Risk assessment – Mobile Climbing Wall

Name of activity, event, and location	**Mobile Climbing Wall** **Beacon Hill Scout Campsite, Horsham** Remember – this is just a starting point for you to assess the risk of your event, and you will need add or take away hazards & controls according to your own findings.	**Date of risk assessment**	**26 January 2026** **Updated 15/02/2026** **& May 2026**	**Name of person doing this risk assessment**	**Alison Styles** **Updated: Mike Bailey and Alison Styles** **May 2026**
		Date of next review	**September 2026** (or when a significant change occurs)		

What could go wrong? What hazard have you identified? What are the risks from it?	**Who is at risk?**	**What are you going to do about it?** How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? How will they be communicated to young people and adults and remain inclusive to all needs?	**Review & revise** What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. **The risk** is the harm that may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	**Controls** are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment, or you might change the way you do the activity.	Keep **checking** throughout the activity in case you need to change what you're doing or even **stop** the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.

Overview

Horsham District Scouts has a Mobile Climbing Wall situated within the boundaries of the District Campsite, Beacon Hill. The facility provides a safe and exciting environment that can be used by members of the Scout Association, Girl Guides and other visiting youth groups.

The purpose of this risk assessment is to identify the common significant risks to which users are exposed and to identify appropriate control measures.

POR rule 9.12.3 applies along with factsheet FS120427 - Climbing - auto belays and mobile walls.

This risk assessment should be read in conjunction with the General Campsite risk assessment.

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General risk control measures:

Activity Leaders responsible for climbing events must have received the appropriate training that allows the use and covers the safe management of this climbing wall. They will be familiar with the participants sufficient to assess individual and group capability and needs or will be supported by such a leader. They will be able to direct, train, coach, support, control the group and administer first aid, when necessary, have a plan for emergency situations and know the procedure to be followed for different types of incidents.

The Event Leader is responsible for ensuring that a suitable First Aid Kit is present during an activity.

Activities will commence with a group briefing covering intended goals, hygiene measures, necessary personal protective and safety equipment, any additional group safety and emergency equipment, group control, potential hazards, any relevant directional signals and contingency or emergency action.

Climbing

Failure of auto belay	Climber Operator	• Swaps carried out annually by trained service technician with manufacturer recommended parts. • Annual inspection by AIB (e.g., ADIPS). • Pre-operating checks to be carried out by a trained operative and signed off before every use including check of cable. • Weight restriction of between 3 and 17 stones.	
Failure of climbing hardware	Climber Operator	• All hardware must be CE Certified. • Carabiners to conform to EN 12275. • Swivels to conform to EN 354. • All hardware must be sourced new from a reliable supplier and be replaced annually during swaps. • Pre-operating checks include carabiners and swivels.	s

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Climbing cable becoming tangled during climb	Climber	• Auto belay system controls slack during climb and descent. Annual swaps and inspection maintained. • Pre-operating checks and priming of belay system to be carried out before use. • Operator trained to check tension before each climber begins ascent. • Operator to observe climbers and instruct to stop climbing if cable retraction fails.	
Failure of harness	Climber Operator	• Climbing harnesses must be purchased from a reputable supplier, conform to EN 12277 and any requirements specified in the Design Review. • Pre use inspection by trained leader. • Detailed inspection carried out and logged every 90 days. Logs must be retained. • Inspection by a competent person annually. • Any faulty harnesses must be tagged and quarantined to prevent accidental misuse. • Harnesses retired at max lifespan (from manufacturer or in accordance with Design Review, whichever is sooner). • Briefing and checking the weight of climbers before they get into a harness and begin climbing	
Climber harnessed incorrectly	Climber Operator	• Leaders properly trained by authorised assessor, with renewal training as appropriate. • Recommend two-person operation, with second person to double check harnesses before use. • Harnesses with automatic double back (eg, Petzl Panji) must be used to reduce the risk of failing to manually double back the harness. • Periodic supervision and assessment of operatives	

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Exceeding recommending climbing height	Climber	• Hose sticks in pulley at top preventing accidental further ascent. • Climber instructed to hit buzzer and descend when they reach the top. • Supervision by trained operative to instruct climber to stop.	
Injury during ascent	Climber	• Climbers briefed by leader prior to ascent • Handholds tested as secure during pre-operating checks. Allen key kept with wall to allow tightening before use. • Handholds must be replaced if chipped or damaged. • Handholds must be fitted with consideration to the textured surface – large handholds cannot be fitted where the texture introduces a gap between the wall and the handhold. • Climbing should cease during wet weather to prevent participants slipping on hand holds	
Injury during descent/landing	Climber Operator	• Climbers must be instructed to put their feet on the wall and push away to prevent grazing on the wall or catching on handholds. • Auto-belay system to prevent a fall (see specific controls). • Continuous safety matting meeting the specification given in the Design Review for the device required to protect climber on landing. • Helmets are not to be worn	
Finger or toggle trap	Climber	• Handholds must be fitted closely to the wall surface with no gaps large enough to fit a small finger or toggle etc. • Where the wall surface is textured care is required in the placement of handholds to ensure there are no gaps between the handhold and the wall surface. In some areas it will not be possible to fit larger handholds. • Gaps must be checked during pre-use inspection	

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Head injury	Climber	• Helmets are not recommended on auto-belay devices due to the risk of strangulation if they catch on a handhold during descent. • No loose objects at height which pose a risk of falling onto participants.	
Injury due to improper behaviour (e.g. swinging, jumping)	Climber Operator	• Climbers briefed before ascent. • Climbers supervised during climb.	
Climber landing on another individual during descent	Climber Operator Public	• Climbing area must be enclosed by a fence or barrier to provide a safe and controlled area. • Leaders to supervise area and ensure that only one person per route is permitted in the area and stays within the area below their route while not climbing.	
Climber hitting barriers on descent	Climber	• Barriers must be erected a suitable distance away from the wall – this is at least 2.5 meters; however, some devices or options require barriers to be situated a further distance away – see the Design Review for the specific specification for your device.	
Climber hitting jack legs on descent	Climber	• Jack legs within 2.4 meters of the wall must be covered with jack leg pads.	
Climbers unable to descend	Climber	• Minimum weight of 3 stone/18kg • Leaders are trained in how to carry out a rescue	
Climbers frozen by fear	Climber	• Leader trained in procedure to follow with nervous climbers • Climber can let go of the wall to descend • Clear the wall and climb up and reassure the climber at height.	

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Wall lowered while being used	Climber Operator Public	• Remote control unit must be unplugged from the trailer and place in a storage crate until it is time to lower the wall.	
Collapse of structure	Climber Operator Public	• Annual inspection by AIB Operator • Visual inspection of frame carried out during daily checks.	
Overturning of structure	Climber Operator Public	• Extendable jack legs must be used • Trailer provides ballast • If the wall is disconnected from the trailer, appropriate ballast must be used in its place. Ballast kits are available from Innovative Leisure. • Tower must not be raised or operated if the wind speed exceeds the maximum given within the Design Review. • Tower must be lowered if being left unattended	

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Siting, setting up and lowering tower

Trailer movement during siting / take down	Operator Public	• Public must be excluded from the area while manoeuvring the trailer. • Competent member of volunteer to act as banksman while manoeuvring/reversing trailer. • Hazard lights to be used.	
Injury during set up and take down of extended jacks	Operator Public	• Public excluded from area. • Only to be set up by leaders trained in how to do so safely • Subject to annual inspection by AIB	
Raising the wall	Operator Public	• Wind speed to be measured, wall must only be raised if it is below the maximum wind speed rating specified in the Design Review. • Area checked for overhead hazards. • Pre-operating procedure and checks that must be carried out before the wall is raised complete. • Only to be raised by a trained operator. • Remote control must be removed and kept in locked storage, key held by authorised operator to prevent raising or lowering by unauthorised person or without proper checks.	
Lowering the wall	Operator Public	• Public excluded from areas, with barriers surrounding the area the wall will be lowered into if necessary • Only to be lowered by a trained operator. • Remote control must be removed and kept in locked storage, key held by authorised operator to prevent raising or lowering by unauthorised person or without proper checks. • All personnel must be clear of the area before the remote is re-attached. • Remote requires constant pressure on button – movement stops if button is released.	

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Maintenance and technical

General maintenance	Operator	• Maintenance should only be carried out by a trained service technician.	
Hydraulic oil leak	Operator	• The auto belay hydraulic system and the lifting hydraulic system both use an ISO 32 hydraulic oil, which is classified as non-hazardous under the CLP Regulation. • An MSDS is supplied with this document. • A pre-use check must be carried out to check for the correct oil level.	
High pressure hydraulic oil escape from lifting ram	Operator Public	• Hydraulic system must be maintained by trained service technician using manufacturer recommended parts. • Annual inspection by AIB. • Pressure relief valve fitted. • Operators trained to cease using remote once wall is fully erected or lowered to prevent a build-up of high pressure.	
Pressure in auto belay rams	Operator	• System is pressurised by service technician to an appropriate level. • No mechanism by which pressure could be increased. Normal operating pressure well below any that could occur due to normal fluctuations (e.g. due to weather). • A pre-use check must be carried out to check for the correct air pressure.	

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If the climbing wall is relocated on the Beaconhill Campsite or taken offsite

Towing

Trailer use on public roads	Public Driver	• Trailer submitted for an IVA and certified by the DVLA before use. • Trailer must only be towed by someone with an appropriate driving license. • Trailer must only be towed with a suitable towing vehicle, taking into consideration the trailers weight. • Driver must use appropriate towing mirrors if the trailer is wider than the rear of the vehicle.	
Trailer coming detached while towing	Public Driver	• Trailer must be attached by suitably trained person. • Trailer checks must be carried out before travel. • Breakaway cable must be used.	
Trailer becoming unstable or fish tailing in transit	Public Driver	• Speed limits must be obeyed. • Wheel nuts and air pressures must be checked. • Trailer checks must be carried out before travel.	
Trailer use on public roads	Public Driver	• Trailer submitted for an IVA and certified by the DVLA before use. • Trailer must only be towed by someone with an appropriate driving license. • Trailer must only be towed with a suitable towing vehicle, taking into consideration the trailers weight.	

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		• Driver must use appropriate towing mirrors if the trailer is wider than the rear of the vehicle.	
Wall raising while in transit	Public Driver	• Hydraulic rams prevent lifting while in transit. • Tie down straps must be used during transit.	
Items falling from trailer while in transit	Public Driver	• Loose items must be fixed or stowed during transit – items must be stored in the towing vehicle or secured in a locked toolbox secured to the trailer • Handholds must be tightly fitted	
Lights not working correctly	Public Driver	• Driver must connect trailer board and test lights before use.	
Failure of braking system	Public Driver	• A braking system is legally required on all trailers over 750kg. • A regular trailer service is recommended to ensure the braking system is fully operational.	