
- 1013 ○ the storage is free from interference of fauna or vermin.

1014

1015 See Core GPG (*Equipment and logistics*) for the general requirements and further detail.

1016 8 Responsibilities and roles

1017 This section sets out the responsibilities and roles of persons involved in the planning and delivery of
1018 abseiling and climbing activities under this guide. It must be read in conjunction with Core GPG Section 8,
1019 which contains the generic responsibilities and roles framework applicable to all outdoor activities. Where a
1020 sub-section below states 'See Core GPG', the full requirements for that sub-section are set out in the Core
1021 GPG and apply without modification to abseiling and climbing activities delivered under this guide.

1022 8.1 Responsibilities and roles framework

1023 See Core GPG Section 8.1 — the responsibilities and roles framework, including the three operational
1024 leadership roles of *Leader*, *Assistant Leader* and *Support person*, applies without modification to abseiling
1025 and climbing activities delivered under this guide.

1026 8.2 Naming conventions

1027 See Core GPG Section 8.2. This guide uses the standard Core GPG role terms — *Leader*, *Assistant Leader*
1028 and *Support person* — throughout. Where a provider uses activity-specific titles, they map as follows:

1029 Abseiling and *climbing guide*, *abseiling guide*, or *climbing guide* — equivalent to *Leader* in the Core
1030 GPG.

1031 Assistant *abseiling guide* or assistant *climbing guide* — equivalent to *Assistant Leader* in the Core
1032 GPG.

1033 *Support person* — the Core GPG term is used unchanged (see Core GPG Section 8.4.3).

1034 8.3 Provider responsibilities to prepare and support leaders

1035 See Core GPG Section 8.3 — the provider responsibilities to prepare and support leaders apply without
1036 modification to abseiling and climbing activities delivered under this guide.

1037 8.4 Leader responsibilities and role descriptions

1038 See Core GPG Section 8.4 — the leader responsibilities and role descriptions, including the role descriptions
1039 for *Leader* (8.4.1), *Assistant Leader* (8.4.2) and *Support person* (8.4.3), and the leader fitness for work
1040 requirements (8.4.4), apply without modification to abseiling and climbing activities delivered under this
1041 guide.

1042 8.4.1 Leader — operational responsibility in the field

1043 The *Leader* carries operational responsibility in the field for the activity and all participants, working within
1044 the provider's systems and direction; see Core GPG Section 8.4.1 for the full role description.

1045 8.4.2 Assistant Leader — delegated responsibility

1046 The *Assistant Leader* supports the *Leader* and carries delegated operational responsibility for defined
1047 elements or participant groups, operating under the *Leader's* direction; see Core GPG Section 8.4.2.

1048 8.4.3 Support person

1049 The *Support person* is a non-technical role that assists *activity leaders* in managing participants and fulfilling
1050 general supervisory and organisational duties, and does not carry the technical responsibilities of a *Leader*
1051 or *Assistant Leader*. The key responsibilities of this role, and its important limitations — including that a
1052 *support person* must not be treated as an *activity leader* for the purpose of calculating *activity leader* to
1053 participant ratios unless they also hold the relevant abseiling and climbing knowledge and skill — are as set
1054 out in Core GPG Section 8.4.3.

1055 8.4.4 Leader fitness for work

1056 Leaders and *assistant leaders* must be physically and psychosocially fit for the demands of the role;
1057 providers must take reasonable steps to manage risks arising from factors including physical and
1058 psychosocial fitness, alcohol, medication, other substances and fatigue; see Core GPG Section 8.4.4.

1059 8.4.4.1 Physical and psychosocial fitness

1060 The provider must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that each person assigned to a Leader or
1061 *Assistant Leader* role is physically and psychosocially capable of the demands of abseiling and climbing —
1062 which vary with activity variant, surface type, site exposure and multi-pitch complexity. Leaders must self-
1063 assess their fitness before accepting a role; see Core GPG Section 8.4.4.1.

1064 8.4.4.2 Alcohol, medication and other substances

1065 Alcohol and other substance consumption should be discouraged during or immediately before an activity
1066 where it could impair a leader's performance. Leaders must carry any required medication appropriate to
1067 the activity duration and environment; see Core GPG Section 8.4.4.2.

1068 8.4.4.3 Fatigue

1069 Physical and mental fatigue creates significant risk, particularly in technically demanding abseiling and
1070 climbing activities where sustained concentration is required; providers must implement reasonable
1071 controls including appropriate scheduling, role allocation and self-assessment procedures; see Core GPG
1072 Section 8.4.4.3.

1073 8.5 Leader readiness and capability

1074 See Core GPG Section 8.5 — the leader readiness and capability requirements, including leadership
1075 knowledge, skill and experience (8.5.1), provider responsibilities under the Outdoor Leader KSE Framework
1076 (8.5.2), first aid (8.5.3), knowledge and skill acquisition (8.5.4), verification (8.5.5), currency (8.5.6) and
1077 verification and currency records (8.5.7), apply to abseiling and climbing activities delivered under this
1078 guide.

1079 The detailed knowledge, skill and experience required of a Leader is set out in Appendix M of this guide,
1080 and of an *Assistant Leader* in Appendix N. The program planning matrix (leader-matching tool) is set out in
1081 Core GPG Appendix O, the recognition-of-competence pathways in Core GPG Appendix P, and the
1082 indicative experience bands in Core GPG Appendix Q.

1083 8.5.1 Leadership knowledge, skill and experience

1084 The provider must ensure each person in a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role holds integrated knowledge, skill
1085 and experience appropriate to the responsibilities of the role and the specific abseiling and climbing
1086 context. This is a non-delegable provider obligation that cannot be satisfied by a qualification alone — it
1087 requires active, documented verification against the role's responsibilities; see Core GPG Section 8.5.1.

1088 8.5.2 Provider responsibilities under the Outdoor Leader KSE Framework

1089 Providers must verify the capability of every person assigned to a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role across the
1090 nine domains of the AAAS Outdoor Leader KSE Framework, scaled to the activity context and the capability
1091 level required for the activity; see Core GPG Section 8.5.2. The abseiling and climbing activity scope, and the
1092 leader requirements that flow from activity variant and operating environment, are set out at the head of
1093 Appendix M.

1094 8.5.3 First aid

1095 Leaders must hold a current first-aid qualification appropriate to the activity, environment and applicable
1096 work health and safety law(s) and/or regulation(s); for remote cliff-site operations a remote or wilderness
1097 first-aid qualification should be considered. See Core GPG Section 8.5.3.

1098 8.5.4 Knowledge and skill acquisition

1099 Knowledge, skill and experience may be developed through, but is not limited to, formal qualifications,
1100 industry training, provider-based programs, structured participation or a combination; no single method
1101 has primacy; see Core GPG Section 8.5.4.

1102 8.5.5 Verification

1103 For each person in a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role, the provider must verify knowledge, skill, experience
1104 and currency in context before the person carries the role. The detailed abseiling and climbing knowledge,
1105 skill and experience against which verification is made is set out in Appendix M (Leader) and Appendix N
1106 (*Assistant Leader*), and pathway guidance is in Core GPG Appendix P; see Core GPG Section 8.5.5.

1107 8.5.6 Currency

1108 Knowledge, skill and experience must be current. The provider must determine the minimum currency and
1109 recency requirements appropriate to the context — having regard to the activity variant, the operating
1110 environment (natural or *artificial surface*, single-pitch or multi-pitch), the role, the frequency of practice,
1111 and the consequences of a lapse in capability — and verify currency for each person in a leadership role
1112 before they carry the role. The means by which currency may be established are set out in Core GPG
1113 Section 8.5.6.

1114 8.5.7 Verification and Currency Records

1115 Providers must maintain records of how verification was conducted — including the basis, method, date
1116 and person responsible — for each person in a leadership role, retained consistent with the provider's
1117 record-keeping obligations; see Core GPG Section 8.5.7.

1118 Glossary

1119 Also, refer terms and definitions from Core GPG.

1120 AAAS: Australian Adventure Activity Standard – See Introduction for details.

1121 *Abseiling*: descending vertical or near vertical *natural surfaces* or *artificial surfaces* using ropes and
1122 descending friction devices to manage the descent. It is also known as rappelling.

1123 *Abseiling assistant guide*: is an *Assistant Leader* with some of competencies of an Abseil Guide and is able
1124 to lead participants in parts of an abseiling activity.

1125 *Abseiling guide*: is a *Leader* able to lead participants throughout an abseiling activity.

1126 *Abseiling instructor*: is a *Leader* able to teach participants to achieve the skills and knowledge required to
1127 participate in an abseiling activity independently.

1128 *Anchor*: Any load bearing attachment to which any part of a *belay system* is attached.

1129 *Anchor system*: a group of individual *anchors* to which any part of a *belay system* is attached.

1130 *Artificial surface(s)*: a man-made structure. Also called ‘artificial structures’ and may include but is not
1131 limited to portable climbing/abseiling walls, climbing gyms, challenge course elements, fixed
1132 climbing/abseiling or other towers, buildings and bridges.

1133 *Auto-belay system*: A device that acts as a *belay system* and that provides for the safe retardation of the
1134 climber to a controlled rate of descent such that there is no hazardous impact with the ground.

1135 *Belay System*: The means by which the climber or abseiler is protected from an uncontrolled fall or descent.

1136 *Belayer*: A person that operates the *belay system*.

1137 *Bottom belay*: Belaying a climber or abseiler from the bottom of a *pitch*.

1138 *Bottom braking*: The controlling of the descent of an abseiler, by a *belayer* located below the abseiler
 1139 applying tension to the abseil rope.

1140 *Bouldering*: A form of climbing activity, limited in height and for which fall safety can be achieved by the
 1141 provision of an impact absorbing system, by a *spotter* providing control of a fall or by a combination of
 1142 these measures.

1143 *Bushwalking*: walking in natural areas.

1144 *Carabiner*: (refer connector).

1145 *Camping*: the use of a temporary site for overnight camping.

1146 *Caving*: refer Caving GPG.

1147 *Canyoning*: refer Canyoning GPG.

1148 *Climbing*: ascending, traversing or descending vertical or near vertical *natural surfaces* or *artificial surfaces*.
 1149 (Also see *rock climbing*).

1150 *Climbing assistant guide*: is an *Assistant Leader* with some of competencies of a *Climbing Guide* and is able
 1151 to lead participants in parts of a climbing activity.

1152 *Climbing guide*: is a *Leader* able to lead participants throughout a climbing activity.

1153 *Climbing instructor*: is a *Leader* able to teach participants to achieve the skills and knowledge required to
 1154 participate in a climbing activity independently.

1155 *Connector(s)*: a metal device used to link components together. A connector may be:

- 1156 • *Non-locking*: a connector that cannot be locked to prevent it opening.
- 1157 • *Locking*: a connector that can be manually locked and unlocked to reduce the possibility of it
 1158 opening
- 1159 • *Auto-locking*: a connector that will automatically lock to prevent it from opening and requires two
 1160 or more deliberate actions to unlock.

1161 *Contact rescue*: a rescue requiring an *activity leader* to manoeuvre to the persons actual location to
 1162 physically assist them.

1163 *Dynamic rope*: a specially constructed rope that is somewhat elastic under load. The elastic 'stretch' under
 1164 load is what makes the rope 'dynamic'. (Also see *static rope*.)

1165 *Fall factor*: is the ratio of the height of a fall (h) (measured before the rope or lanyard begins to stretch) and
 1166 the rope or lanyard length available to absorb the energy of the fall (L). It is used as a representation of the
 1167 severity of a fall when arrested by a *belay system*. It is calculated by (h) divided by (L).

1168 *Fall height*: The vertical distance between the climber's or abseiler's lowest body element and the surface
 1169 beneath.

1170 *Fall zone*: The surface that can be hit by a climber or abseiler falling.

1171 *Feature*: a part of a *natural surface* or *artificial surface*.

1172 *Flash flooding*: is flooding in a localised area with a rapid onset, usually as the result of relatively short
 1173 intense bursts of rainfall.

1174 *Forward abseiling*: *abseiling* while facing towards the ground.

1175 *GPGs*: Good Practice Guide(s) – See Introduction for details.

1176 *Lead climbing*: where the climber ascends a *pitch* while periodically attaching their rope to fixed or
 1177 removable protection.

1178 *Minimum Breaking Strength (MBS)*: is the magnitude of a load that may permanently distort or damage
 1179 equipment but not cause it to break. (Refer [Appendix W Equipment load ratings](#)).

1180 *Master Anchor Point*: (also known as Focal or Power Point) The main connection point of an *anchor*
 1181 constructed from multiple anchors or pieces of protection providing increased security through
 1182 redundancy.

1183 *Multi-pitch*: a section of a *natural surface* or *artificial surface* that to ascend, traverse or descend, progress
 1184 is made by using more than one *pitch* and establishing *belay systems* mid route.

1185 *Natural surface(s)*: the geologic structure and flora that forms a cliff or steep face.

1186 *Non-actively participating*: a participant that is waiting to but is not currently doing the activity.

1187 *Pitch*: a section of a *natural surface* or *artificial surface* that requires no greater than one length of rope to
 1188 ascend, traverse or descend. (Also see *multi-pitch* and *single-pitch*.)

1189 *Rappelling*: see *abseiling*.

1190 *Rock Climbing*: ascending, traversing or descending vertical or near vertical *natural surfaces*. At times also
 1191 used to describe climbing on *artificial surfaces*. (Also see *climbing*.)

1192 *Safety Factor*: the ratio between the *Minimum Breaking Strength* (MBS) and *Safe Working Load* (SWL) to
 1193 provide a safety margin. It is expressed as a ratio, example 8:1. (Refer [Appendix W Equipment load ratings](#)).

1194 *Safe Working Load (SWL)*: is the magnitude of load that does not permanently distort, weaken, damage or
 1195 break equipment and includes a safety margin. (Refer [Appendix W Equipment load ratings](#)).

1196 *Self-belay*: a *belay system* that requires the climber or abseiler to operate and does not use an independent
 1197 belayer or *auto-belay system*. For example, abseiling with a prussik brake.

1198 *Single-pitch*: a section of a *natural surface* or *artificial surface* that requires no greater than one length of
 1199 rope to ascend, traverse or descend.

1200 *Sports climbing*: *lead climbing* where the *belay system* relies on permanent fixed anchors for protection.
 1201 (Also see *traditional climbing*)

1202 *Spotter(s)*: a person or persons who are *spotting*.

1203 *Spotting*: a support process provided by a person, or persons, who offer physical protection of the head and
 1204 upper body of a person should they fall.

1205 *Stated Strength*: the magnitude of load that is either the *Minimum Breaking Strength* (MBS) or *Safe*
 1206 *Working Load* (SWL) marked on equipment or listed in manufacturer's literature. (Refer [Appendix W](#)
 1207 [Equipment load ratings](#)).

1208 *Static rope*: a specially constructed low stretch kernmantle rope, that has low elongation under load. The
 1209 low elongation or 'stretch' under load is what makes the rope 'static'. (Also see *dynamic rope*.)

1210 *Top belay*: Belaying a climber or abseiler from the top of a *pitch*.

1211 *Top-rope climbing*: climbing where the *belay system* has its *anchor* or *anchor system* at the top of the *pitch*
 1212 and uses either a *top belay* or *bottom belay*.

1213 *Traditional climbing*: *lead climbing* where the *belay system* relies on *anchors* for protection that the climber
 1214 places during the climb. (Also see *sports climbing*).

1215 *Via ferrata climbing*: climbing where the safety system does not use a *belayer* and relies on a series of
 1216 permanent fixed anchors that limit the distance a climber can fall.

1217 *Waiting areas*: a location in which to wait prior to undertaking the activity, where it is reasonable for a
 1218 person to not be required to use equipment to protect them from a fall from height.

1220 Acronyms

1221 The following acronyms are used in this Good Practice Guide.

1222 AAAS: Australian Adventure Activity Standard

1223 GPG: Good Practice Guide

1224 ISO: International Organization for Standardization

1225 MBS: Minimum Breaking Strength

1226 NFPA: National Fire Protection Association

1227 OCA: Outdoor Council of Australia

1228 SWL: Safe Working Load

1229 UV: Ultraviolet

1230 Appendices

1231 Appendix A Principal legal obligations

1232 *See Core GPG (Appendix A).*

1233 Appendix B Management of Risk

1234 *See Core GPG (Appendix B).*

1235 Appendix C Summary of AS ISO 31000 – risk management

1236 *See Core GPG (Appendix C).*

1237 Appendix D Risk management process

1238 *See Core GPG (Appendix D).*

1239 Appendix E Risk analysis information

1240 *See Core GPG (Appendix E).*

1241 Appendix F Risk management plan template examples

1242 *See Core GPG (Appendix F).*

1243 Appendix G Dynamic risk assessment process

1244 *See Core GPG (Appendix G).*

1245 Appendix H Benefit–Risk Assessment

1246 *See Core GPG (Appendix H).*

1247 Appendix I Emergency management planning framework

1248 *See Core GPG (Appendix I).*

1249 Appendix J Health & wellbeing considerations for risk management

1250 *See Core GPG (Appendix J).*

1251 Appendix K Privacy of information

1252 *See Core GPG (Appendix K).*

1253 Appendix L Environmental sustainability procedures

1254 *See Core GPG (Appendix L).*

1255 Appendix M First aid and medication considerations

1256 *See Core GPG (Appendix M).*

1257 Appendix N Knowledge, skill and experience — Leader

1258 Each knowledge, skill and experience requirement in this appendix is to be applied by the provider within
1259 the context of the planned abseiling or climbing activity — including the activity variant (abseiling or
1260 climbing, natural or artificial surface, single-pitch or multi-pitch), the operational setting, the participant
1261 group and the provider's own program structure. The requirements are not a minimum checklist to be
1262 satisfied mechanically — they are a framework for the provider to assess and confirm the capability of each
1263 person in a leadership role against the demands of the specific activity. This appendix contains only the
1264 requirements specific to abseiling and climbing; the generic Leader knowledge, skill and experience is set
1265 out in Core GPG Appendix M.

1266 Activity scope and leader requirements

1267 This guide applies to the planning and delivery of abseiling and climbing activities across the range of
1268 activity variants and settings commonly undertaken in Australia. The knowledge, skill and experience
1269 required of a Leader varies with the activity variant and the operating environment in which the activity is
1270 conducted.

1271 Abseiling and climbing encompasses a technically diverse range of activities on natural and artificial
1272 surfaces, from single-pitch activities in controlled settings to multi-pitch operations on natural rock faces.
1273 Each variant carries distinct technical demands, and the Leader must hold capability appropriate to each
1274 variant they are leading.

1275 In addition to the primary activity variant, the operational setting — natural versus artificial surface, single-
1276 pitch versus multi-pitch, and the level of provider support available — directly affects the knowledge, skill
1277 and experience required. Leaders must not lead at a complexity or in an environment beyond their verified
1278 competence.

1279 *Table N.1: Activity variants and leader technical requirements*

Activity variant	Setting and characteristics
Single-pitch abseiling — natural surface	Abseiling on natural rock (cliff, gorge, rock formation). Single drop from rigged anchor. Top-belay, bottom-braking or self-belay backup system.
Multi-pitch abseiling — natural surface	Multiple successive pitches on natural rock. Two activity leaders required per active belay system: one dispatching at top, one managing the lower station.
Abseiling — artificial surface	Purpose-built abseil towers, portable abseil frames, and climbing walls configured for abseiling. Manufacturer and operator specifications govern use.

Top-rope climbing — natural surface	Rope fixed above the participant from a rigged anchor. Single-pitch on natural rock. Participant connected to rope at all times.
Lead climbing — natural surface	Participant clips protection as they ascend; fall potential exceeds fall on top-rope. Greater consequence of belay error. Single or multi-pitch.
Multi-pitch climbing — natural surface	Multiple successive pitches on natural rock. Ratio of 1 guide per maximum 4 participants for multi-pitch. Significant rescue complexity.
Climbing — artificial surface (indoor wall, auto-belay)	Indoor or outdoor climbing wall. May include auto-belay systems (ratio: 1 guide per 8 auto-belay systems). Venue operator requirements apply.
Via ferrata	Fixed iron protection (rungs, cables, ladders, bridges) on natural terrain. Y-shaped energy-absorbing lanyard required. High fall-factor risk between protection points.
Bouldering	Low-level climbing without ropes. Crash pads and spotters are the primary safety controls. No height restriction applies to technical difficulty.

1280 The program planning matrix (leader-matching tool), which scales leader requirements by the operational
1281 context — provider support and backup availability, environment and proximity, and activity complexity —
1282 is set out in Core GPG Appendix O. The domains below contain only the requirements specific to abseiling
1283 and climbing; they do not repeat the generic content of Core GPG Appendix M.

1284 Safety and risk management

1285 the Leader identifies and manages hazards specific to fall-from-height activities on natural and artificial
1286 surfaces. This domain covers activity-specific hazard assessment and management that adds to the generic
1287 safety framework in the Core.

1288 Knowledge

1289 The Leader understands the fall-from-height hazards specific to abseiling and climbing, including anchor
1290 and belay system risks, rockfall, harness hang syndrome and the effects of leader fatigue on repetitive
1291 technical tasks.

1292 This should include, but is not limited to: fall factor and impact force on anchors and participants;
1293 conditions under which a fall causes serious injury on belay; rockfall risk from participant movement, rope
1294 drag and equipment displacement; swinging fall hazards; entanglement and snag hazards from harness and
1295 descender fittings; harness hang syndrome and the critical rescue time window; anchor failure risk
1296 including corrosion and root damage; and leader fatigue risk from repetitive belaying and anchor work.

1297 Skills

1298 The Leader applies fall-from-height risk assessment and monitoring skills, including anchor and belay
1299 inspection, rockfall management, harness hang syndrome recognition and leader fatigue controls.

1300 This should include, but is not limited to: inspecting anchors, belay systems and equipment before each use
1301 and throughout the activity; managing rockfall risk through participant and leader positioning and helmet
1302 fitting; conducting dynamic risk assessment at each site and in changing conditions including wet rock;
1303 recognising harness hang syndrome and executing immediate lowering and management; and managing
1304 leader fatigue through role rotation and scheduling.

1305 Experience recommended

1306 The Leader has operated in abseiling and climbing settings across a range of conditions, variants and
1307 surface types.

1308 This should include but is not limited to: managing anchor and belay systems across a range of surface
1309 types, variants and conditions; and recognising and responding to equipment failure indicators, rockfall
1310 incidents and participant safety events.

1311 Technical activity leadership

1312 the Leader applies the technical knowledge, skill and experience specific to abseiling and climbing across
1313 the variants within their scope, including equipment, anchor systems, belay systems, rescue techniques and
1314 the specific demands of each activity variant.

1315 Knowledge

1316 The Leader understands the technical content of abseiling and climbing across the variants within their
1317 scope, including equipment, anchor systems, belay systems, rescue techniques and the specific demands of
1318 each activity variant.

1319 This should include, but is not limited to: natural surface single-pitch and multi-pitch abseiling systems
1320 (descenders, belay and safety systems, anchor types and assessment, multi-pitch procedures, forward
1321 abseiling); artificial surface abseil systems and operator requirements; top-rope and lead climbing anchor
1322 and belay systems on natural surfaces including equalisation principles and lead-specific belay; multi-pitch
1323 climbing procedures and ratios; artificial wall and auto-belay systems and venue requirements; via ferrata
1324 lanyard function, fall factor and sequential clipping technique; bouldering crash pad placement and
1325 spotting; and general requirements including harness and helmet selection, rope management, knot tying
1326 and rescue systems.

1327 Skills

1328 The Leader applies the practical technical skills required to operate the relevant activity variants safely,
1329 including rigging, belaying, equipment management and rescue.

1330 This should include, but is not limited to: rigging and operating single and multi-pitch abseil systems on
1331 natural and artificial surfaces; rigging and managing top-rope anchor systems and belaying on natural
1332 surfaces; managing lead belay on natural surfaces; managing multi-pitch climbing systems; operating auto-
1333 belay systems and setting up artificial wall sessions; leading via ferrata and briefing sequential clipping;
1334 placing crash pads and managing spotting for bouldering; tying and verifying all required knots; performing
1335 stuck-abseiler and stuck-climber rescues; and maintaining equipment records.

1336 Experience recommended

1337 The Leader has operated the activity variants within their scope in field conditions across a range of
1338 settings, rock types and participant ability levels.

1339 This should include but is not limited to: rigging and managing anchor and belay systems for the relevant
1340 variants in real conditions; briefing, equipping and supervising participant groups across a range of ability
1341 levels; practising and applying rescue techniques for stuck abseilers and climbers; and leading participants
1342 on multi-pitch or via ferrata routes where these form part of the activity scope.

1343 Leadership and group management

1344 the Leader manages the supervision challenges specific to abseiling and climbing, particularly managing
1345 participants who are active simultaneously with those who are waiting, and the positioning demands on
1346 the Leader throughout delivery.

1347 Knowledge

1348 The Leader understands the supervision challenges specific to abseiling and climbing, including managing
1349 split active and waiting participant groups and the positioning requirements that apply throughout delivery.

1350 This should include, but is not limited to: the supervision challenge of managing active and waiting
1351 participants simultaneously, including the requirement that waiting participants self-manage as briefed or
1352 are separately supervised; and positioning requirements to maintain observation of belay system
1353 performance, participant behaviour and environmental hazards throughout.

1354 **Skills**

1355 The Leader applies the supervision and coordination skills required to manage split participant groups and
1356 assistant guides at abseiling and climbing sites.

1357 This should include, but is not limited to: positioning within the activity site to maintain supervision of
1358 active and waiting participants; and coordinating assistant guides in managing belay systems, tie-in
1359 inspection and waiting group supervision.

1360 **Experience recommended**

1361 The Leader has managed groups with split active and waiting participants at abseiling and climbing sites,
1362 including coordinating assistant guides.

1363 This should include but is not limited to: managing groups with active and waiting participants across a
1364 range of abseiling and climbing sites and activity variants, including coordinating assistant guides across
1365 different site configurations.

1366 Decision-making and judgement

1367 the Leader applies decision-making requirements specific to abseiling and climbing, including the proceed,
1368 modify and cancel triggers particular to cliff-based and height activities.

1369 **Knowledge**

1370 The Leader understands the specific proceed, modify and cancel triggers for abseiling and climbing
1371 activities, including the environmental, equipment and participant factors that require a change in plan.

1372 This should include, but is not limited to: wet rock, loose rock encountered during the activity, deteriorating
1373 weather, lightning risk at exposed cliff sites, participant fatigue and fear response, anchor integrity
1374 concerns, and equipment issues identified during the activity.

1375 **Skills**

1376 The Leader applies assessment and decision-making skills to make and communicate proceed, modify or
1377 cancel decisions for abseiling and climbing activities in response to changing conditions.

1378 This should include, but is not limited to: assessing rock condition (wet, loose, lichen-covered), approaching
1379 weather, participant readiness and equipment status before and during the activity; and communicating
1380 proceed, modify or cancel decisions clearly to the group and assistant guides.

1381 **Experience recommended**

1382 The Leader has made proceed, modify or cancel decisions for abseiling and climbing activities across a
1383 range of changing conditions.

1384 This should include but is not limited to: making and reviewing proceed, modify or cancel decisions in
1385 response to changing rock conditions, weather, participant factors and equipment issues across a range of
1386 activity variants.

1387 Planning and program management

1388 the Leader manages pre-activity site survey and site-specific planning requirements for abseiling and
1389 climbing venues that extend beyond the generic planning framework in the Core.

1390 **Knowledge**

1391 The Leader understands the pre-activity site survey and site-specific planning requirements for abseiling
1392 and climbing venues, including the additional considerations for operating with limited or no assistant
1393 guide support.

1394 This should include, but is not limited to: site survey requirements including assessment of anchor
1395 condition, rock quality, route characteristics and ratings, hazard zones, participant waiting areas and
1396 emergency egress; and planning requirements when operating as the sole activity leader, including
1397 additional equipment, communication and risk management measures.

1398 **Skills**

1399 The Leader applies pre-activity site survey and planning skills at abseiling and climbing venues.

1400 This should include, but is not limited to: conducting a pre-activity site survey including anchor assessment,
1401 route condition, environmental hazards and egress planning before participant arrival; and adapting plans
1402 where site conditions differ from those anticipated.

1403 **Experience recommended**

1404 The Leader has planned and conducted pre-activity site surveys at abseiling and climbing sites across a
1405 range of conditions and variants.

1406 This should include but is not limited to: conducting pre-activity site surveys at natural and artificial
1407 abseiling and climbing sites across a range of conditions; and adjusting the activity plan in response to
1408 survey findings.

1409 **Environment and place-based knowledge**

1410 the Leader applies environmental and terrain knowledge specific to abseiling and climbing environments,
1411 including rock type assessment, site characteristics and the environmental factors that affect activity safety.

1412 **Knowledge**

1413 The Leader understands the rock types, site characteristics, seasonal hazards and emergency egress
1414 considerations relevant to abseiling and climbing venues in Australia.

1415 This should include, but is not limited to: rock types common to Australian climbing sites (sandstone,
1416 granite, limestone, basalt, metamorphic) and their strength, texture and weathering properties; the
1417 Australian climbing grading system and how grades translate to participant and leader demands; cliff and
1418 crag site characteristics including seasonal hazards (nesting raptors, flooding at the cliff base, lichen build-
1419 up after rain); and emergency egress routes and emergency services access from cliff sites.

1420 **Skills**

1421 The Leader applies rock condition assessment and site assessment skills at abseiling and climbing venues
1422 across the conditions within their scope.

1423 This should include, but is not limited to: assessing rock type and condition including identifying loose rock,
1424 wet sections and lichen before and during the activity; and identifying, managing and briefing participants
1425 on site access and emergency egress routes.

1426 **Experience recommended**

1427 The Leader has operated at abseiling and climbing sites across multiple seasons and conditions.

1428 This should include but is not limited to: operating at abseiling and climbing sites across multiple seasons
1429 and conditions, including wet conditions and sites with seasonal wildlife or access restrictions; and applying
1430 site-specific knowledge to adjust the activity or manage access requirements.

1431 Communication and interpersonal skills

1432 the Leader applies communication requirements specific to abseiling and climbing, where activity geometry
1433 and environmental noise frequently limit voice communication between leader and participant.

1434 Knowledge

1435 The Leader understands the call-and-response communication systems used in abseiling and climbing and
1436 the alternative methods used when voice communication is limited.

1437 This should include, but is not limited to: standard call-and-response sequences ('on belay / belay on',
1438 'climbing / climb on', 'off belay / belay off'); and procedures used when cliff geometry, wind or noise limits
1439 voice communication between the Leader and participants or assistant guides.

1440 Skills

1441 The Leader applies standard climbing and abseiling communication calls and adapts to alternative methods
1442 when voice communication is limited.

1443 This should include, but is not limited to: using standard communication calls clearly with participants and
1444 assistant guides; and adapting to rope tugs, whistle signals or visual signals when voice communication is
1445 limited by distance, cliff geometry or ambient noise.

1446 Experience recommended

1447 The Leader has used standard communication calls and alternative communication methods effectively
1448 across a range of abseiling and climbing sites.

1449 This should include but is not limited to: using standard climbing and abseiling calls and alternative
1450 methods in field conditions across a range of site types, including multi-pitch settings and high-noise
1451 environments.

1452 Self-management and professional practice

1453 Not modified for abseiling and climbing — the requirements of Core GPG Appendix M (domain M.8) apply
1454 in full.

1455 Outdoor living, activity and travel skills

1456 the Leader applies approach, access and travel skills specific to abseiling and climbing, including equipment
1457 management for cliff-site operations and multi-day or remote settings.

1458 Knowledge

1459 The Leader understands the approach, access and equipment management requirements for natural
1460 climbing and abseiling sites, including load-carrying, off-track travel and multi-day expedition logistics.

1461 This should include, but is not limited to: approach and access requirements including load-carrying with
1462 climbing or abseiling gear packs, off-track travel to cliff bases and the physical demands of remote cliff site
1463 access; and multi-day climbing rack and equipment management for expeditions in remote or alpine
1464 settings.

1465 Skills

1466 The Leader applies the approach, gear management and racking skills required for abseiling and climbing
1467 sites.

1468 This should include, but is not limited to: carrying and managing climbing and abseiling equipment to and
1469 from remote or difficult-access cliff sites; and organising and racking climbing equipment efficiently for
1470 multi-pitch and multi-route sessions.

1471 **Experience recommended**

1472 The Leader has accessed and operated at natural climbing and abseiling sites requiring off-track travel or
1473 significant approach.

1474 This should include but is not limited to: accessing and operating at natural climbing and abseiling sites
1475 requiring off-track travel or significant approach across a range of conditions and seasons.

1476 **Appendix O Knowledge, skill and experience — Assistant Leader**

1477 This appendix sets out the knowledge, skill and experience expected of a person carrying the Assistant
1478 Leader (assistant abseiling guide or assistant climbing guide) role described in Section 8.4.2. The role is
1479 structured against the same nine domains as Appendix M; the requirements of Appendix M apply, with the
1480 variation that each domain is applied at the level of the delegated tasks, under the direction of the Leader
1481 and within the provider's systems. This appendix contains only the requirements specific to abseiling and
1482 climbing; see also Core GPG Appendix N.

1483 **Safety and risk management**

1484 As for Safety and risk management — applied at the level of the delegated tasks. The Assistant Leader must
1485 be able to recognise and report the fall-from-height hazards relevant to their assigned role — including
1486 rockfall risk, equipment failure indicators and harness hang syndrome — and must know and follow the
1487 Leader's safety procedures and emergency action steps.

1488 **Technical activity leadership**

1489 As for Technical activity leadership — applied to the delegated tasks only. The Assistant Leader must hold
1490 the technical knowledge and skills for the specific tasks assigned by the Leader, but is not required to hold
1491 the full technical capability needed for independent leadership across all variants. The Assistant Leader
1492 must be able to supervise participant tie-in and harness checks, assist at the base of an abseil or climbing
1493 wall, manage waiting participants, and assist the Leader with equipment checks — and must not operate
1494 anchors, belay systems or rescue procedures beyond their confirmed competence without the Leader's
1495 direct supervision.

1496 **Leadership and group management**

1497 As for Leadership and group management — applied to the assigned participant sub-group or delegated
1498 task. The Assistant Leader must be able to supervise waiting participants, manage the assigned section of
1499 the activity, and report changed conditions or participant difficulties promptly to the Leader.

1500 **Decision-making and judgement**

1501 As for Decision-making and judgement — limited to the scope of decisions delegated by the Leader. The
1502 Assistant Leader must understand the proceed, modify and cancel triggers and escalation procedures used
1503 by the Leader, be able to recognise developing hazards and report them immediately, and make immediate
1504 safety decisions within their assigned tasks while referring all anchor, belay and rescue decisions to the
1505 Leader.

1506 **Planning and program management**

1507 As for Planning and program management — limited to supporting the Leader's plans. The Assistant Leader
1508 must be familiar with the activity plan, their specific assigned tasks, the emergency management plan and
1509 the communication arrangements with the Leader, and must be able to carry out pre-activity equipment
1510 checks for assigned participants.

1511 Environment and place-based knowledge

1512 As for Environment and place-based knowledge — sufficient for the assigned tasks. The Assistant Leader
1513 must have enough site knowledge to carry out their assigned duties safely, including awareness of rockfall
1514 zones, waiting area hazards, site access and emergency egress routes.

1515 Communication and interpersonal skills

1516 As for Communication and interpersonal skills — the Assistant Leader must be proficient in standard
1517 climbing and abseiling communication calls, be able to brief participants on their assigned task
1518 requirements, and communicate promptly with the Leader about anything affecting safe delivery or
1519 participant welfare.

1520 Self-management and professional practice

1521 As for Self-management and professional practice — the Assistant Leader must maintain the fitness,
1522 currency and professional standards required for the tasks they are assigned, self-assess fitness for work,
1523 and act on feedback from the Leader.

1524 Outdoor living, activity and travel skills

1525 As for Outdoor living, activity and travel skills — the Assistant Leader must be able to carry and manage
1526 equipment appropriate to their assigned tasks, travel safely to and from the activity site, and support the
1527 Leader in managing the group's access and equipment needs at the site.

1528 Appendix P Recognition of competence: pathways to verification

1529 See Core GPG Appendix P. The recognition-of-competence pathways — formal qualifications and training
1530 courses, industry training, provider-based verification, structured participation and experiential learning,
1531 and combining methods — apply without modification to abseiling and climbing. For abseiling and climbing,
1532 industry qualifications issued under Outdoor Council of Australia or equivalent schemes may be relevant to
1533 formal-pathway verification, but are not mandatory — capability verified through provider-based
1534 assessment is equally valid where it addresses the requirements of Appendix M.

1535 Appendix Q Indicative experience bands and evidence expectations

1536 See Core GPG Appendix Q. The indicative experience bands and evidence expectations support the
1537 provider's verification judgement under Section 8.5 and apply to abseiling and climbing, adjusted for the
1538 activity variant, operating environment and role. When applying the bands, providers should have regard to
1539 the technical demands of each variant and the operating environment (natural or artificial surface, single-
1540 pitch or multi-pitch, front-country or remote).

1541 Appendix R Australian Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings 1542 and trigger points

1543 *See Core GPG (Appendix R).*

1544 Appendix S Program planning matrix: leader-matching tool

1545 See Core GPG Appendix O. The program planning matrix (leader-matching tool) applies without
1546 modification to abseiling and climbing. Providers rate the three factors — provider support and backup
1547 availability, environment and proximity, and activity complexity — and read off the recommended
1548 minimum leader configuration. For abseiling and climbing, activity complexity is informed by the activity
1549 variant and operational setting (see Appendix M, Activity scope and leader requirements).

1550 Appendix T Weather information

1551 *See the Core GPG.*

1552 Appendix U Equipment

1553 The equipment required and the appropriate “type” of equipment used is dependent on the specific
1554 context of the activity.

1555 Equipment used for abseiling and climbing may include but is not limited to:

1556 Abseiling and climbing specific equipment

- 1557 ○ helmet
- 1558 ○ harness
- 1559 ○ descending device
- 1560 ○ belay device
- 1561 ○ carabiner
- 1562 ○ ropes – static and dynamic as appropriate
- 1563 ○ slings
- 1564 ○ accessory cord
- 1565 ○ artificial removable anchors including but not limited to chocks, cams, nuts, hexes,
1566 keyhole/removable bolt plates
- 1567 ○ fixed artificial anchors (e.g. bolts)
- 1568 ○ nut tool
- 1569 ○ whistle (for communications or emergency)
- 1570 ○ rescue equipment.

1571 Rescue equipment may include but is not limited to:

- 1572 ○ additional rope
- 1573 ○ pulleys
- 1574 ○ ascenders
- 1575 ○ prusik loops
- 1576 ○ slings
- 1577 ○ accessory cord
- 1578 ○ carabiners
- 1579 ○ belay device
- 1580 ○ knife suitable for cutting ropes (preferably on a lanyard).

1581 Abseiling specific equipment

1582 Specific equipment for abseiling may include but is not limited to:

- 1583 ○ gloves.

1584 Climbing specific equipment

1585 Specific equipment for climbing may include but is not limited to:

- 1586 ○ gloves
- 1587 ○ climbing shoes
- 1588 ○ chalk bag.

1589 Bouldering specific equipment

1590 Specific equipment for bouldering may include but is not limited to:

- 1591 ○ crash pads or padding.

1592 **General equipment**

1593 Specific general equipment may include but is not limited to:

1594 **Emergency/rescue**

- 1595 ○ documentation (see [Core GPG - Activity leader required documentation](#))
- 1596 ○ emergency communication equipment (see [Core GPG -Emergency communication](#))
- 1597 ○ first aid kit in waterproof storage (see [Core GPG - First aid equipment and medication](#))
- 1598 ○ a waterproof method of storing and carrying documentation and communications equipment
- 1599 ○ specific activity context equipment required
- 1600 ○ emergency shelter where appropriate for the context
- 1601 ⇨ emergency equipment to keep a patient warm (e.g. mat, sleeping bag) where appropriate for the
- 1602 context.

1603 **Activity Leaders**

- 1604 ○ communications equipment (standard communication rather than emergency communication
- 1605 where this differs) and spare batteries or backup “power banks”
- 1606 ○ relevant maps and navigation information
- 1607 ○ a waterproof method of storing and carrying maps and navigation information
- 1608 ○ compass and/or other navigation aids(e.g. GPS)
- 1609 ○ pen/pencil and blank writing paper
- 1610 ○ watch or equipment suitable to tell and measure time for first aid purposes
- 1611 ○ head torch and spare batteries
- 1612 ○ same as for participant.

1613 **Participant**

- 1614 ○ personal medications (including for asthma and anaphylaxis)
- 1615 ○ personal hygiene requirements
- 1616 ○ clothing appropriate to the weather conditions
- 1617 ○ sun hat
- 1618 ○ sunglasses
- 1619 ○ spare prescription glasses
- 1620 ○ sunscreen.

1621 **Group**

- 1622 ○ backpack to carry equipment
- 1623 ○ trowel for toileting
- 1624 ○ toilet paper
- 1625 ○ hand sanitiser
- 1626 ○ water purification system
- 1627 ○ repair kit
- 1628 ○ food for duration plus spare
- 1629 ○ rubbish bags
- 1630 ○ multi-tool with knife
- 1631 ○ sunscreen
- 1632 ○ insect repellent
- 1633 ○ first aid kit common content (see [Core GPG](#)).

1634 **Multi- pitch activities**

- 1635 ○ small personal backpacks to carry personal equipment
- 1636 ○ inter-group communication equipment (e.g. portable two-way radios)

1637

1639 Appendix V Equipment & relevant standards

1640 Equipment and standards

1641 Fixed and mobile artificial climbing and abseiling walls:

- 1642 ○ AS 2316.1.1:2021

1643 Equipment and the relevant standards:

- 1644 ○ Accessory cord (EN 564:2023)
- 1645 ○ Braking devices (EN 15151-1:2012, EN 15151-2:2012)
- 1646 ○ Carabiners or other connectors (EN 362:2004, EN 12275:2013, AS/NZS 1891.4:2025 or ISO 10333-5:2001)
- 1647 ○ Chocks (EN 12270:2013)
- 1648 ○ Crash pads/padding (AS 2316.1.1:2021, UIAA 161-3 (V5, 2018))
- 1649 ○ Descending devices (EN 341:2011)
- 1650 ○ Energy absorbing systems EN 958:2024
- 1651 ○ Frictional anchors EN 12276:2013
- 1652 ○ Helmets (EN 12492:2025)
- 1653 ○ Harnesses (EN 358:2018, EN 361:2002, EN 813:2024, EN 12277:2015+A1:2018, AS/NZS 1891.4:2025 or equivalent)
- 1654 ○ Lanyards (EN 354:2010)
- 1655 ○ Rock anchors (EN 959:2018)
- 1656 ○ Rope clamps EN 567:2013
- 1657 ○ Rope – dynamic (EN 892:2012+A3:2023)
- 1658 ○ Rope – static (EN 1891:1998, CI 1801:2025)
- 1659 ○ Personal fall protection equipment - anchor devices (EN 795:2012)
- 1660 ○ Pitons (EN 569:2007)
- 1661 ○ Pulleys (EN 12278:2007)
- 1662 ○ Slings (EN 566:2017, AS 1353:1997 (series) or AS/NZS 1891.4:2025)

1665 List of relevant standards

1666 AS/NZS

- 1667 ○ 1353:1997 Flat synthetic-webbing slings Product specification
- 1668 ○ 1891 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices
- 1669 ○ 1891.4:2025 Part 4: Selection, use and maintenance
- 1670 ○ 2316.1.1:2021 Artificial climbing structures and challenge courses Part 1: Fixed and mobile artificial climbing and abseiling walls.
- 1671 ○ 2512 Methods of testing protective helmets
- 1672 ○ 2512.1 Part 1: Definitions and headforms

1674 CI

- 1675 ○ 1801:2025 Low Stretch And Static Kernmantle Life Safety Rope

1676 EN

- 1677 ○ 341:2011 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height—Descender devices
- 1678 ○ 354:2010 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height—Lanyards
- 1679 ○ 358:2018 Personal protective equipment for work positioning and prevention of falls from a height—Belts for work positioning and restraint and work positioning lanyards
- 1680 ○ 361:2002 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height—Full body harnesses
- 1681 ○ 362:2004 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height—Connectors
- 1682 ○ 564:2023 Mountaineering equipment—Accessory cord—Safety requirements and test methods
- 1683 ○ 566:2017 Mountaineering equipment—Slings—Safety requirements and test methods
- 1684 ○ 567:2013 Mountaineering equipment—Rope clamps—Safety requirements and test methods

1686	○	569:2007 Mountaineering equipment. Pitons. Safety requirements and test methods
1687	○	795:2012 Personal fall protection equipment. Anchor devices
1688	○	813:2024 Personal fall protection equipment—Sit harnesses
1689	○	892:2012+A3:2023 Mountaineering equipment—Dynamic mountaineering ropes—Safety
1690		requirements and test methods
1691	○	958:2024 Mountaineering equipment. Energy absorbing systems for use in klettersteig (via ferrata)
1692		climbing. Safety requirements and test methods
1693	○	959:2018 Mountaineering equipment. Rock anchors. Safety requirements and test methods
1694	○	12270:2013 Mountaineering equipment. Chocks. Safety requirements and test methods
1695	○	12275:2013 Mountaineering equipment—Connectors—Safety requirements and test methods
1696	○	12276:2013 Mountaineering equipment. Frictional anchors. Safety requirements and test methods
1697	○	12277:2015+A1:2018 Mountaineering equipment—Harnesses—Safety requirements and test
1698		methods
1699	○	12278:2007 Mountaineering equipment—Pulleys—Safety requirements and test methods
1700	○	12492:2025 Mountaineering Equipment - Helmets For Mountaineers - Safety Requirements And
1701		Test Methods
1702	○	15151-1:2012 Mountaineering equipment. Braking devices. Braking devices with manually assisted
1703		locking, safety requirements and test methods
1704	○	15151-2:2012 Mountaineering equipment. Braking devices. Manual braking devices, safety
1705		requirements and test methods
1706	○	1891:1998 Personal protective equipment for the prevention of falls from a height—Low stretch
1707		kernmantel ropes
1708		ISO
1709	○	10333 Personal fall-arrest systems
1710	○	10333-5:2001 Part 5: Connectors with self-closing and self-locking gates
1711		UIAA
1712	•	161-3 (V5, 2018) Crash Pads
1713		

1714 Appendix W Equipment load ratings

1715 Equipment loading discussion

1716 Proper understanding and use of equipment load ratings (*stated strength*) is needed to allow for an
1717 appropriate safety margins (*safety factors*) to be used. This ensures that equipment is never loaded to a
1718 point it is in danger of breaking or being damaged.

1719 Manufacturers provide details of the load ratings for equipment either stamped on the equipment or in
1720 available documentation. This is called the *Stated Strength*. *Stated Strength* is the magnitude of load that is
1721 either the *Safe Working Load* (SWL) or *Minimum Breaking Strength* (MBS).

1722 It is critical to understand the difference between *Safe Working Load* (SWL) and *Minimum Breaking*
1723 *Strength* (MBS) because SWL has a safety factor already applied to it, while MBS does not.

1724 *Safe Working Load* (SWL): is the magnitude of load that does not permanently distort, weaken, damaged or
1725 break equipment. It is safe to load equipment to 100% of the SWL.

1726 *Minimum Breaking Strength* (MBS): is the magnitude of a load that may permanently distort or damage a
1727 piece of equipment but not cause it to break. An appropriate *safety factor* needs to be applied to the MBS.
1728 The MBS is a load, determined by the manufacture, that might not break a piece of equipment but may
1729 make it unusable or unsafe to use. Equipment should never be loaded to the MBS, even for testing
1730 purposes when testing a system before being use, the test should not exceed the SWL. Some equipment
1731 may be in danger of being overloaded even at less than half the MBS. It should be noted that the stated
1732 MBS value is calculated from tests on a selection of items, not on each individual item. It is therefore likely
1733 that a small percentage of similar items, (usually less than 1%) will break slightly below their stated MBS
1734 value.

1735 *Safety Factor*: The ratio between the *Minimum Breaking Strength* (MBS) and *Safe Working Load* (SWL)
1736 which is used to provide a safety margin. It is expressed as a ratio for example 8:1. An appropriate *Safety*
1737 *Factor* is chosen based on the type of equipment and intended use. The *safety factor* applicable may be
1738 specified in relevant standards or manufactures instructions. It is recommended to follow known safe
1739 practices, manufacturers recommendations, relevant standards or calculated assessments when
1740 determining safety factors.

1741 Examples

1742 Rope

1743 Recreational 'climbing/abseiling' rope may have the *Stated Strength* provided as a *Minimum Breaking*
1744 *Strength* (MBS). In use, it requires a suitable *Safety Factor* to be selected and applied to the MBS to
1745 calculate appropriate SWL.

1746 Static rope:

- 1747 ○ Stated strength: 30kN MBS
- 1748 ○ Safety Factor: say 8:1
- 1749 ○ Safe Working Load (SWL): 3.75kN (30 divided by 8 = 3.75)

1750 Flat lifting sling:

1751 A flat lifting sling may have the *Stated Strength* provided as a *Safe Working Load* (SWL). In use, it can be
1752 loaded to 100% of the SWL.

- 1753 ○ Stated strength: 2,000 kg SWL
- 1754 ○ Safety Factor: may or may not be provided by manufacturer
- 1755 ○ Safe Working Load (SWL): 2,000 kg (No calculation required as Stated Strength given as SWL)

1756 The Australian Standard AS1353 states that a 2,000 kg SWL flat lifting sling should have a 8:1 safety factor.
1757 If this is the case, then the MBS is 16,000 kg (2,000 times 8 = 16,000).

1758 Connectors

1759 Recreational 'climbing/abseiling' connectors may have the *Stated Strength* provided as a *Minimum*
1760 *Breaking Strength* (MBS). In use, it requires a suitable *Safety Factor* to be selected and applied to the MBS
1761 to calculate appropriate SWL.

1762 In-line loaded carabiner:

- 1763 o Stated strength: 24kN MBS
- 1764 o Safety Factor: say 4:1
- 1765 o Safe Working Load (SWL): 6kN (24 divided by 4 = 6)

1766 All equipment needs to have its *Safe Working Load* (SWL) estimated using an appropriate *safety factor* for
1767 the context it is being used. They are not to be loaded above their SWL.

1768 Case example

1769 On the 4th of May 2014, in Rhode Island USA, a 45kN carabiner was overloaded and failed with a 6.8kN
1770 three-way load, causing 8 circus performers to fall 10m. The subsequent investigation showed that similar
1771 carabiners, in new condition, also failed when similarly loaded but easily held 50kN when in-line loaded.

1772 Kilonewtons (kN) of force vs kilograms (kg) of load (mass)

1773 Newtons, (abbreviated to N) are the metric units of force. A 102kg object applies, approximately, 1,000 N,
1774 (1kN) downward force at the surface of the earth, (due to its mass and gravity). One Kilonewton (1 kN) is
1775 1,000 N.

1776 In a simple vertical loading situation, it is generally accurate enough to convert a load mass of 100 kg to a
1777 force of 1kN. Forces can exist in any direction, not just up and down. Force is calculated by multiplying mass
1778 by acceleration. Gravity at earth's surface produces approximately 10m/s² of acceleration, (the exact value
1779 varies and is slightly less).

1780 Therefore, equipment rated 1 kN of force equals equipment rated approximately 100kg of load (1,000N
1781 divided by 10 = 100kg of load). So 1kN of force = approximately 100kg of load. Note that peak loads can
1782 vary and allowance for these should be made.

1783 Examples:

1784 SWL 3.75kN force equals approximately 375kg static load

- 1785 o Calculation: 3.75 times 1,000 = 3,750N with 3,750N divided by 10 = 375 or
- 1786 o Calculation: 3.75 times 100 = 375

1787 SWL 2,000kg static load equals approximately 20kN force

- 1788 o Calculation: 2,000kg times 10 = 20,000N with 20,000N divided by 1,000 = 20 or
- 1789 o Calculation: 2,000kg divided by 100 = 20

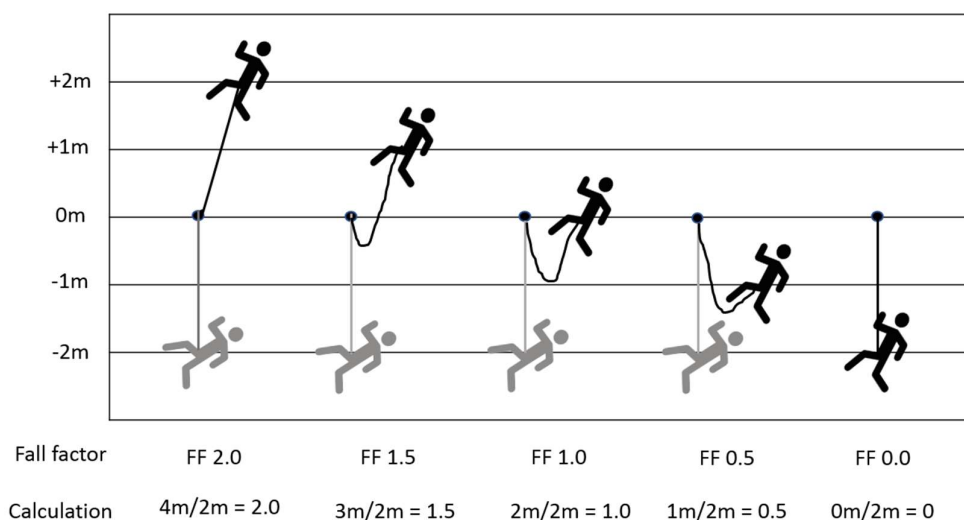
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1791

1792 Appendix X Fall factors

1793 Fall factors

1794 *Fall factor* is the ratio of the height of a fall (h) (measured before the rope or *cow's tail* begins to stretch)
 1795 and the rope or *cow's tail* length available to absorb the energy of the fall (L). It is used as a representation
 1796 of the severity of a fall when arrested by a *belay system*. It is calculated by (h) divided by (L). *Fall factors* are
 1797 illustrated in the following diagram A5-1. fall-factor-diagram



1798

1799 *Figure W.2: Fall factors*

1800 Detailed Contents

1801	Traditional Owner Acknowledgement.....	2
1802	Copyright	2
1803	Disclaimer	2
1804	Version details	2
1805	Foreword	4
1806	Creation.....	5
1807	Funders.....	5
1808	Table of Contents	6
1809	List of Figures.....	6
1810	List of Tables	6
1811	<i>Preface.....</i>	6
1812	About these documents	6
1813	Dependent Participants.....	7
1814	Does the Standard and Good Practice Guides apply to me?	7
1815	Are they legally binding?	7

1816	Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides	9
1817	Interpretation of the Standard and Good Practice Guides.....	9
1818	1 Introduction.....	10
1819	1.1 Abseiling	10
1820	1.2 Climbing	10
1821	1.3 Exclusions.....	10
1822	1.4 Related activities	10
1823	2 Management of Risk.....	11
1824	2.2 Context Matters	11
1825	2.3 Risk management framework and process	11
1826	2.4 Risk management plan.....	11
1827	2.5 Dynamic risk assessment	11
1828	2.6 Incident reporting.....	11
1829	3 Planning	11
1830	3.1 Management and approval of activities.....	12
1831	3.2 Activity plans.....	12
1832	3.3 Group size	12
1833	3.4 Cultural, environmental and historical values	12
1834	3.5 Emergency management planning	12
1835	3.6 Activity leader required documentation	13
1836	4 Diversity, equity and inclusion.....	13
1837	4.1 Diversity of participants and leaders	13
1838	4.2 Inclusive practice	13
1839	4.3 Cultural safety	13
1840	4.4 Psychological safety and dignity.....	13
1841	4.5 Information, communication and consent	13
1842	4.6 Leader competence	13
1843	4.7 Concerns, complaints and review	13
1844	5 Participants	13
1845	5.1 Information provided pre-activity	14
1846	5.2 Participant health and wellbeing.....	14
1847	5.3 Supervision and management during the activity	14
1848	5.3.1 Overview.....	14
1849	5.3.2 Abseiling and climbing group size	14
1850	5.3.3 Recommended supervision	14
1851	5.3.4 Participants that are non-actively participating	15

1852	5.3.5 Abseiling supervision	15
1853	5.3.6 Climbing supervision	15
1854	5.3.7 Bouldering supervision	17
1855	5.4 Activity management during activity	17
1856	5.4.1 Knowledge of site	17
1857	5.4.2 Activity information provided to participants	17
1858	5.4.3 Falling objects	18
1859	5.4.4 Falls from height	18
1860	5.4.5 Swinging falls	19
1861	5.4.6 Entanglement and snags	19
1862	5.4.7 Anchors and the belay & activity systems	19
1863	5.4.8 Abseil backup systems	20
1864	5.4.9 Forward abseiling	20
1865	5.4.10 Multi-pitch activities	21
1866	5.4.11 Activity leader fatigue and repetition	21
1867	5.4.12 Activity leader positioning	22
1868	5.4.13 Communication	22
1869	5.4.14 Participants belaying or spotting	22
1870	5.4.15 Bouldering	22
1871	5.4.16 Single activity leader working independently	22
1872	5.5 Pre-activity communication	23
1873	5.6 Participation restrictions	23
1874	5.7 Vulnerable participants	23
1875	5.8 Privacy of information	23
1876	5.9 Activity leader to participants ratios	23
1877	5.10 Activity briefing	23
1878	6 Environment	23
1879	6.1 Environment related planning	23
1880	6.1.1 Natural surfaces	23
1881	6.1.2 Artificial surfaces	24
1882	6.1.3 Weather information	24
1883	6.1.4 Severe weather triggers	24
1884	6.2 Bushfire, prescribed fire and fire danger	25
1885	6.3 Water crossings and flooding	25
1886	6.4 Environmental conditions, safety and impact management	25
1887	6.5 Bushfires, prescribed fire and fire danger	25
1888	6.6 Tree safety	25
1889	6.7 Drinking water safety	25
1890	6.8 Food safety	25
1891	6.9 Wildlife safety	25
1892	6.10 Environmental sustainability procedures	26
1893	6.11 Land owner and/or manager requirements	26
1894	6.12 Water environments	26

1895	7 Equipment and logistics	26
1896	7.1 Framework for equipment requirements.....	26
1897	7.2 Equipment requirements	26
1898	7.3 First aid equipment and medication	26
1899	7.4 Communications equipment	27
1900	7.5 Use of equipment	27
1901	7.5.1 Equipment use.....	27
1902	7.5.2 Equipment loading	27
1903	7.5.3 Connections	27
1904	7.5.4 Connectors and practices relating to use	27
1905	7.5.5 Chest harnesses.....	29
1906	7.5.6 Other equipment use considerations.....	29
1907	7.5.7 Rescue systems and rigging for rescue.....	29
1908	7.6 Transport	29
1909	7.7 Maintenance of equipment.....	29
1910	7.8 Storage of equipment	30
1911	8 Responsibilities and roles.....	31
1912	8.1 Responsibilities and roles framework	31
1913	8.2 Naming conventions	31
1914	8.3 Provider responsibilities to prepare and support leaders	31
1915	8.4 Leader responsibilities and role descriptions	31
1916	8.4.1 Leader — operational responsibility in the field	31
1917	8.4.2 Assistant Leader — delegated responsibility.....	31
1918	8.4.3 Support person	31
1919	8.4.4 Leader fitness for work.....	32
1920	8.5 Leader readiness and capability	32
1921	8.5.1 Leadership knowledge, skill and experience	32
1922	8.5.2 Provider responsibilities under the Outdoor Leader KSE Framework.....	32
1923	8.5.3 First aid	32
1924	8.5.4 Knowledge and skill acquisition.....	33
1925	8.5.5 Verification	33
1926	8.5.6 Currency	33
1927	8.5.7 Verification and Currency Records	33
1928	Glossary	33
1929	Acronyms	37
1930	Appendices.....	37
1931	Appendix A Principal legal obligations	37
1932	Appendix B Management of Risk	37
1933	Appendix C Summary of AS ISO 31000 – risk management	37
1934	Appendix D Risk management process.....	37
1935	Appendix E Risk analysis information.....	37

1936	Appendix F Risk management plan template examples	37
1937	Appendix G Dynamic risk assessment process	37
1938	Appendix H Benefit–Risk Assessment	37
1939	Appendix I Emergency management planning framework	37
1940	Appendix J Health & wellbeing considerations for risk management.....	38
1941	Appendix K Privacy of information.....	38
1942	Appendix L Environmental sustainability procedures.....	38
1943	Appendix M First aid and medication considerations.....	38
1944	Appendix N Knowledge, skill and experience — Leader	38
1945	Activity scope and leader requirements	38
1946	Safety and risk management	39
1947	Technical activity leadership.....	40
1948	Leadership and group management.....	40
1949	Decision-making and judgement.....	41
1950	Planning and program management	41
1951	Environment and place-based knowledge.....	42
1952	Communication and interpersonal skills.....	43
1953	Self-management and professional practice.....	43
1954	Outdoor living, activity and travel skills.....	43
1955	Appendix O Knowledge, skill and experience — Assistant Leader	44
1956	Safety and risk management	44
1957	Technical activity leadership.....	44
1958	Leadership and group management.....	44
1959	Decision-making and judgement.....	44
1960	Planning and program management	44
1961	Environment and place-based knowledge.....	45
1962	Communication and interpersonal skills.....	45
1963	Self-management and professional practice.....	45
1964	Outdoor living, activity and travel skills.....	45
1965	Appendix P Recognition of competence: pathways to verification	45
1966	Appendix Q Indicative experience bands and evidence expectations	45
1967	Appendix R Australian Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and trigger points	45
1968	Appendix S Program planning matrix: leader-matching tool	45
1969	Appendix T Weather information	46
1970	Appendix U Equipment.....	46

1971	Abseiling and climbing specific equipment	46
1972	Abseiling specific equipment	46
1973	Climbing specific equipment	46
1974	Bouldering specific equipment.....	46
1975	General equipment	47
1976	Appendix V Equipment & relevant standards	49
1977	Equipment and standards	49
1978	List of relevant standards	49
1979	Appendix W Equipment load ratings	51
1980	Equipment loading discussion	51
1981	Examples.....	51
1982	Kilonewtons (kN) of force vs kilograms (kg) of load (mass)	52
1983	Appendix X Fall factors	53
1984	Fall factors	53
1985	<i>Detailed Contents.....</i>	53
1986		
1987		