



Assisted Climbing Policy

Policy created:

Policy first adopted:

Signed chair of Governors:

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This document is a generic risk assessment covering hazards that can be expected at any venue for Climbing. It is recognised every location may have different, specific risks associated with them and so a risk assessment of each new venue should be made prior to its use, along with the normal dynamic risk assessment process that should be part of any activity session.

OGC would like climbers of all abilities to access the sport of climbing. It is recognised that for this to happen there may need to be adaptation of equipment and techniques normally used for these activities. When the assisted climbing systems outlined in this document are used, they should be in a static load, not fall arrest, setting. If participants/climbers are likely to take a dynamic fall then these systems are not appropriate, and normal safety rope systems should be used, or added separately.

The venues.

Venues can be indoor walls or single pitch outdoor crags. The definition of a single pitch crag is that as laid down by the BMC and MLTUK as crags where climbing is on single pitch routes easily accessible from both the top and the bottom. When at climbing walls, the safety policies of the wall management must be followed in addition to those of this policy and/or WSCC.

Staff qualifications and ratios.

The minimum qualification for anyone leading assisted climbing should be CWA. They must also have relevant experience working with those with SEN and be signed off to WSCC requirements. The leader will be assisted by at least one other responsible adult who is not directly responsible for safety, but may have a role in supervising the behaviour of the group. When assisted climbing techniques are being implemented a dynamic risk assessment should be carried out. This should identify suitable supervision requirements and appropriate activities for the rest of the group.

Equipment.

1. All equipment should be checked prior to, during and after use for excessive wear or damage. Any defective equipment should be marked clearly and withdrawn from service.
2. All ropes must have a logged history.
3. Locking karabiners should be used at all anchor points and also for attaching persons into the system.
4. Helmets must be worn by all participants and instructors whilst engaged in any climbing or activity outside. The helmet must be correctly fitted and checked by the instructor. When working indoors a dynamic risk assessment should be carried out as to when it is necessary for the Leader, Climber and group to be wearing helmets. When operating hoist system 3 it would be advisable for the climber, any assistants and the leader to do so.
5. Harnesses should be worn by anyone climbing and must be checked by an instructor every time before being tied in or clipped to the climb.

6. Participants should either tie in to the harness using a re-thread figure of 8 knot or clip on using a locking Krab through a figure 8-knot. In both cases it should be followed by a stopper knot, and an instructor should check it before proceeding.
7. Assisted Hoisting system should follow an approved rigging system. (see diagrams for reference to approved OGC systems)
8. An approved device should be used for belaying which is suitable for the forces involved and the type of rope being used.
9. Care and thought should be given in relation to forces when setting up the anchor points for the hoisting/pulley systems, noting that it is very easy to add extreme forces when doubling and tripling up ropes. If in any doubt, use a separately anchored bottom rope in addition to the hauling system.
10. Where a floor anchor is used this should be tied off using a locking krab and Italian hitch. Where it is a bottom belay situation the climber should be lowered and not allowed to climb above the suspension point.
11. It is recommended that pulley systems are extended away from the climber. However, caution should be taken to ensure this does not introduce a risk of entrapment.
12. Participants and instructors should wear clothing appropriate to the conditions and advice will be given on this before the session takes place. It may be necessary to provide extra padding to make climbing more comfortable for those who are being hoisted.
13. Assisted climbing can take place on natural rock; it is not recommended that hoisting (system 3) be used on only natural protection. If it is, a separately anchored bottom rope safety system **MUST** be used.
14. There should be a method of transport available for emergencies and instructors must always have a group emergency kit available.
15. All procedures should adhere to the current WSCC operating guidelines.

System 1

To climber

Auto locking device



Connected to belayer

Direction of pull

System 2



Taped sling

Auto lock belay

Ground anchor
Backed up person
Italian hitch tie off

System 3

Helmets maybe necessary



Swivel above system

Auto lock belay device

Ground anchor
Backed up person
Italian hitch tie off