

MENDIP OUTDOOR PURSUITS RISK ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been compiled for two reasons:-

- to define an expected standard and approach for each activity session
- and to provide a training resource for new instructors

Whilst not wishing to create an inflexible "standard" session for each activity, it is important that all instructors work from the same basis. This will ensure continuity between what we offer to prospective clients and what they will actually receive, and standardises the technical information (both verbal and visual) passed on to clients by the various instructors.

For each activity, obligatory safety rules are given. These must always be adhered to. These are followed by an outlined normal procedure which should be followed as closely as conditions on the day allow. A number of factors could necessitate a change of plan e.g. adverse weather, other users at a site, limited ability of the group etc., but there should always be a reason for not keeping to the outlined procedure, and the session should still be run as constructively as possible.

The guidelines are the result of the considerable experience of a number of instructors. They are expected to evolve as new techniques are learnt, new equipment becomes available and new sites are found etc. If you have an idea that may be feasible, and improve our sessions, or you notice changes at a site which may require alteration to policy, raise the issue at our regularly held staff meetings, or directly with a manager.

These guidelines will be reviewed constantly, with due consideration given to comments by staff, external pressures, items arising from incidents / near misses, changes at, or of, sites etc, and alterations made as appropriate by the directors (with an annual review each winter), with assistance from relevantly qualified staff and National Governing Bodies.

THE AIMS OF M.O.P.

To provide comprehensive, safe and enjoyable training in a variety of outdoor pursuits.

To use the outdoor pursuits to encourage development of participants both as individuals, and as part of effective small teams, and to stimulate interest in the environment and activities being used.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessments on activities and sites can be found in this document except for buildings for charity abseils and one-off venues which the office holds. The rest of the guidelines provide a recommended procedure for running these activities to minimise risk.

"FIVE STEPS TO RISK ASSESSMENTS" - FROM HSE

1. *Identify the hazards.*
2. *Decide who might be harmed and how.*
3. *Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.*
4. *Record your findings and implement them.*
5. *Review your assessment and update if necessary.*

STAFFING RATIOS

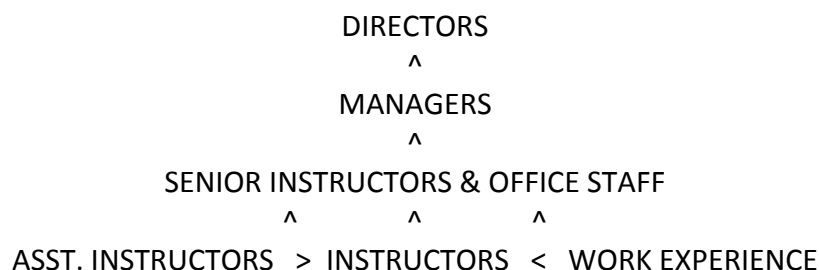
The usual ratio for instructor to clients is 1:8. Sometimes (e.g. special needs groups, white water and sea canoeing, advanced cave trips etc.) this will be improved further by the addition of an assistant, or by reducing the group size, or both. These cases are discussed in the relevant chapters. An adult may accompany a group of 8 if we deem it to be beneficial. For some activities, where there are less safety issues, groups may be larger – see Minimum Qualifications.

If more than 8 turn up in a group then participants may alternate turns at the activity, provided this is feasible and the visiting group leader takes responsibility for any additional people.

Where there may be two or more groups at one site simultaneously, they should normally be kept as separate groups - clients will not receive the same standard of tuition working 2:16 as they do working 1:8. A "grey area" may develop over which instructor is responsible for certain safety aspects etc. when groups are merged. Exceptions to this may arise occasionally with some activities - again this is discussed in the appropriate section.

Children under 8 may only take part, with agreement of the directors, if an adult is present.

ACCOUNTABILITY DIAGRAM



CANOEING / KAYAKING

(National Governing Body - British Canoe Union)

Very Sheltered Water: B.C.U./U.K.C.C. Coach Level 1 per 8 pupils
or B.C.U. Coach level 2 trained, provided a B.C.U. Coach Level 2 is also on the water
Sheltered Water: B.C.U. Coach Level 2 with relevant experience per 8 pupils
Moderate Water (Gr 2): B.C.U. Coach Level 3 & competent assistant per 8 pupils
Advanced Water (Gr 3+): B.C.U. Coach Level 3 with 5* (or equivalent) plus a competent assistant per 6

Definitions of water can be found: <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/media/pdf/CHECKLIST%20FOR%20THE%20GUIDANCE%20OF%20THE%20RELEVANT%20AUTHORITIES1.pdf>

HILL-WALKING / NAVIGATION

(National Governing Body - Mountain Leader Training UK)

Duke of Edinburgh: Instructor qualified appropriately for the area per 12 pupils
& a competent adult per extra 12 pupils

Low level walks: Adult per 16 pupils, with competent Instructor in overall charge

Low level walks: Basic Expedition Leader Award with relevant experience per 12 pupils
(over 1km from road) or Instructor with in-house training and knowledge of the area per 12 pupils

Wild Country: Mountain Leader Summer trained with relevant experience per 8 pupils
(below 600m) or Walking Group Leader per 8 pupils
or South West Mountain and Moorland per 8 pupils

Mountainous: Mountain Leader Summer Assessed, per 8 pupils
(Summer conditions) up to 12 with Mountain Leader Summer trained assistant

CLIMBING & ABSEILING

(National Governing Body - Mountain Leader Training UK)

Single Pitch with easy access: Single Pitch Award, per 8 pupils

Single Pitch remote from road: Single Pitch Award with Hill-walking qualification
appropriate to area & competent assistant per 8 pupils

Lead climbing/Multi-pitch: Mountain Instructor Award for 2 pupils
& Single Pitch Award holder for 4 pupils

CAVING

(National Governing Body - British Caving Association)

Horizontal Cave/Mine: Local Cave Leader Award Level 1 for the relevant cave per 8 pupils
or Site Specific Report for Goatchurch Cavern per 8 pupils

Vertical Cave/Mine: L.C.L.A. Level 2 for the relevant cave & competent adult per 6 pupils

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A SECOND ADULT IN THE CAVE WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S GROUPS.

ORIENTEERING

(National Governing Body - British Orienteering)

Sessions in safe enclosed simple areas: B.O. Teaching Orienteering Part 1 per 12 pupils

Safe small areas with clear boundaries: B.O. T.O. Part 2 or U.K.C.C. Level 1 Coach per 12 pupils

In either case, a competent adult is required per extra 12 pupils when working with children, plus session must be discussed beforehand with B.O. Level 2 Coach.

Local parks, permanent courses and small woodlands with clear boundaries:

B.O. Level 2 Coach (with C.P.D.) or U.K.C.C. Level 1 Coach
& competent adult for 12 pupils or 2 adults for 24 pupils

If only a map walk with Instructor & short star course (must be cleared by Level 3 Coach):

B.O. T.O. Part 2 or U.K.C.C. Level 1 Coach per 12 pupils

Woods/open land with good access which are not exposed, remote or complex, with children:

B.O. Level 3 Coach & competent adult per 8 pupils

http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/downloads/documents/coaching_support_skillsandprogression.pdf

TARGET ARCHERY

(National Governing Body - Grand National Archery Society)

G.N.A.S. Archery Leader per 12 pupils

ASSAULT COURSE, RAFT-BUILDING

(No National Governing Bodies)

In-house Trained and Assessed Instructor per 8 pupils

INITIATIVE PROJECTS, SEARCH & RESCUE, PIONEERING, BRIDGE-BUILD, BUSHCRAFT

(No National Governing Bodies)

In-house Trained and Assessed Instructor per 12 pupils (these ratios may be varied with agreement of group leaders). Simple Initiative Projects can be run by competent adults after briefing.

All Instructors hold current First Aid Certificates or have immediate access to first aider and those leading Watersports have a Life-Saving qualification.

MENDIP OUTDOOR PURSUITS has been inspected by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and is licensed to provide specified activities under the following headings (Registration number R0003):

- *Kayaking, Open Canoeing, Improvised Rafting,*
- *Rock Climbing, Abseiling, Caving,*
- *Hill Walking and Mountaineering*

Other activities offered are not regulated by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations.

Licence details can be confirmed by calling the Licensing Authority on 029 2075 5715

The qualifications listed above are the MINIMUM and additional or more highly qualified staff may be used when group ability, weather or activity site dictate.

We keep a file with confirmation of all qualifications, staff references, police clearance forms, driving licences and guidelines for all activities at our office.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

The aims of the company are to provide comprehensive, safe and enjoyable training in a variety of outdoor pursuits and to use these outdoor pursuits to encourage development of participants, both as individuals and as part of effective teams, as well as stimulating interest in the environment being used.

It is the policy of the company to provide a safe and healthy work place for employees and trainees. To support this policy a monthly risk assessment is carried out on site and action plans updated from this. This assessment is logged and kept in the office.

Where N.G.B. qualifications are appropriate, instructors are qualified at, or above the relevant level and qualifications are recorded at our office. For other activities, in-house training and assessment are done by relevant senior staff and recorded on individual log sheets.

Instructors in charge of child / vulnerable groups are cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau. All instructors hold current First Aid Certificates or have immediate access to first aider and those leading Watersports have a Life-Saving qualification.

All staff are provided with an induction pack when they start work, including information on a variety of safety issues and also a risk assessment pack. A senior member of staff will run through these packs and the new employee will sign and date a form to confirm this. Work experience pupils will sign to the relevant items. (A disc containing Induction, Risk Assessment and Guidelines will be given to staff, if they have computer access).

In addition, all staff have access to a copy of Mendip Outdoor Pursuits Guidelines containing safety and good working practices to safeguard clients, staff, third parties and The Business. Staff sign on the reverse of the induction form when they have read relevant sections.

Spot checks are made on sessions and recorded, staff reviews are also conducted, to ensure staff are working to standards and to identify areas where further training is required.

Guidelines are under review continuously. Appropriate instructors will be informed of major updates. Minor updates will be added to the "Notification of Changes" log and be distributed with major updates.

Info on Health and Safety matters can also be found on <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm>

HEALTH & SAFETY LAW - What you should know

Your health, safety and welfare are protected by law. Your employer has a duty to protect and keep you informed about health and safety. You have a responsibility to look after others. If there is a problem, discuss it with your employer or safety representative, if there is one. Below is a brief guide to health and safety law. It does not describe the law in detail, but it does list the key points

Your employer has a duty under the law to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, your health, safety and welfare at work.

Your employer must consult you or your safety representative on matters relating to your health and safety at work (see box below).

In general your employer's duties include:

- *making your workplace safe and without risks to health;*
- *ensuring plant and machinery are safe and that safe systems of work are set and followed;*
- *ensuring articles and substances are moved, stored and used safely;*
- *providing adequate welfare facilities;*
- *giving you the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for your health and safety.*

Health and safety consultation and representation arrangements at this workplace. Your employer must consult you or your representative on matters to do with your health and safety, including:

- *any changes which may substantially affect your health and safety at work, e.g. in procedures, equipment or ways of working;*
- *the employer's arrangements for getting competent people to help him/her satisfy health and safety laws;*
- *the information you have to be given on the likely risks and dangers arising from your work, measures to reduce or get rid of these risks and what you should do if you have to deal with a risk or danger;*
- *the planning of health and safety; and*
- *the health and safety consequences of introducing new technology.*

In particular, your employer must:

- *assess the risk to your health and safety;*
- *make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as being by the assessment;*
- *if there are five or more employees, record the significant findings of the risk assessment and the arrangements for health and safety measures;*
- *if there are five or more employees, draw up a health policy statement, including the health and safety organisation and arrangements in force, and bring it to your attention;*
- *appoint someone competent to assist with health and safety responsibilities, and consult you or your safety representative about this appointment;*

Appointed person(s): Health and safety responsibilities: Tim Partridge

- *co-operate on health and safety with other employers sharing the same workplace;*

- *set up emergency procedures;*
- *provide adequate first-aid facilities;*
- *make sure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements, e.g. for ventilation, temperature, lighting, and sanitary, washing and rest facilities;*
- *make sure that work equipment is suitable for its intended use, so far as health and safety is concerned, and that it is properly maintained and used;*
- *prevent or adequately control exposure to substances which may damage your health;*
- *take precautions against danger from flammable or explosive hazards, electrical equipment, noise and radiation;*
- *avoid hazardous manual handling operations, and where they cannot be avoided, reduce the risk of injury;*
- *provide health surveillance as appropriate;*
- *provide free any protective clothing or equipment, where risks are not adequately controlled by other means;*
- *ensure that appropriate safety signs are provided and maintained;*
- *report certain injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the appropriate health and safety enforcing authority.*

As an employee you have legal duties too. They include:

- *taking reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what you do or do not do;*
- *co-operating with your employer on health and safety;*
- *correctly using work items provided by your employer, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with training or instructions; and*
- *not interfering with or misusing anything provided for your health, safety and welfare.*

If you think there is a health and safety problem in your workplace you should first discuss it with your employer, supervisor or manager. You may also wish to discuss it with your safety representative, if there is one. You, your employer or your safety representative can get information on health and safety in confidence by calling HSE's *Infoline* telephone service on 0541 545500.

If you think your employer is exposing you to risks or is not carrying out legal duties, and you have pointed this out without getting a satisfactory answer, you can contact the enforcing authority for health and safety in your workplace (see below). Health and safety inspectors can give advice on how to comply with the law. They also have powers to enforce it. The (HSE's) Employment Medical Advisory Service can give advice on health at work. You can contact them at the addresses below.

Name and address of enforcing authority whose health and safety inspectors cover this workplace (e.g. HSE or your Local Authority's Environmental Health Dept.):

Health & Safety Executive, Somerset House, Oxford St, WSM, BS23 1TG. (01934) 634602

Address of HSE's Employment Medical Advisory Service:

Health & Safety Executive, Government Buildings, Ty Plas, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5SH.

You can get advice on general fire precautions etc. from the Fire Brigade or your fire officer.

More info about H & S law is set out in HSE priced publications, such as: *Essentials of health and safety at work* HSE Books ISBN 071760716X and in free leaflets such as: ***An introduction to health and safety INDG259 HSE Books.***

Details of HSE publications can be found on HSE's home page on the World Wide Web: <http://www.open.gov.uk/hse/hsehome.htm>
HSE publications are available from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO 10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 and from booksellers.

GROUP CODE OF CONDUCT

PLEASE RESPECT: STAFF, EACH OTHER, GENERAL PUBLIC, ENVIRONMENT, EQUIPMENT, SELF

- *I will listen to all briefings given by staff*
- *I will follow all safety instructions*

It is my responsibility to help with looking out for myself, other group members and members of the public

I will tell the staff if I see anything that may be dangerous

I understand that if I compromise the safety of myself or others, I will not be able to continue on the session

If necessary, I will follow any emergency procedures e.g. fire drill

I will respect other participants and bystanders and try not to disturb them

I will try to support staff and other participants

I will not smoke whilst actively involved in sessions, on vehicles, or in buildings, as hot ash can damage the equipment

I will not take part in activities whilst under the influence of drink or drugs

I understand that if I turn up without clothing that is appropriate for an activity, I may not be able to take part (Specialist equipment is provided)

I am responsible for my own belongings

Equipment should only be used for its intended purpose and will be returned in suitable condition at end of session

I will try to leave venues in as good or better condition than when I arrive

I know which areas I can use for different purposes, or will check e.g. site boundaries, playing games, what to do with wet / muddy kit, smoking etc

I will wear a seat belt and behave appropriately whilst travelling in vehicles

A medical / consent form has been completed and returned already

I will inform the instructor of any medical conditions that may affect me or any other group member during the session e.g. being pregnant

I will try to be on time and do tasks that staff ask me to do promptly

If I am unsure of anything, I will ask

This list covers items that may not be appropriate for all groups, please cut and paste the bits you need, or get group to come up with suggestions and write them down, adding any bits from the list that you and visiting staff feel are important.

ADVICE RE: TICKS AND LYME DISEASE / WEIL'S DISEASE

Ticks:

A tick is a small, blood sucking mite. Normally it lives on blood from wild animals, such as deer, but occasionally it may attach itself to humans when they walk through grass, rough vegetation, bracken or heath-land.

Most tick bites are harmless but, occasionally, the tick carries a small bacterium called *Borrelia burgdorferi* in its stomach. This bacterium causes Lyme Disease.

Lyme Disease:

Lyme Disease is an infection caused by bacteria that can be transmitted by ticks when they bite (not every tick carries Lyme Disease).

The infection can affect the skin and it may also cause partial paralysis of the face (Bells Palsy), cause serious illness of the nervous system, joints and heart. Ticks are tiny flat bodied, spider-like creatures that attach themselves to passing animals or persons for a blood meal. The highest risk was thought to be from April to October when the tick was most active and feeding, but research has shown that, in certain areas, ticks may be active throughout the year.

Can it be prevented?

Yes. When visiting the countryside keep to open paths and always keep your skin covered (wear long trousers and long sleeved shirts) whilst passing through areas of rough vegetation. Tuck trousers into socks if necessary.

Light coloured clothes will help you spot ticks and brush them off.

At regular intervals check your clothing and exposed skin for ticks.

At the end of the day completely check over your body for ticks.

Dogs are susceptible to Lyme Disease and may cause them to develop arthritis at an early age. Insect repellents and repellent collars for pets help prevent ticks getting hold.

What if I am bitten?

Remove the tick as soon as possible by grasping it close to the skin with a pair of tweezers. Apply gentle pressure, twist anti-clockwise and pull upward. Pull slowly and consistently until it lets go. Do not squeeze the body of the tick or attempt to remove the tick through burning or chemicals.

If the tick is accidentally pulled apart and the head remains in the skin, there may be a risk of infection from other microscopic organisms. This kind of infection is not related to Lyme Disease but can still be unpleasant. Consult a doctor if infection occurs.

Save the tick in a sealed container in case you develop symptoms later.

Should I see my Doctor?

The disease might show itself as an expanding reddish round rash in the area of the bite. Usually this will occur within three to thirty days of a bite.

Early symptoms may resemble influenza (flu), with swollen glands near the site, mild headaches, aching muscles and joints, and tiredness.

If you develop any of these symptoms and you suspect that a tick has bitten you, inform your doctor. Lyme Disease is treatable with antibiotics and the earlier it is diagnosed, the better.

Contacts:

For more information or advice about ticks, please contact Annette Carr, Countryside Management Officer, Somerset County Council, on (01823) 355170 or your local AONB Office.

ADVICE RE: WEIL'S DISEASE

What is leptospirosis?

Two types of leptospirosis infection can affect workers in the U.K.

Weil's Disease This is a serious and possibly fatal infection that is transmitted to humans by contact with urine from infected rats.

The Hardjo form of leptospirosis This is transmitted from cattle to humans.

What are the symptoms?

Both diseases start with a flu-like illness with a persistent and severe headache.

Who is at risk?

Anyone is at risk who is exposed to rats, rat or cattle urine or to fetal fluids from cattle.

Farmers are now the main group at risk for both Weil's disease and cattle leptospirosis: the cattle form is a special risk for dairy farmers.

Other workers who have contracted leptospirosis in recent years include:

vets, meat inspectors, butchers, abattoir and sewer workers.

Workers in contact with canal and river water are also at risk as are cavers, especially in wet caves or caves where farmers throw rubbish.

How might I catch it?

The bacteria get into your body through cuts and scratches and through the lining of the mouth, throat and eyes after contact with infected urine or contaminated water, such as in sewers, ditches, ponds and slow-flowing rivers. Rat urine may also contaminate animal feed stuffs on farms.

How can I prevent it?

Get rid of rats. Don't touch them with unprotected hands.

Consult your vet about cattle protection.

Cover all cuts and broken skin with waterproof plasters before and during work.

Wash protective clothing.

Wash your hands after handling any animal or any contaminated clothing or other materials, and always before eating, drinking or smoking.

What else should I do?

Report any illness to your doctor. Tell the doctor about your work and show this document. Leptospirosis is much less severe if it is treated promptly. If your doctor decides you have leptospirosis tell your employer, who should then report it to the Health & Safety Executive. If you are self-employed, you should report it yourself.

To the doctor

The document holder's work may expose him/her to the danger of leptospirosis (either *L.icterohaemorrhagiae* or *L. hardjo*). Early diagnosis and treatment are vital in Weil's disease as jaundice is often absent in early stages. The illness in *L. hardjo* may also be greatly shortened by

appropriate antibiotic treatment. (Your local Public Health Laboratory Service or hospital consultant microbiologist should be able to offer advice and serological testing.)
You or your doctor can get further information from the Employment Medical Advisory Service at any office of the Health & Safety Executive.

RISK ASSESSMENT - GENERAL

- We ask all groups to provide info on their previous experience, abilities, and any medical conditions / disabilities beforehand to ensure they can cope with the activity provided and so that we can make any necessary adjustments to enable them to get the most out of the activity. If there is anything which we have not been made aware of, or something unexpected occurs, we reserve the right to adjust, or cancel, the activity as required.
- A first aid kit and qualified first aider must be available for all sessions.
- Slippery surfaces must be improved or people warned about them.
- Damaged equipment is removed from usage immediately, so it cannot endanger anyone. If fixed facilities (e.g. landing stage with splinters) then warn the group and report to office.
- Equipment should be put away properly so it is not left where it could cause injury, e.g. tripping up, or where it could be misused by an inexperienced person e.g. power tools.
- Be aware that mobile phone emergency call operators may not be in your local area. Make sure they know exactly where you are, including the county.
- All instructors hold at least the appropriate level of qualification for each activity, or have been trained in-house for non-NGB activities, and hold a valid first aid certificate (or have immediate access to someone with a valid first aid certificate).
- Any new sites must be checked out prior to usage, and a risk assessment carried out.
- Instructors must consider how participants are coping with the activities, the weather, and any other factors that arise during the session, and make appropriate adjustments to their plans. If this involves changing venue then either the office or senior staff must be informed.
- Instructors must ensure that when they are out with groups, the office knows where they are and when they are expected back, this is particularly important for caving, canoeing and hillwalking trips.
- Groups are told to remain together so that we don't lose anyone.
- If walking alongside / crossing roads brief group and check they are following instructions.
- On activities where groups are likely to get dirty, make sure they wash hands before eating.
- Where groups are moving heavier items then advise on safe techniques and taking care.
- Particularly when working with disaffected youth it may become necessary for a member of staff to stop one member, or the whole group, from taking part if there is a likely danger to participants or third parties. The visiting staff member may be told to take over responsibility for the individual or group. If we are transporting group, then we can refuse to take them.

- A safety brief is given to all groups at the start of the activity and this is reinforced, or updated, as necessary during the session, so that they know their boundaries.
- Participants may use their own equipment at Instructor's discretion. Check the condition and for relevant markings e.g. UIAA or BS nos. If you're not happy - don't use it.
- Instructors should be clearly in charge of their own group and only allow groups to mix where there are clear benefits, the instructors should agree who will take the lead.
e.g. from 'The lessons from Stainforth Beck' by Marcus Baillie, A.A.L.A.: "There are however inherent practical weaknesses with joint leadership. For example, each leader may harbour almost subconscious anxieties about the unfolding events but take confidence from the apparent confidence of the other. These anxieties, if borne alone, may have led a sole leader to abandon the venture."
- Instructors should be aware of their surroundings and what is going on around them and ensure that group are kept away from obvious danger – especially if not obvious to group.
- Where staff are training other staff, then they should either hold the relevant qualification, or if appropriately experienced management team members decide that it will benefit both parties, and be safe training, then suitably experienced instructors can train others. If the decision concerns a manager then another manager must be consulted.
- Inform groups in areas of long grass / bracken of risk of Lyme Disease from ticks.
- Our Staff Induction Pack covers Staffing Ratios, Health and Safety Law, General Information for Staff, Driving Guidelines, Safety Procedures, Care of Equipment and Vehicles, Child Protection and Equal Opportunities Policies and Advice re: Weil's Disease and Ticks / Lyme Disease, to minimise the risks from these factors. Staff sign the Induction Form to confirm that they have read and understand these and also sign for the appropriate guidelines.

WATERSPORTS / RIVER CROSSINGS

N.B.: The terms canoe and canoeing can refer to either kayak or open canoe.

Properly fitting buoyancy aids must be used to reduce the risk of drowning, including raft-building instructors who may need to jump in to rescue someone trapped under the raft.

All instructors ensure that they know where all participants are at all times (if several people are in the water, the first thing to do is count everyone, to ensure nobody is trapped underwater.

Be prepared for unexpected panicking in cold, deep water – remember Reach, Throw, Wade rescues.

Helmets must be worn where there is a possibility of being knocked unconscious – e.g.

- 1) Canoeing where capsize is possible in shallow water.*
- 2) Canoeing / raft building to protect paddlers from each other's paddles.*
- 3) Where the raft could capsize on top of the participants, or they could fall onto jetty.*
- 4) River crossings where the group could fall on the equipment.*

Suitability of equipment should be checked especially carefully before using on moving water.

A safety craft must be present for canoeing groups (suitably equipped canoe), or for raft-building groups (canoe or board) where rafts can get further away than the throwlines can safely reach. Instructor must be confident that they can rescue clients, if not then phone office for assistance.

Groups should get into canoes on the water, where feasible. Usually, when getting canoes on/off the water, an instructor should be afloat, or where this is impractical, make sure group are under control and well supervised e.g. rafted to jetty.

Rescue ropes must be present where safety craft are not suitable:

- 1) For bank rescues on white water canoeing trips.*
- 2) To rescue swimmers during raft building / river crossing sessions.*

A knife should be available whenever ropes are used near water e.g. rafts and throwlines.

Suitable precautions taken to prevent hypothermia are:

- 1) Windproof tops for all canoeing trips.*
- 2) Groups are advised of suitable clothing / equipment to bring, beforehand.*
- 3) Nearby shelter must be available (building, vehicle or group shelter).*

Groups must wear secure footwear to protect their feet from objects on the bank / in the water.

Participants who come into contact with still or slow moving-water, such as sewers, ditches, ponds and slow-moving rivers need to be informed of the effects of Weil's disease and what they should do if they suspect they have the disease. Further information can be obtained from the induction pack. Make sure groups wash hands before eating.

If pollution / Blue green algae are suspected at any site then an alternative site must be used, and the relevant authorities informed, via office.

Precautions are taken to ensure groups are not in danger of being blown offshore, or being overwhelmed by conditions, where this is a possibility:-

- 1) Check forecasts for prevailing weather conditions that are appropriate for the activity.*
- 2) Safety craft are present.*
- 3) Alternative locations are used if conditions are unsuitable.*
- 4) Coastguard informed of any sea trips, and of their return.*
- 5) Flares carried on all coastal trips.*

Rafts must be checked before launching to ensure that there is nothing to trap group members, especially in case of a capsize – warn about trapping fingers etc during construction and use. Participants must be told how to sit on the raft so that there is little chance of them being caught up.

When lifting people out of the water remember your lifting techniques and consider that it may be better to have their back to the jetties. When lifting heavier items e.g. poles make sure all take care.

When using paddles near other people, warn participants about risk of hitting each other, esp. faces.

If you are driving near water, extra care needs to be taken to avoid the risk of driving into the water, make sure vehicles are kept well away from the edge.

Trailers must be loaded appropriately, and loads secured, by instructors (remember good lifting techniques). Participants can assist, but must not be put in a position where they might injure themselves or others.

HEWISH

In heavy rain the sluice gates might be opened to release water (or due to vandalism), get any groups off the water if this is suspected. The authorities have been requested to inform us beforehand.

If there is no water in Old Bridge River then may be able to use the Yeo (over the stone bridge), but need to get permission to cross land between the rivers first.

Do not drive over the bridge on the Old Bridge River as it is not strong enough.

A ladder is positioned between the rope bridges where it is easier to get out.

Do not drive fast down the track, or across the field.

Steep banks, use the landing stages.

Deep water may make some groups nervous.

Seal launching down bank is not allowed. Lowering kayaks with participants in down the steps is potentially damaging for your back. Launching down steps is dangerous as may hit posts at bottom.

No jumping off the stone bridge (parapets are crumbling), or banks (as edges are too shallow).

No one to go under stone bridge as it is potentially unsafe.

Only cleared staff may take groups under the M5 Bridge, due to the undercut walkway.

Rafts must not be allowed under the M5 Bridge.

If rafts are to travel further than a rope length from the landing stage, then a canoe or board must be used as a rescue craft (take throw-rope with you).

Raft launch ladders should be used to launch and recover complete rafts. Whole group should help to pull on rope to haul raft out of water (or pulley system could be used if raft too heavy). Ladders are not to be used by groups to enter / exit the water, or for seal launches.

Collapsed rafts should be dismantled and carried up the steps in manageable sections.

Guidelines for Instructor i/c Hewish are in Induction Pack.

No phone box. Take mobile phone, especially if you are instructor i/c or only instructor there.

Landowner is Geoff Board, The Trotters, Manor Farm (back along road towards railway).

Nearest hospital – Weston

Portaloo on site. Camping loo is also available.

CONGRESBURY YEO

The car park surface is often dirty and oily, avoid putting kit down on it where possible. Do not allow boats to be dragged across the car park / along path.

Watch out for broken glass around bottle banks – make sure footwear worn.

When launching use the new landing stage.

The weir must not be shot. There is no access to the water above the weir.

Youth Club can be used for changing, toilets etc – make sure it is left tidy, need key and code.

The river is shallow and muddy - swimmers may lose shoes if not secure. Do not allow students to jump from bank. Watch out for objects dumped in the water.

Car park size is now limited, so be careful with parking – can use track down to field, but do not drive onto field.

Public toilets are in the Ship & Castle car park. Phone box in pub.

Nearest hospital - Weston or B.R.I

CONGRESBURY YEO RIVER WALK

River is mostly knee deep, with few deeper sections, need to wear secure footwear.

Throw-line necessary in case of rescue.

Check ahead for obstructions in river.

HUNTSPILL

Barbed wire at sides under bridge, this area should be avoided.

Access is not allowed upstream of the bridge unless permission has been obtained already.

In times of heavy rain the sluice gates might be opened to release water (see Hewish above).

No jumping off bridge or sluice gates (sluice has now been roped off with line of buoys – DO NOT CROSS).

Don't play hide and seek in the reeds, as easy to lose people.

Gate may be locked, if driving onto grass - check ground is solid and keep away from river.

Area tends to be exposed to the wind – inlets are more sheltered.

A phone is at the hotel at the other end of bridge.

Nearest hospital - Minor injuries, Bridgwater, otherwise Weston

No toilet.

APEX LAKES

Only use the first lake when the model boat club are not meeting, (see license for details).

No access during bird breeding season.

Be aware of rubbish and pollution and fisherman.

The trailer may not fit if the height restriction is in place.

Nearest hospital - Weston

UPHILL

On 12m+tides the lake may be flooded by the sea and the flood gates will be closed.

Lake is now too large to reach centre with throw-rope – safety canoe or board required.

Area tends to be exposed to the wind – but they will just blow to the side.

Water is slightly salty.

Be aware of marina staff moving large boats.

The gate alongside the lake can be unlocked by Uphill Boat staff and equipment driven round to jetty area. As can the cable across the slipway, to ease access.

The latest code for the toilet (these can be used for changing and have 20p shower) can be obtained from Uphill Boats or there is a public toilet along the road towards the beach.

A phone is at Uphill Boats, or use phone box down the lane beside Dolphin pub.

Weston Hospital is less than 1 mile away.

MALLARD'S PIKE LAKE

Forest Enterprise have their own Conditions of use for canoeing / raft building including:

All groups must be booked in advance, as **key required** (we have one).

There are to be no more than 30 participants on the lake at any one time.

Only 1 raft group is allowed per session (i.e. one organisation).

A copy of the Conditions is in office.

Make sure you park in correct place, as charges apply.

Some edges of the lake are hard, be aware.

Only launch and land at the slipway provided.

Keep clear of inflow and weir when water is flowing strongly.

Close supervision of children is necessary, particularly between the toilet / changing block and the lake's access point as the path is wooded and several incidents have been reported of suspect individuals watching groups. Changing block requires code to enter.

GLOUCESTER AND SHARPNESS CANAL - PURTON

Contact British Waterways 7 days before each visit to allow plenty of time for identifying and managing any expected circumstances, or for us to mutually agree a change of date.

The bridge keeper advises that we use the water to the north of the upper bridge as the visibility there is much better. He has particularly requested that we keep well away from the Upper Bridge as this is operated remotely from the Lower Bridge and the bridge keeper cannot see if there are very small craft such as canoes and rafts by the bridge. We will call in each time we arrive on site, just to alert the bridge keeper to the fact that we are on site and so that he/she can advise us of any unusual factors prevalent on the day (such as a large vessels moving on the canal or water extraction that could increase flows).

Max. water depth 4 metres.

OTHER BOATS - UNLIKELY to be problem as instructors know that there is other traffic and will move group to side if approaching, not much traffic from October onwards (see average movements in file). British Waterways will ensure that their Harbour Master at Sharpness and the Purton Bridge Keeper are informed of our presence on the canal so that they can alert us to any expected changes in use.

SWING BRIDGES - UNLIKELY as group will be kept away from the bridges and will inform the bridge keeper if we are likely to approach, also not much traffic from October. There are two bridges at Purton. The Lower Bridge (nearest to Sharpness) is manned at all times between 10am and 4pm, the Purton Bridge telephone no. is 01453 811384.

WATER FLOW - UNLIKELY -we are aware that there can be significant increases in the flow of the water on the canal if all four sluices at Sharpness are opened at once or water extraction is taking place, British Waterways will inform us if this is likely to occur.

TIMING - Activities will take place between 10am and 4 pm, so not in the dark and bridge will be manned.

INJURIES - UNLIKELY. Canoes will be launched from the landing stage, so no unusual risks there. Rafts are constructed from short poles and barrels, so do not constitute a H&S lifting hazard, participants informed how to lift correctly. Participants wear helmets to protect from paddles etc that may endanger the head. Instructors are first aid qualified and first aid kits are present. Participants warned not to put fingers/hands etc between boats when close together.

EMERGENCIES - there is a telephone in the bridge hut that we could use in an emergency. There is also a public telephone in the car park. we have been informed that mobile phone reception at Purton is good.

No toilet facilities, so visit some beforehand. Parking is now £4 (2007)

MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL / CANAL AT TONBRIDGE

Various car parks can be used for access but roads are narrow for trailers.

Canals are narrow so watch out for other boats - both are quiet midweek in term time.

Phone at Goytre Wharf / in Tonbridge

Nearest hospitals – Abergavenny / Royal Tunbridge Wells

NOXON POND

Private fishing lake that can be used if Mallards Pike booked up and Noxon is quiet.

Keep away from any fishermen and from weedy area in centre.

Phone at farmhouse

Nearest hospital - Chepstow

RIVER AXE (WAS SALLY BAGENAL'S)

Banks are steep and sometimes fishermen are present.

In times of heavy rain the sluice gates might be opened to release water (see Hewish above).

Difficult to turn around on track.

Bridges over the river are awkward to get under, depending on water level.

Contact landowner on opposite bank before doing any river crossings.

Nearest hospital – Weston

SALTFORD

Be aware of other boats on the river, fishermen, overhanging trees (fishing line) and people jumping in off the bridge. Keep away from weirs, unless level 3 coach – still be wary.

A phone is at 'Bird in Hand' Pub.

Nearest hospital - Bath

CLEVEDON MARINE LAKE

Check height & timing of tides as spring tides (c.12m) may flow over into lake.

May be other users on lake, such as sailing boats or canoe club – discuss which areas they are using.

Watch out for broken glass/other litter around area/in water.

North end is shallow, getting deeper away from Clubhouse, but nowhere really deep.

Phone in Pub or clubhouse

Nearest hospital -BRI

POOL CANOEING

Backwell, Churchill, Cheddar and Strode swimming pools provide qualified lifeguards. Kingswood School, Bath require qualified lifeguard.

At Badminton School, Sidcot, Clifton High and Bristol Royal Infirmary pools, if only one instructor, then they need to be on the side when participants are in the water and participants on the side if the instructor is on the water.

No ball games are allowed in the B.R.I pool, because of possible damage to the ceiling.

If polo is played using paddles then buoyancy aids and helmets must be worn.

Pools have their own guidelines which must be followed.

Phones are situated at the pools.

Nearest hospitals - Weston or B.R.I

RIVER & SEA TRIPS

Instructors should be familiar with the river / area, or get up to date information from local paddlers (or the Access Advisor), and a weather report.

Possible hazards such as bridge pillars, trees, fishermen, swans, weirs, wire, sea cliffs, over-falls, and shipping lanes should be pointed out and circumvented as appropriate. High water levels / rough sea conditions may be too much for the group – take account of their experience.

Details of the trip must be left with a competent person at base, so that they can inform the emergency services if the group is overdue.

Particular hazards include: (nearest hospital in brackets) [This list is not exhaustive but covers features that regularly require extra care at these locations, the hazards listed above also need to be considered wherever they may occur].

Congresbury Yeo to Hewish –check for obstructions under water, very weedy in summer, just before Hewish is a sluice gate/weir to be portaged (WSM)

River Wye - No seal launching from big rock above Symonds Yat, fly fishermen, limited access points, Ferry boats, Symonds Yat - moving water (Monmouth)

River Barle - Continuous in flood, trees, weirs Dulverton down - (Minehead/Exeter)

River Lyn - Shallow, steep & very fast, trees - (Minehead or Barnstaple)

River Dart - Weirs (esp. Anvil and Holne), trees, other users - (Plymouth)

River Exe - Weirs below Bolham - (Exeter)

River Usk - Trees, drops - (Brecon or Abergavenny)

River Avon - Weirs, other users - (R.U.H or B.R.I)

River Monnow - (Monmouth)

River Frome - Weirs - (R.U.H)

Solent - Boats, tides, Cowes Week - (Southampton)

S Devon/Dorset - Cliffs, wind, races - (Exeter or Weymouth?)

Lulworth, Dorset - Firing range (Poole)

Portsmouth - Firing range, boats - (Portsmouth)

Bristol Channel - Strong tides, mud - (Weston)

Combe Martin, N Devon - wind and tide - (Barnstaple)

Poole Harbour - Boats, fishermen, nature reserves, strong currents & chain ferry near entrance, mud when tide drops, unusual tidal pattern (Poole)

ROCK SPORT

Customers must be provided with properly fitting equipment (variety of sizes are available).

Helmets are worn to protect heads from impact with rocks (both falling rocks and if someone slips). Any one not wearing a helmet must be kept away from the rocks.

Harnesses / caving belts and helmets must be checked for correct fitting continually throughout the day not just at the start of the session, especially after breaks.

Groups are kept back from edges where they might fall off. If they are required to approach the edge then ropes should be used to protect them and instructor should be tied off.

Groups are told not to throw rocks as there may be people below.

Areas of loose rock are normally avoided, where it is not possible to avoid them and there is minimal risk, groups are warned to take special care whilst crossing them.

Groups are warned to take special care whilst on uneven / slippery surfaces and where there are loose rocks or overhead hazards.

All anchors, whether natural or man-made, must be checked each time before use.

Double check all knots and karabiners are secure when being used.

Sharp edges or muddy areas may damage ropes, these should be avoided, or rope protection used to prevent damage. If ropes do get muddy they should be washed afterwards.

Several sites have glass and other litter scattered around, groups must be warned of any danger this poses, and equipment protected from possible damage.

Car park surfaces are often dirty and oily, kit must not be put down on them, where this occurs. Groups are discouraged from standing on ropes as this will damage them.

Anyone working more than 2 metres off the ground, where they could fall, must be tied off.

Where they could prove to be a hazard, Staff should ensure that rings, necklaces, watches or ear fobs etc are removed or covered before activities and helmet straps or hair etc are tucked in. Also safeguard against clothing, gloves or anything else becoming a hazard.

CAVING

Long days may tire people out leading to exhaustion/hypothermia. Keep an eye on the group and adjust the session accordingly.

Groups must wear wellies/stout footwear with good tread, to reduce the chances of slipping. Trainers may be worn in Sandford Levvy as it has a flat floor.

Group members must be 'spotted' from below, whenever climbing up or down.

Hand-lines, or assisted hand-lines, should be used where climbs are particularly slippery and belayed when necessary.

Caving belts must be worn properly to provide an attachment point in case of emergency and also as a secure handhold to assist clients, warn them when you are going to grab belt.

The Instructor must be aware of the limitations of the group and choose the route accordingly; they should also be able to spot potential dangers and safeguard them appropriately.

Make sure you and group check others are following, especially where there are route choices.

In caves where group are likely to get wet then extra equipment may be required, from chocolate / energy sweets &/or hot drink, group shelter to cordura oversuits / fleece & thermal layers/fleece hats.

Instructors should be aware of the risks of Radon and other gas (ask to see the booklet in the office if you are not). Info on Radon levels in the Forest of Dean can be found in Caving Access file. An investigation into its presence in Mendip caves is ongoing.

Bats should not be disturbed – avoid shining light / photographing them.

Do not allow groups to touch formations.

Do not allow groups to drink from springs e.g. by Goatchurch.

Access Guide for Southern Caves can be found on CSCC website.

Caving instructors should also be aware of carbon dioxide (CO₂)

CO₂ is a colourless, odourless gas, normally present in the air we breathe; “fresh air” has about 0.03% CO₂ and about 21% oxygen (O₂). (CO₂ forms about 4% of the air we breathe out – a low enough level for “mouth to mouth” resuscitation to work.)

In caves and old mines the concentration is normally up to about 1% but can be higher due to rotting vegetation or wood, organic pollution carried in by water, poor ventilation or heavy “caver traffic” in small passages. Using a carbide lamp further depletes the oxygen level and adds to the CO₂.

CO₂ is heavier than air and may form pockets of higher concentration in low areas, particularly where these are badly ventilated.

Effects of excess CO₂

Anyone breathing a higher than normal concentration of CO₂ will suffer gradually increasing ill effects - depending on the level of the gas - and may eventually become unconscious, or even die, if not evacuated (The most famous casualty being Neil Moss who became trapped at the bottom of a shaft in Peak Cavern)

HSE sets CO₂ limits for the workplace: 0.5% for the long term exposure; 2% for short term exposure; anything higher than this for any length of time is regarded as a risk to human health.

The symptoms of excess CO₂ levels

2% - some breathlessness, headache after several hours' exposure

3% - panting after exertion, slight headache

4% - panting, throbbing headache, face flushed, nausea, sweating

7-10% - mental deterioration, gasping for breath, intolerable for more than a few minutes

10-15% - intolerable panting and exhaustion, unconsciousness in minutes, convulsions

Normally a person will recover once out in fresh air. However, take care when evacuating as even minor exertion can worsen symptoms and judgment may be affected, so lifeline even simple climbs.

In addition to the symptoms experienced by humans, a useful guide is that a match or candle will not stay lit when there are high levels of CO₂, although humans will feel the effects before this point.

For following Burrington caves the phone box is situated in Burrington village or ask at the Burrington Inn. Nearest hospital B.R.I or Weston

GOATCHURCH CAVERN

Care should be taken when passing the Badger's Hole - this is easily overlooked.

The extension beyond the Drainpipe should not be used with students.

The Drainpipe should only be used with fit, confident students - avoid when the cave is busy.

The Instructor, or a capable assistant, should wait by the big middle step of the Giant's stairs, to prevent anyone from falling down!!! (NB: encourage students to get themselves down, with support, rather than doing it for them).

A rope should be used with novices on the Tradesman's entrance, normally the Instructor should tie in to it and then assist students to climb out, or use assisted hand-line.

The step across and down past Bloody Tight is hard to protect – avoid taking groups here.

If Coal Chute is used, then must be belayed or assisted hand-line.

The Instructor should be in a position at the base of the Chimney (Jacob's Ladder) to catch anyone that slips. A hand-line can be rigged here if necessary.

The 'Hole in the Floor' should not be used to get from the Boulder to the Water Chamber, as there are holes that children can fall down and it involves the removal of helmets.

The Instructor, or capable assistant, should wait at the foot of the coffin lid slab to prevent anyone from slipping back down into the Water Chamber.

The rift by Bloody Tight has caused accidents and should be avoided.

Hellish tight should only be used with very confident groups and the instructor must protect the slope and drop there in.

SIDCOT SWALLET

An Instructor, or capable assistant, should wait inside the entrance with novices, to protect them against falling as they come in.

A hand-line must always be rigged on the Lobster Pot (short rope is sufficient).

The Chimney should only be used by very confident students and they must be belayed (long rope belayed to column in chamber is sufficient).

The Duck is not normally tried, if it is, wetsuits must be worn.

Make sure everyone is following on, as clients may head down Purgatory Passage if they can't see others.

There are loose rocks on the right of the entrance. Keep an eye on them as they could fall into the entrance.

PIERRE'S POT

NB An important conservation area, only used as part of a course, or if Sidcot etc. unsuitable. Do not allow students to touch the 'moon-milk'.

The approach to stream-way should not be attempted with students.

A hand-line must be used in the entrance. An Instructor should safeguard students as they traverse the entrance rift. With novices an assistant should help on the pedestal rock.

An Instructor should safeguard the traverse of the hole in the floor. Beware of students catching their legs in the wide crack as they step down - it grabs wellies and ankles.

A hand-line can be rigged on the chimney if necessary (thread belay just above).

The switchback should only be used with confident students, and must be belayed from inside the rift. An Instructor must be in a position to catch anyone that slips, entering the rift, from the tube. An assistant is needed to attach the climber.

NB Check that students can do the final squeeze before sending them around!!!!

The "gap and climb" in the main chamber must be belayed if used, but is difficult for novices.

ROD'S POT

The "bold step" must be protected by the Instructor to prevent students falling into the rift.

Climb down below the step must also be spotted.

Students should clip into a traverse line across the pitches (do not tie to loose block at end).

The following traverse and scramble should be roped if necessary otherwise the traverse can be protected by the Instructor, who ties in to the end of the first traverse line.

A belayed assisted hand-line should be rigged on the Bear Pit. This is cramped and awkward, so should only be used with confident students.

In the passage down to / up from the Bear Pit make sure all clients are following on as there are various routes through the rift that go a surprisingly long way / into awkward spots to find them.

The pitches should not be used with novice cavers. The middle pitch is a belayed climb and the first pitch can be laddered. Belay to obvious boulders at the pitch head. Level 2 only.

New connection to Bath Swallet is also a ladder trip – must have certificate for both caves.

BATH SWALLET

Can't throw rope back down main pitch, so need an assistant half way down or double length rope.

Climb down may require assisted hand-line or belaying.

READ'S CAVERN / FOXES HOLE (BC)

Loose rock in lower levels of Read's – only the main chamber can be used by most LCLAs.

Foxes entrance also requires some care.

CORAL CAVE

Need CSCC key, lock can be stiff.

Hauling system can be set up on the surrounding trees, double ladder required.

Narrow entrance means careful rigging needed so you don't block access.

Footpath nearby, so do not leave entrance open/unsupervised.

Assistant can show group around chamber as most of time will be belaying them down and back up.

Foxes (CB), Denny's, Loxton, Loxton Quarry, Sandy Caves

Need CSCC key for Loxton Caves.

Doorway may need clearing at Loxton to get in.

Bats may be present.

Denny's, long hand-line required. Brambles may also need pruning.

Foxes, rope useful to assist exit.

No phone box, but several houses. Nearest hospital - Weston Super Mare

SWILDON'S HOLE

The entrance section has moved recently, so should be checked carefully beforehand.

Wet weather will make the cave more challenging for groups and increase the likelihood of hypothermia. If water flowing into round pipe then Upper Section becomes Level 2 territory. If more heavy rain is forecast go elsewhere. Farmyard pollution can be a problem.

Several climbs need spotting / assistance, an experienced assistant is useful here, especially:

Protect step from 1st chamber over slide to wet way or crossing rift into Zigzags.

When following passage past 'Jacob's Ladder', warn about the drop.

'Jacob's Ladder' itself requires protecting & step across 'Jacob's Ladder' from Zigzags.

In Old Grotto make sure group are aware of holes and which is correct way on.

The Showerbath below the Meeting of Ways, especially when more water obscures view.

8 foot waterfall (below 40 ft pitch) requires either spotting or hand-line depending on group and water conditions.

Make sure group cannot fall down 20 ft pitch, by being at front.

Avoid Wet Way in high water. Check group's ability and clothing again before using Wet Way.

Make sure all group safely through Lavatory Pan before continuing.

Spot on split climb from main step. Advise of hand-hold in centre of stream.

Old 40' and below 20' are Level 2 territory.

All group members should be in harnesses. Rig to allow easy hoisting and releasable ladder.

Teach group belay signals - whistle required in case stream-way too noisy to hear voice.

Hike boots with hooks for laces should be avoided when using ladders.

Carefully monitor stamina, fitness and how cold group are. Be prepared to turn back.

Below 20' requires wetsuit below boiler or oversuit, or fleece/thermal clothing below oversuit.

Leap-frogging instructor and assistant up to front of group should be common practice, so can keep group moving, also make sure group can spot each other safely on small steps.

Protecting Double Pots and entry / exit of Tratman's Temple and Barnes' Loop requires care.

Phone box is situated by the New Inn

Hospital for minor injuries, Wells, otherwise B.R.I or Weston

SANDFORD LEVVY

Ski Centre car park can be busy.

Track can be muddy and slippery, some bits indistinct – make sure you know way.

Low wire fence to cross and brambles / fallen branches across footpath and entrance.

Small mining test pits either side of path.

Only main passage to be used – there are a few holes along edges.

Respect the conservation tape. Paving slabs in Levvy may be a trip hazard.

Phone at Ski Centre reception

Nearest hospital – Weston

WATERWHEEL SWALLET

Need to get key from Charterhouse Centre or MCG Hut.

Be careful that entrance gate isn't dropped on fingers.

Group need to be experienced as several descents & climbs to be negotiated (mostly protected by spotting), along with the flooded passageways.

Water is cold so need to take extra equipment in case anyone becomes hypothermic.

Care needs to be taken of the formations.

If using the pitch at end be aware that water may be deep & you may need to haul people back up.

If lowering someone down pitch then they must be belayed until they reach the dam, as fixed traverse lines shouldn't be relied upon.

Phone at Charterhouse Centre

Nearest hospital - Weston

CUCKOO CLEEVES

Need CSCC key.

Entrance pitch must be belayed down to floor, harnesses can then be removed.

Group need to be experienced as trip is tiring with several descents & climbs (some need spotting).

In summer/dry conditions there is a risk of CO₂ build up.

Care should be taken of loose rock on the floor.

Phone at Hunters Lodge Inn

Nearest hospital – Weston

EAST TWIN SWALLET & LIONEL'S HOLE

Both contain potentially dangerous loose rock and are not generally used. Lionel's can flood.

MANGLE HOLE

Same guidelines and procedures as approaching Sandford Levvy apply, but it is even harder to find.

Rig from tree as well as scaffold bar, 3 ladders required to go straight down, or a short traverse between ladders allows 2 ladders to reach floor (double the length of rope required so end doesn't get stuck on the ledges, even on straight route), where scramble down between boulders can be spotted.

Route finding is complex, so need to know the cave well, with a competent group.

MANOR FARM SWALLET

Cave is closed for 'maintenance' during the summer.

Farmyard pollution can be a problem.

Back up the scaffold bar belays at entrance, and on 2nd pitch.

Check weather forecast beforehand. See Swildon's for notes on taking level 2 groups.

Watch out for water levels rising at Albert's Eye, it is very easy to get trapped beyond.

Phone at farm

Nearest hospital - B.R.I or Weston

AVELINE'S HOLE

Broken glass and rubbish can be a problem.

Visibility of traffic is difficult when leaving the cave, best for you to cross first so can see better.

HUNTER'S HOLE

Only suitable for small groups (4 + 2), who must be confident / competent on ropes & ladders, also requires use of cow's tails & traverse lines.

Watch out for loose rocks, avoid in wet conditions as rocks may be washed down.

GOUGH'S CAVE

Arrange access with Chris Castle/Hugh Cornwell at Cheddar Showcaves (check SRT rope in place).

Walk through the show cave to Black Cat Chamber (quite warm so take water & don't wear too much).

Can rig several ladder pitches from rock ledge, where cow's tails are required for everyone.

Phone in the cave!

Hospital – Weston

Ladder / S.R.T. practice in Barn

Check knots before use. Only experienced staff, or those under their supervision can use.

SYMONDS YAT CAVES

Steep walk down - rope may be required in wet conditions.

Need to wear helmets on approach / below cliff.

Level 2 caver or SPA can lower / abseil group down to entrances.

Dry caves with no big drops to worry about, but some of passageways are quite tight.

Normally use C10 aka SYC No. 18 or Symonds Yat Cave (Entrance 1 – spot or hand-line 1.5m drop, 2 not normally used, but can life-line 3m overhang, 3 is slighter tighter one). Be aware of bats and some areas are loose.

Phone is at the teashop or Braceland campsite.

KING ARTHUR'S CAVE / DROPPING WELLS (BIBLIN'S) MINE

Watch out for glass and other litter.

King Arthur's is suitable for groups to explore without caving equipment.

PANCAKE CAVES, NEAR BIBLIN'S (LCLA 1 WITH SPA CAN DO ABSEIL)

Watch out for glass and other litter.

Old tree by abseil has finally fallen over – plenty of others available.

Assistant should abseil first, to help clients at bottom, group walk out from there.

Stay out of obvious collapsing sections.

Cave 1 through trip needs rigging with hand-line beforehand – tie off bottom end also.

Phone at campsite

Hospital for all these – Monmouth

OGOF CLOGWYN

Steep slippery walk down – 80m rope required for traverse line for novice groups, on bolts & boulder.

Knee deep water in places - groups need to be prepared for this.

'Spotting' is necessary on the entrance and climbs.

Keyhole has potential for jamming feet – make sure group keep their legs high and spot exit.

Nearest phone at Blackrock.

Hospital – Abergavenny

EGLWYS FAEN/OGOF PEN ERYR

Difficult to find the entrances in poor visibility, make sure group are suitably clothed for weather.

Eglwys Faen - Spot group up ladder in to Upper Series – can be slippery when wet. Make sure group briefed about 20ft shaft on right in Upper Series, or protect with assistant. Also spot the pothole down to the Eastern and St Patrick's Series. Entering and exiting the Upper Series can be difficult for larger cavers, as can the crawl to the Inner Chamber. The only places where group likely to get wet are on the ladder, in St Patrick's Series and the Waterfall Entrance.

Ogof Pen Eryr – tight corkscrew at entrance can be hard for larger/long legged individuals, as can the slot at the end. Watch out for loose rocks.

Phone at Llangattock.

Hospital – Abergavenny

OGOF Y CI

Avoid after heavy rain.

Phone at farm.

Hospital – Merthyr Tydfil

PORTH YR OGOF

Rocks being dropped from above can be a problem, don't linger by the entrances.

If the Mellte is not easily crossed then it is too high and cave should not be entered with groups.

Keep out of the deep water – there have been several accidents, especially at the Resurgence.

Phone- may be available with car park attendant.

Hospital – Merthyr Tydfil or Swansea

BRIDGE CAVE / WHITE LADY'S

Pay goodwill fee (£1 per person or £5 per minibus). Do not use in wet conditions as they flood.

Bridge Cave has been closed to groups recently, check current situation and also weather. debris in the boulder choke can cause unpredictable back-up. Spot the scramble and never cross the Bridge, keep away from the Sump.

White Lady – spot group on climb outside cave. Care needed traversing deep pool – take a throwline.

Phone- on Pontneddfechan road

Hospital – Methyr Tydfil or Swansea

OTHER AREAS

We use qualified instructors with their own risk assessments for site.

CLIMBING & ABSEILING

Long hair or dangling straps are tucked away if there is a danger of it catching in the belay device, or tied back especially when abseiling.

Abseil safety rope should not be slack whilst on abseil (or so tight that instructor is lowering). It needs to be controlled especially carefully when nearing bottom of long abseils due to stretch in safety rope if abseiler were to let go of abseil rope.

Groups must not loiter at the base of abseils, in case anything is dislodged from above.

The responsibility of the belayer and rope holders should be made very clear and failure to comply in any way should result in instructor intervention. If a person or group will not follow the methods explained to them, they either need further tuition or need closer supervision. Either occasion may well require that only one rope be run at a time

If there is a visiting member of staff available they can help to supervise a rope whilst ascending, but the group remain the responsibility of the instructor. The instructor must still supervise the lowering of the climber (a competent assistant may help).

Climbers are told to climb slowly enough for the belayer to take in the rope, so that they do not end up with slack rope between them. If it becomes apparent that the belayers are having a continual problem keeping the rope tight then all climbing is to stop until the problem has been solved. It may be necessary to clarify the belaying technique or alter the belaying method.

Make sure climbers stay on route to avoid them pendulum swinging if they fall off.

No more than 3 climbs should be operating per instructor at any time, and then only if the instructor is happy that they are all operating safely (2 often advisable). Using 4 ropes on more advanced and indoor courses should be discussed with senior staff first.

Karabiners and knots are to be checked each time anyone attaches to the climbing rope and belay device.

Standard climbing calls are used to prevent misunderstandings.

Do not demonstrate rope pulling through group member's hands – one participant held on!

Clients must tell instructor when climber is ready to descend and wait for instructor to okay.

Stich plates/Tubers etc. can be difficult for small children to pull the rope through, so special attention must be paid to taking in, if these are used.

GriGri's are easier to take in but are more risky when lowering the climber. When lowering, with beginners, the instructor or competent assistant should operate the GriGri and control the rope or

back up on the rope whilst belayer operates both the rope and the handle. More experienced participants must still be supervised appropriately for safe operation of the device.

Ensure that the belayer does not press on the GriGri handle as this will prevent it locking.

GriGris also have the problem that if the climber leans back slowly onto the rope, or isn't very heavy, then the cam may not lock. As with any belay device it is imperative that the 'dead rope' is held at all times and the correct operation is shown from the start.

With adults who are belaying each other, if the climber is heavier than the belayer, it is better to use stich plates, or other belay devices, rather than GriGris, as the belayer will find it difficult to control lowering - otherwise the instructor must assist.

It is acceptable to do blindfold climbing as a trust exercise as long as the same safety precautions are taken. Time trials are also acceptable but only for the upward journey, and belaying must be done by the instructor, or a client with direct instructor supervision. Once again, should the rope become loose, the instructor must stop the climber.

A chest harness (or full body harness) should be used when anyone is too small or too large to wear a sit harness safely. Easiest method - the chest and sit harnesses joined by a D-maillon and the safety rope clipped / tied to the straight side between sit and chest. (Descender clipped to harness.) The rope could also be tied directly to the harnesses.

BMC research into the biggest causes of accidents: Climbers being lowered off too quickly. Rope incorrectly attached to harness. Belay device not used correctly. Leading / clipping technique poor. Other misuses e.g. 3 way load on karabiners.

CLIMBING AND ABSEILING TOWER

The tower set up must be supervised by Senior Instructor.

Anchors - More than one steel bar must be used to tie off ropes (multiple anchors).

Can have 2 climbs or 1 abseil on each side – check holds are secure before use.

One instructor may only use one side, i.e. 2 climbs, at any one time as they cannot see both sides.

For the ascent of the abseil ladder, all of the group and supervising staff should be shown how to do up and check a karabiner. The karabiner should be checked by either an assistant instructor or visiting staff provided the instructor is happy they are competent - the instructor should visually confirm that it is connected properly.

Only an instructor or competent assistant should belay a client up the ladder.

Tower must not be used in high winds and also cannot be put up or taken down safely in strong winds.

STRETCHER LOWER

Only appropriately trained staff can run this.

All participants are either anchored, life-lined or kept well back from the edge.

Only run at Uphill, Sandford or Split Rock (see below), where there are enough suitable anchors.

Stretcher and stretcher bearers are all interlinked so that no individual can be dropped by releasing one rope.

Stretcher and 'casualty' (if alive) are both belayed separately, whilst attached together, as they are the heaviest loading.

One member of the group is anchored at the edge to communicate between the belayers and the stretcher bearers.

LEAD CLIMBING

Only MIA qualified staff can teach lead climbing.

SPA qualified staff can introduce lead climbing, but participants must be belayed on a top rope, so there is no chance of them falling.

Further notes on using specific sites can be found in the 'Guidelines' on Climbing and Abseiling. The following are site risk assessments:

BURRINGTON COMBE

Sometimes overrun with many different groups. It is vital that instructor keeps track of their group, and does not interfere with other users.

Instructors must abseil in to rig the bolts. The instructor must be happy to do this to run sessions here.

The approaches to abseils can be quite steep and slippery - groups must be in view whilst negotiating these.

There is some loose rock at the top of the car park bay (in the centre) this should be avoided - it is solid to either side (where the climbs are).

The goats are easily spooked and may knock rocks down – keep eye out for them.

Keep groups away from steep rocks when they are eating lunch / waiting for collection etc.

Make sure groups realise the dangers of road & car park.

Phone box - Burrington village.

Hospital - B.R.I. or Weston

UPHILL QUARRY

There is some loose rock at the top – most can be avoided, but care must be taken not to dislodge it.

Fence where you climb over is slippery when wet, warn group. Group always walk round this way.

Particular care must be taken near the edge as this is an extremely steep cliff – also keep group well away from edge on walk up.

Phone box - Uphill Boats or along lane by Dolphin pub

Hospital – Weston (Uphill)

SPLIT ROCK

Small slabs at end can be used for novice groups, or the large bay on right – tree belays.

The right-hand wall should be avoided as it consists of loose rock.

Care must be taken not to drop anything from left wall, as the cutting is a footpath.

Phone box - in Wookey Hole village, or houses at bottom of lane

Hospital for minor injuries Wells, otherwise B.R.I or Weston

CLEEVE QUARRY (GOBLIN COMBE)

Has a particular problem with broken glass, due to local kids throwing bottles off the top in the past, ledges should be checked, and cleared if needed, and all groups warned.

Stakes have been put in, so trees are used less, check they are still solid.

Phone box - Opposite Lord Nelson pub.

Hospital - Weston or B.R.I

GOBLIN INNER COMBE

Footpath is not obvious from the car park, cliffs are not obvious from path (due to trees) and it is not easy to find where to rig, instructor needs to have been there before.

Footpath can be muddy and slippery.

Need to keep group together on way there and back, as is a public footpath through woods.

Need plenty of time if rigging before group arrive, as you have to get back to the car park.

Care should be taken on approach over scree slopes (straight forward paths are obvious) and at base of cliff because it's not flat.

Phone and Hospital as Cleeve Quarry.

SANDFORD QUARRY

Need to get key for the gate from Ski Centre.

Meet all groups at entrance gate, not cliff – check by the lime kilns if they are not at gate.

Use only the area cleared for climbing – lot of loose rock elsewhere.

Rigging from trees at top – don't use the pipeline.

If walking group up track at top of cliff then warn about metal 'spike' on track and rigging ropes across it, possibly also brambles.

There is no public access so members of the public messing about should be asked to leave.

Phone box – by Sandford Stores

Hospital – Weston

AVON GORGE

Participants advised to approach from M5 direction so not turning across carriageway, although there is now a filter lane.

Where large groups expected, marshal required to control car parking.

Road noise makes it particularly difficult to communicate – however - the street lighting makes it possible to climb after sunset! - Normally Sea Walls area.

Groups must be kept back from edge of road when walking up to abseils.

The footpath up to the abseils can be quite slippery, so groups must be supervised on this (it is also possible for them to walk past the instructors!). A rope handrail can be used if necessary (2 x 50m ropes needed to reach 90ft abseils and 3½ x 50m to get to 150ft).

Bolts have been there for some time, so should be backed up to each other and trees above.

(New bolts have been put at top of several routes - these should still be checked before use.)

Instructors should abseil off trees above to get to bolts, or rig off trees.

Consideration must be given to other users at this very popular site.

No Phone box

Hospital - B.R.I

BIXSLADE & STONEY HILL QUARRIES

These have to be booked in advance, so that you can collect a key.

Large blocks provide belay points at Bixslade- check they are safe. Need long stick to thread rope under blocks. Trees at Stoney Hill.

Make sure you know how to get group back out of bottom of quarry at Bixslade.

No phone box.

Hospital - Cinderford or Monmouth

CHURCHILL ROCKS

Permission must be sought before use.

The route to the top is fairly complex - therefore all groups must be accompanied.

Site is getting somewhat overgrown, be careful near prickly bushes / nettles.

When leaving the site group must be helped over the fence and down the bank as they could stumble into the road.

There is no climbing on the side of the slab as any rocks would fall into the road.

Phone box - Crown or Nelson Inn

Hospital - B.R.I or Weston

PORTISHEAD QUARRY

It tends to be dusty and slippery at the top of the severe so it is advisable to be tied on.

It is also difficult to find the top of the crag so it is not recommended for abseiling.

Large loose block to left of slab is to be removed by Avon Wildlife in spring 2006.

Plenty of rigging rope is required. The crag is usually only used on climbing courses with competent groups.

As it is only a small site it can become overcrowded and there isn't much parking.

Phone box – edge of Portishead or in Weston in Gordano

Hospital - B.R.I or Southmead

SYMONDS YAT

Areas of loose rock should be avoided. Also soil erosion – some trees no longer secure.

Steep hill – make sure rocks aren't rolled down as footpath is far below.

Steep walk down - rope may be required in wet conditions – need to know where you are.

Another site that tends to get very busy, so appropriate measures should be taken.

Forestry Commission do not allow ropes to be set up or left on climbs when not being used.

Phone box available at tea-room in forestry car park or in Symonds Yat East

Hospital – Monmouth

BIBLIN'S ROCK

Crag is behind toilet block.

Permission is obtained from site manager.

There is space for one group only – best for climbing.

Phone available in bunkhouse or manager's chalet (poor mobile reception)

Hospital – Monmouth

PWLL DU

Bolted climbs and abseil (require bolts), are very slippery when wet.

Park before reaching the quarry as there is nowhere to turn around once you're there.

Walk in right round the back of the climbs and approach from far side to avoid cliffs.

There is quite a drop off the side of the approach track, warn groups.

Phone in bunkhouse (if in use)

Hospital – Abergavenny

CHUDLEIGH: (Info leaflet on Devon crags for groups - in Climbing Access file.)

Climbs are very polished - there are likely to be numerous other people at crag.

Phone box – village

Hospital - Exeter

CANONTEIGN WATERFALL

55 metre rope minimum

sign-posted from A38/M5

OS Map 191

GR 832824

Own car park

75 miles / 1½ hours from MOP

Photos of descent and top on computer.

Have to climb over fence at top, above big drop – people must be safe and encouraged.

Vegetation may need cutting back at top beforehand – owners will do.

Descent is slippery and is possible to wander off-line, so clear directions must be given.

Awkward descent, so participants need to know what they are doing. Not suitable for under 16s.

Must have arms and legs covered as rocks are rough and participants are likely to slip over.

Everyone told to wear suitable clothing, as will get wet and may be cold – keep eye on water level.

2 instructors and 2 assistants needed for 1 rope - extra staff required as working in a potentially wet and cold environment. 5 abseilers per hour, per rope (max. 60 in a 12 hour day).

Extra rope needed in case 2nd instructor needs to descend to help, or main rope is damaged.

Spectators must be kept well back from base of waterfall.

Long walk up to top – participants should be warned prior to event and need to keep track of whereabouts after kitting up.

Emergency kit in case of injuries must be at base of falls – fleeces & cags, flasks, casualty bag, group shelter. Radios can usually be borrowed from reception, although most mobiles now have reception.

Phone – reception

Hospital – Exeter

HAYTOR : (Info leaflet on Devon crags for groups - in Climbing Access file.)

Exposed to the elements, group should be suitably equipped.

Must contact National Park Rangers (01626 832093) for groups of 6+. (Numbers for Hound Tor, Dewerstone and Baggintor Quarry can also be found in Climbing Access file.)

Other users, particularly the tourists must be considered.

No phone box – ice cream van and National Park info centre may be open.

Hospital – Exeter

WOOD LANE QUARRY

Parking is on main road, not Wood Lane.

Some sections are quite sharp at the top and have damaged ropes in the past so it is necessary to use rope protectors.

The base of the cliff must be kept clear of clients, when anyone is at the top, as there are lots of loose branches/leaves on the top of cliff which hide obstructions/equipment underneath, and can be knocked off, onto anyone below.

To access the top with groups, the steel folding ladder is used and attached to a tree, as the top of the crag is fenced off.

On some top-rope positions, the ropes will knock earth down onto the belayer, be aware of the possibility of this getting in someone's eyes (get them to stand back).

Phone - houses on Wood Lane.

Hospital – Weston

BERRY HEAD – BRIXHAM

Site map in file. Photos of descent, top and rigging on computer.

Need to contact the council to get key for quarry.

Participants and public walk down and back up private road, which runs behind the abseil position – check they don't get near the edge. Staff and disabled can drive down.

Gate into quarry needs to be opened to get back up - participants must only enter from bottom of abseil to gate, and must also keep public out, as other rock faces are loose.

Phone at entrance

Hospital - Torbay

LLANGATTOCK

Groups of 8 or more must be pre booked at Crickhowell Adventure, Crickhowell. Nominal fee is payable. (Info leaflet and Guidebook in Climbing Access file.)

Blocks now in place for anchors, but also require stakes to give variety.

No phone.

Hospital – Abergavenny

TAUNTON CAMP OUTDOOR WALL

Photos of tower and top on computer.

Surrounded by fence – gate needs unlocking.

Rigging may be in place, preferable to use your own. Use rope protectors

Phone – plenty, you are in Army camp Hospital – medical facilities on site or Taunton Hospital

WOODHOUSE PARK OUTDOOR WALL

Check condition of wall and that holds are secure before use.

Phone – scout camp site

Hospital - Frenchay

INDOOR WALLS

St. Werburgh's, Wells Blue School and B.G.S. walls have their own guidelines which we follow (old copy for St. Werburgh's in Climbing Access files). These walls are also staffed.

Nearest Hospitals are Southmead and B.R.I. - Wells for minor injuries.

Helmets are still worn to aid easy identification and encourage good practice.

BUILDINGS FOR ABSEIL

Buildings are checked prior to use, especially for:

Check for suitable anchors

Height (need to know length of rope)

Route through building to get to top

Slippery floors / tripping hazards - someone must watch participants on any hazards

Do you need protection of ropes / building?

Need suitable area to kit up groups and practice abseil

Check landing area is safe – be especially aware of dropping items

Any glass around line of abseil ? Also check if it has kite-mark.

Many of these buildings have additional info in the office onenote file and photos on the office computer (media/my pictures/work/locations).

Phones are usually available in the building

Nearest Hospitals are normally in the named town

Individual risk assessments for buildings are kept at our office.

ARCHERY

The shooting line is strictly controlled to prevent archers shooting each other, or anybody else.

Access points beyond the targets are closed off & warnings displayed to prevent people/animals wandering onto the range. Arrow stop nets are normally used to reduce overshooting.

In areas which are accessible to public/livestock – need to keep checking beyond safety net.

Groups instructed not to draw bows without arrows as bow limbs could be damaged, causing injury.

Instruction is provided on collecting the arrows to prevent people walking into them.

Toggles, long hair, dangly earrings should be tied back or removed as appropriate.

HEWISH

The range should be set up so that it avoids problems with other groups/livestock.

The animals need to be shut out of the field.

BIBLIN'S / WELSH BICKNOR YHA

Public footpath runs below the field, so range must face towards slope in camping field.

TONEDALE HOUSE / GERBESTONE MANOR

Possibility of group members entering gardens behind range – make sure everyone knows.

BEDGEBURY PINETUM

As the Forest is Open to the Public and it is a busy time of year take lots of rope/flagging tape and danger signs to cordon off the range and keep a sharp watch out

Any footpaths/roads behind the range must be at least 120m away

Discuss arrangements on day with forestry staff

Further useful info, such as nearest hospitals etc, can be found on the FC Agreement

OTHER OUTDOOR SITES

Lyncombe Lodge (top and bottom fields), Goblin Combe bunkhouse, Barton Camp, Locklease School, BGS Sports Fields, St Mary Redcliffe Sports Fields, Chilton Trinity Leisure Centre, Churchill Sports Centre, Nailsea School, field behind Mark Village Hall, Mark College school fields, Biblin's Youth Campsite, Maunsell House, Halswell House, Woodhouse Park, Cadbury House have all been checked, other sites are checked on a one-off basis when required.

All sites need to consider other possible users.

INDOOR SITES

Banwell YCC, Hewish Hall, Long Ashton Hall, Weston YMCA, Portway School, Mark College Sports Hall, Barton Camp hall, Pill Community Hall, Weston YC, Redmaids School Gym have all been checked, other sites are checked on a one-off basis when required.

A double net may be needed to protect the back wall from damage – ladders may be needed.

All halls must be checked for suitability before use.

ASSAULT COURSE

The assault course consists of obstacles set up to allow two teams to use them.

Obstacles are checked on a regular basis to ensure they are safe. They are also checked visually prior to each use.

Each obstacle will be explained prior to use.

Some obstacles can be used on both sides by a single group, when direct supervision not required on both sides.

Each obstacle is generally used separately from the adjoining obstacles, except where one obstacle has a minimal risk and does not require direct supervision.

Instructors are trained on where people are likely to have problems, so that they can position themselves appropriately. Groups are encouraged to assist each other by helping with balance – especially when it is wet.

A sensible pace for the conditions / obstacle is encouraged.

Risk of walking into obstacles and banging head or body parts is minimal as instructor keeps group control and warns of possibility.

Watches, bracelets, rings and dangly earrings should be removed (if possible) to prevent them getting caught on obstacles.

When using blindfolds. Groups must not race. Only one person blindfolded per instructor on the obstacles at a time.

Three legged race is not permitted.

Serious accidents may require requesting an air ambulance or four wheel drive.

Balance beams

Risk of slipping / over-balancing and falling on grass (max. 60cm) or pole. Encourage careful use - reduce speed if necessary with consideration for slipperiness. Mind back/head if going under.

Stepping tyres

Risk of tripping/twisting ankle, negligible risk of other injuries.

The Wall

Risk of falling from the obstacle (height adjustable c. 250cm). Demonstrate / explain how to do. Chipping base has been added to give a more forgiving landing area. Instructor is available to spot as necessary. Only one participant per instructor on the obstacle at a time.

Make sure participants don't drop onto concrete bases at edges.

Risk of splinters is minimal as obstacles checked before each use.

Risk of trapping fingers between planks when putting planks into the wall. Instructor to control the putting of planks into the wall, staff training.

Swing Tyres

Risk of falling (max. 40cm) – staff training and supervision.

Risk of trapping foot in tyre – make sure foot placed across tyre.

Risk of hitting self on A-frame – warn & watch participants.

If participants don't have a good power to weight ratio they may get rope burns on hands – get others to hold tyres in place.

Wobbly poles

Risk of slipping from poles – danger negligible.

Risk of falling onto poles – participants hold ropes or supports to balance, unless crawling.

Risk of finger / body being knocked by poles moving together. Helpers should not go between the bridges if both sides are being used.

Tube Slides

Do not allow hauling, because if group are hauling a team member up the tubes with the rope there is a risk of falling over when they let go of rope.

Risk of getting stuck is unlikely. Staff training just in case.

Can be combined with previous obstacle.

Crawl Net

Warn about getting things caught in net (see general items above).

Snake Tyres

Risk of falling from top of tyre to ground is minimal (max. 70cm). Groups often crawl through (mind backs) and leapfrog instead. Ground is hard on knees when dry.

Ascending Tyres

Risk of falling from top of tyre to ground is minimal (max. 90cm). Groups often leapfrog or crawl through instead.

Risk of falling from tyre and hitting another tyre. Staff training and spotting required. Only one side of obstacle to be used per instructor.

Risk of getting wedged in tyres is minimal (first is too small to go through), consider size of group members.

Wobbly Planks

Risk of getting hit by a plank swinging into ankles. Team to stay behind marker tyres.

Risk of falling onto structure (30cm) if balancing without using ropes. Spotting / staff training required. An instructor can only spot one side at a time. Other side may be used in another way.

Tyre Tunnel

Risk of falling if going over top of tunnel (max. 70cm) is minimal.

Can be combined with next obstacle.

Jumping Tyres

Risk of slipping from tyres. Staff training and spotting required.

Only one side of the obstacle to be used per instructor. One person at a time.

Suspended Tyres

No diving through due to risk of landing badly.

Risk of getting fingers jammed between tyres and ropes, so brief group not to.

Risk of back injury if lifting other participants. Correct lifting techniques must be used.

Risk of dropping person whilst lifting. Spotting / instructor briefing group.

If lifting only one side may be used per instructor.

Hollows have formed either side of tyres – warn them of uneven ground.

Over Under bars

One at a time on obstacle per instructor, unless going under obstacle.

Risk of participants hitting each other whilst on the obstacle. Instructor briefing - keep to own side.

Risk of falling and hitting another bar is unlikely. Spotting and staff training.

Risk of falling from bars to ground (max. 125cm). Minimal risk of injury.

Risk of landing awkwardly after going over bars. Encourage speed suitable for conditions and ability of group.

Mud Crawl

Minimal Risk, as long as they take care entering (slippery) & mind their heads.

Can be combined with previous obstacle.

Tyre Wall

Maximum of 2 people on obstacle per instructor.

Risk of falling from height (max. 300cm). Brief to stay near middle of wall, and direct supervision.

Falling from side of obstacle is very unlikely. Safety surface beside obstacle in case.

Warn about trapping hands/feet between tyres – recommend they use tyres to hold on to.

Buried Tubes

Minimal Risk - can be combined with previous obstacle.

See Saw

Risk of being hit by moving see saw. Team to stay behind marker tyres.

Risk of falling off see saw is minimal (centre height 70cm). Ensure area around see saw is clear of obstructions.

Risk of falling off when balancing the see saw with more than one person is greater. A trust-worthy group and instructor control are vital.

Risk of falling onto each other. Told to take care.

Only one side of the obstacle to be used per instructor.

Plank and Tyres

Risk of falling over. Instructor should be in a position to limit the likelihood of falling onto the plank.

Risk of team moving plank and hurting other people. Encourage care when moving plank.

River Crossings

See watersports and river crossings sections.

FLAG POLE

Sections of pole should be bolted together.

2 opposite guy lines must be fixed before pole is raised.

Group members must wear helmets.

Base of pole must be held in place when raising and lowering.

If anchor stakes are being driven into the ground then suitable boots should be worn and the stake supported (by wedging wood) rather than held. Group members must be closely supervised. No one should stand in front of (or behind) anyone using "Thor's" hammer.

When hauling pole up the opposite guy must be held, or anchored, to prevent it falling forward.

The bottom of the pole should be anchored before lowering, so it does not flick up.

No one underneath pole whilst it is being lowered until top ½ of pole can be reached (do not attempt to hold lower half of pole as this may result in base flicking up).

Check ground is solid enough to hold anchors and the strength / direction of wind – can use only 2 or 3 sections (rather than all 4) if necessary.

GIPS / Pot of Gold / Bridge-building / Trebuchet (Catapult) Challenge

Only appropriately trained staff can run these activities, the training required for Bridge-building and Trebuchet challenge is much more technical than for GIPS.

Instructors should be in a position where they can see and protect all of the group and be able to stop anything that may be dangerous. For low risk activities the group can be divided into smaller teams.

All equipment must be checked to ensure that it is suitable for the intended purpose.

Instructors should check that all equipment is positioned safely, and that anything constructed by the group is safe, and that it is used in the manner for which it is intended.

If anchor stakes are being driven into the ground then suitable boots should be worn and the stake supported (by wedging wood) rather than held. Group members must be closely supervised. No one should stand in front of (or behind) anyone using "Thor's" hammer.

Gloves should be worn where participants may encounter splinters or rough surfaces.

Participants must not be put in a position where they can injure themselves, or someone else.

The instructor must be checking constantly for any potential dangers during the construction and use of any structure. All structures must be 'over-designed' for their purpose.

All should stand well clear of structures that could fall down e.g. flagpoles or bridge supports and sufficient anchoring ropes must be used, considering the ground and weather conditions.

Keep fingers away from pulley blocks.

Everyone should stand clear of structures with moving parts, whilst being operated (e.g. Trebuchets), and nobody should be forward of the Trebuchet when firing.

If a bridge is being built across water then the Risk assessment for River Crossings applies.

If the structure is not above water, and anyone is more than 2 metres off the ground, then they must be tied off to a harness and wear a helmet. Less than 2 metres – must be 'spotted'.

Venues

Hewish, Lyncombe Lodge, Goblin Combe bunkhouse, Barton Camp, Avon Gorge, King's Wood (Winscombe), Churchill Sports Centre, Ibstock Place School, Welsh Bicknor YHA, Ashton Court, Biblin's Youth campsite, Bristol YMCA, Bishopstrow House Hotel (Warminster), Mendip Heights Campsite, Combe Lodge, Maunsell House, Gerbestone Manor, Cadbury House have all been checked, other sites are checked on a one-off basis.

ORIENTEERING

Courses are set out to avoid dangerous areas.

Inexperienced under-18s must be in groups when orienteering, never alone, with possible exception when using a short, simple star course.

Clients are told to come back to the start if they can't find a point after a reasonable time.

Give groups a safety bearing if appropriate e.g. head east to road.

Set a return time, by which all must be back, even if they haven't finished course. A recall signal must be agreed with the group before they leave the instructor.

Youngsters are warned not to talk to strangers, as most areas have public access.

Two adults must be present if groups are sent off to find checkpoints, so that one can remain at the start point whilst the other can look for the group.

Clients need to be informed what to do if they think they are lost or if a member of the group becomes injured, e.g. re-orientate or use whistle.

Warn groups about brambles or other obstructions they may come across.

WORLEBURY WOODS

Beware of strangers, dogs, vehicles, tree felling, cars using main track.

There is a steep hill on north side, with some small crags.

Many shallow depressions at west end.

Some of markers may have been removed.

Many paths are not marked on the map, or are unclear, especially on the north side of track.

Phone box - Golf club.

Hospital - Weston

LYNCOMBE LODGE

Watch out for horses and other livestock, plus the barb wire fences.

Watch out for other activities taking place / distracting your group – e.g. off-road driving courses.

Make sure group knows boundaries, as there are many mine shafts & pits in the woods.

Phone – in Hotel or reception

Hospital - Weston

ASHTON COURT

Beware of roads, golfers, strangers, tree-felling, dogs, mountain bikes.

Car park can be very busy.

It is easy to get lost in the main woods.

Phone box - Cafe in car park

Hospital - B.R.I

STOCK HILL

Beware of roads, strangers, dogs, tree-felling.

Several areas have been clear-felled since the map was produced, or changed otherwise.

As this is not a permanent course, children should only travel short distances on star courses.

Car break-ins are likely - height restriction prevents minibuses using main car park.

No phone.

Hospital - B.R.I or Weston

BLAISE CASTLE

Beware of strangers, dogs, cliffs.

Car park can be very busy.

Phone in cafe.

Hospital - B.R.I

CHRISTCHURCH, FOREST OF DEAN

Beware of mountain bikes, strangers and vehicles.

Make sure groups aware of the river & the steep banks.

There are cliffs, but these are mostly well fenced and away from footpath.

Also there are some large holes.

Phone box – Symonds Yat East, Braceland Campsite or Biblin's bunkhouse.

Hospital – Monmouth

PORTISHEAD LAKE GROUND

Beware of strangers, dogs, pond and roads.

Phone?

Hospital - B.R.I

CROOKS PEAK/WAVERING DOWN

Phone – Barton Camp or farm on top

Hospital - WSM

BEDGEBURY PINETUM, KENT

Beware of mountain bikes, strangers, dogs, tree-felling, groups being distracted by play areas/GO APE.

If using permanent markers there are courses of varying standards – make sure appropriate for group.

Couple of points where it is easy to overshoot, either have roving instructor or make group aware.

Phone – by start (mountain bike hire)

Hospital – Royal Tunbridge Wells

HILLWALKING/SEARCH & RESCUE

Worlebury Woods, Burrington, Dolbury, Blackdown, Crooks Peak, Quantocks, Exmoor, Dartmoor, Forest of Dean, Sugar Loaf, Brecon Beacons, Black Mountains, Chilterns, South Downs may all be used.

Staff trained to recognise signs of hypothermia, and how to treat it.

The group need to be warned of any likely dangers beforehand.

Instructor must take appropriate precautions around steep slopes.

The group must be kept together, especially close if it is misty, foggy or dark.

Plenty of fluids carried, and protective clothing worn, to reduce the effects of the sun or storm.

Boots with ankle support recommended on rough terrain to avoid ankle injuries.

Instructors must regularly check that all are present, especially in poor conditions or at night.

Group should carry torches if possibility of being out after dark.

Instructors leave route plan at base, with timings and escape routes.

If conditions are unsuitable for the original plan then instructors will use a suitable alternative and inform base.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award training days run at Redland High School, YMCA and Kewstoke Hall. Training and Assessment expeditions run on Mendips, Forest of Dean, Exmoor and Brecon Beacons. See our separate Guidelines for further details.

Night Walks on Crooks Peak and from Goblin Combe and Biblins.

Be especially careful around steep slopes and cliffs and caves – follow rules above.

In summer “night walks” are often actually during daylight hours – check sunset times.

Do regular number counts to ensure you have everyone.

SURVIVAL CAMPS / CAMPING

Camp hygiene is of utmost importance.

How to use the stoves safely is demonstrated before group use them.

Trangia stoves can appear to be out when they are still burning - make sure they are out and cool before refuelling. Refer to COSHH file on use of meths.

Fires/cookers are supervised to prevent burn/scald injuries, and to prevent them getting out of hand (water must be available – do **not** use on meths).

No cooking or naked flames are allowed near the tents.

Campfires should be constantly supervised, children should be kept at a safe distance and fire must be fully extinguished when it is left - have water/sand at hand to control the fire.

Refer to CoSHH file for info on Meths/bottled gas/elsan blue etc.

Sites should be clear of likely flood areas.

The group should all be pitched close together so that the instructor can supervise everyone and also to discourage strangers. But warn of tripping over guy lines/pegs.

Consider other potential hazards when positioning tents - such as vehicles, wasp's nests, other animals and falling branches.

Camps should be kept away from potential dangers, and group members warned.

Protect food from insects and animals.

Football and other games are to be kept away from tents.

Wide games should be played in a safe area (check for hazards before - warn group of minor hazards, don't do it if major hazards - do something else that avoids the hazards). An instructor should control the game (more if necessary) - make sure rules and boundaries are clearly explained before starting. Recall signal and / or end of time agreed beforehand.

Boundaries need to be set so the group know where they can/can't go.

CAMPSITES (phones usually at reception)

Goblin Combe (hospital – Weston or B.R.I) alongside bunkhouse

Mendip Heights (hospital – Weston or B.R.I) small site

Braceland (Forestry Commission, hospital - Monmouth) huge site

Bibblins Youth site (Forestry Commission, hospital - Monmouth) youth groups only, but public footpath passes through. Phone at bunkhouse or Warden's Hut (both may be shut)

Hill Farm (private, hospital - Weston or B.R.I) Camp toilet or bury waste. Phone at farmhouse

LOXTON WOODS

Watch out for barbed wire, prickly bushes / nettles and bee / wasp nests.

Do not damage living trees / plants.

No phone

Hospital – Weston

BUSHCRAFT

Use of fire strikers and tinder will be demonstrated and supervised. Fire making materials should be returned to the fire pit after use, to avoid unwanted smouldering fires. (A supply of water or sand must be kept to hand to put out fire and treat minor burns.)

If tools are to be used, i.e. Saw, Knife, Axe etc then safe use of tool will be briefed and supervised. Tools must only be used for their intended purpose. Appropriate footwear will be worn if using tools. All tools must be kept in good condition to avoid injury e.g. sharpen before use.

Group members should be briefed not to eat anything that they find in the woods. If food is to be found it will be closely supervised.

Water from a stream must be boiled for 3 minutes to sterilise it before drinking.

See also section on Survival Camps for further appropriate guidance.

GAMES

Staff should not take part in contact games.

Rules should be clearly set on the tackling that is allowed, e.g. football standard rules.

Boundaries should be clearly set.

Games should not include the use of sharp objects.

VEHICLE TREASURE HUNTS

We provide central contact point, in case there are problems and to make sure all return.

Participants use own vehicles and are told that it is not a race – don't break the law.

Drivers should not use phones or read directions/maps whilst driving.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Where group leaders have arranged these as additional to our provision, they are responsible for checking the appropriate risk assessments, insurance and procedures. Where we have arranged them, we make sure contracted organisations have suitable arrangements.

BUNKHOUSES & RESIDENTIALS

Adhere to their guidelines.

Group are given a briefing at start of residential to cover these points.

Fire regulations must be followed and fire drill explained.

No smoking in buildings. Smoking outside only in prescribed areas and cigarettes extinguished.

Other groups may be using the sites.

Campfires are to be built only in prescribed areas and follow guidelines under Camping.

Bunk beds are not climbing frames.

Keep pupils out of kitchen unless supervised.

Take care in parking areas and near roads.

Check facilities and surrounding area for potential dangers.

Keep an eye out for members of public approaching bunkhouse or group members should be challenged – if in doubt contact the police.

Where to play and where not, should be specified e.g. no football near windows.

Warn that wet floors can be slippery e.g. showers and recently cleaned areas.

No tree climbing or over walls or fences.

Pupils must not leave grounds unsupervised.

Cleaning chemicals, tools etc must be kept away from group.

BARTON CAMP

Have own guidelines.

Staff must be trained before using swimming pool – pupils not allowed otherwise.

Pupils must be supervised on playground.

GOBLIN COMBE BUNKHOUSE

Following risks reduced by informing groups where they can or can't go at site:

Cleaning chemicals are in kitchen.

Steepish slope is beyond back wall with tempting woodland.

Clay pigeon range nearby – usually only operates weekends – they put up warnings.

BIBLINS

Public footpath past site – Stranger Danger in briefing.

Toilets are outside the building – responsible adult needs to know who has gone at night.

Pupils told to keep away from river unless supervised – no swimming.

Approach track steep and rough – drive slowly.

VINEY HILL

Have own guidelines.

PWLL DU

Make everyone aware of steep hill beyond fence.

Area is prone to hill fog.

OTHER BUILDINGS inc. OUR OFFICES/STORES

Check fire procedure. Fire procedure for Office/Stores is in Induction Pack.

Check fire alarms / appliances / emergency lighting are maintained. Office/Stores are open enough for fires to be quickly detected without detection system, appliances are regularly checked, torches are kept next to Office exits.

Check fire exits. Office/Stores route is out through main door – make sure not obstructed.

Make sure everyone knows the fire drill. Office/Stores drill run quarterly.

Check for hazards and take appropriate steps to minimise. Fire Safety Report for Office/ Stores is kept in the COSHH file and H&S reviews are done regularly and recorded.

Keep fuels and sources of ignition separate. Highly flammable chemicals are not stored in the Office/Equipment Stores. Flammable materials are kept to a minimum.

Dangerous chemicals must be kept out of reach of children. Office/Stores are not normally visited by children (any that do visit are supervised by parents and/or instructors).

No smoking in buildings.

Office equipment (esp. electrical goods) should only be used for their intended purpose.

Tim Partridge has completed a Certificate in Occupational Safety covering Fire Safety and Manual Handling.

FOOD PROVISION

If we are providing food then staff should have a Food Hygiene / Safety Certificate and / or receive in-house training on preparing food. Important points are:

STORAGE - Keep away from animals / insects

Store raw meat at the bottom, so it can't drip on other stuff

Perishable items should be kept cool (in summer frozen sausages will defrost in a cool box during the day, whilst keeping other items cool)

Throw away any suspect items

PREPARATION - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water at each of these times: before starting to prepare food, after touching raw meat (including poultry), after going to the toilet, after touching the bin, after touching animals (don't forget to dry)

Keep work surfaces & utensils clean

Separate raw meat / fish from ready-to-eat food

Check the label (for use by date & storage / cooking info)

COOKING - Make sure food is hot enough to have cooked right through

Particularly check meat has been cooked properly (cut open sausages etc)

Pre-cook or microwave meat before barbequing

Microwave potatoes to save time cooking on fire

Make sure frozen food is properly thawed before you cook it

Turn the food regularly, and move it around the barbecue, to cook it evenly

Don't assume that if meat is charred then it will be cooked properly on the inside

CLEANING - Clear up split food straight away

Be particularly thorough cleaning items used on raw meat / fish

If it can't be cleaned immediately make sure it is done when you return

Cloths, sponges & tea-towels should be dried after use (wash regularly)

Try to use different cleaning items for different jobs