

Garners Field Campsite Climbing & Abseiling Tower

Climbing & Abseiling Tower Operating Procedure for Farnham District Instructor led events

Version 1.8

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Location of compound using the application:

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1. Document Control

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2. Table of Contents

1. Document Control	2
2. Table of Contents.....	3
3. Overview of the Tower.....	4
4. General Information.....	5
4.1 Instructor Qualifications	5
4.2 Climbing.....	5
4.3 Abseiling.....	5
4.4 The Site	5
4.5 Equipment	5
4.6 Setting up the tower	6
4.7 Restrictions	6
4.8 Accidents.....	6
4.9 Garners Field Campsite Accident and Emergency Procedure	7
4.10 Weather conditions.....	7
4.11 Risk Assessments	8
5. Running the Session	9
5.1 Prior to commencing any activity	9
5.2 Equipment required by participants and instructors	9
5.3 During the Activity.....	9
5.4 If peer belaying is being used	10
5.5 After the activities have ended.....	10
6. Set Up Instructions	11
6.1 Visual Inspection of the Tower.....	11
6.2 Climbing and Abseiling Equipment	11
6.3 Ground Anchor	12
6.4 Top rope Set-Up.....	12
6.5 Belay Set Up	13
6.6 Live End	13
6.7 Abseil set up.....	14
6.8 Abseiling.....	15
7. Emergency Rescue Plan.....	16

3. Overview of the Tower

Climbing and abseiling takes place on a purpose-built wooden **Self-Supporting Climbing Wall** located at Garners Field Campsite. The structure is inspected and certified by an approved contractor annually in accordance with EN 15567-1 2007 and 2015.

The tower has three working sides



Climbs 1 and 2 on a straight wall



Climbs 3 and 4 on a straight wall with overhang



Abseil Wall

4. General Information

4.1 Instructor Qualifications

The following qualifications can be used for this activity (or equivalent qualifications)

- Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI) or higher (With abseil endorsement if abseiling)
- Girlguiding Level 1 Climbing/Abseiling
- The Scout Association Climbing/Abseiling Permit (Leadership or above)

4.2 Climbing

- Where there is more than one qualified climbing instructor on a session, one must be designated to be the person in charge of the session or supervisor.
- No more than two climbing ropes can be supervised by a single climbing instructor who has the qualifications stated above.

4.3 Abseiling

- Abseiling will be operated by a suitably qualified Abseil instructor. A climbing instructor not approved for abseil can NOT operate the abseil wall. When running abseiling there must also be a supervising adult, in addition to the abseil instructor(s), at the top of the tower. The Supervising Adult is there to ensure participants waiting to abseil do not move past the metal barrier until called forward by the abseil instructor, and do not disturb the abseil instructor in any way whilst the instructor is operating the abseil. The supervising adult does not require a climbing qualification to perform this task.
- If someone has refused to abseil for any reason, and are in a distressed state, they must be safely escorted down the internal staircase to a safe place by the supervising adult. If escorting the person down results in no supervising adult at the top of the tower then the abseiling activity should be put on hold until a supervising adult is back at the top of the tower.
- **All people abseiling down the wall must do so with a back-up safety mechanism. There are no exceptions to this.**

4.4 The Site

- The tower compound is to be kept locked when unattended.

4.5 Equipment

- All equipment must be inspected by a competent Farnham District Climbing Instructor at the beginning and end of every outdoor climbing season. This is logged on a website – gearlog.org – with details of purchase date and serial numbers. A copy can be accessed by the climbing team.

- Ropes, helmets and harnesses must be checked every use for general wear and tear before fitting by the climbing instructor.
- All participants and instructors must wear a helmet and sit harness. If the participant has an ill-defined waist (i.e. a standard sit harness will not be sufficient to provide safety when climbing or abseiling), a full body harness or a linked sit and chest harness must be worn if available. If a harness cannot be fitted safely then that person will not be able to climb or abseil.
- All equipment must be purchased from reputable retailers and conform to the appropriate safety standards.
- Any damaged equipment must be removed from site and district climbing team must be informed.
- Climbing equipment will be replaced in accordance with manufacturer guidelines.
- If an instructor wishes to use their own harness and helmet this must be approved by the lead instructor running the event, and relevant details of this equipment logged and kept in the tower with the tower usage log.
- Participants on a district led session are not permitted to use their own equipment.

4.6 Setting up the tower

Climbing Activity will be set up in accordance with the set-Up Instructions as detailed in this document. A copy of these set up instructions are also displayed inside the climbing equipment store.

If you have any questions, please speak to the campsite warden or District climbing team.

4.7 Restrictions

Maximum weight of an individual using the facility is limited to 120Kg (19 stones).

There is no limit on Height, though it is important that people can duck under the horizontal steel support wire between eye bolts when starting to abseil. Minimum height is set by use of our smallest full body harness.

A maximum of 10 people can be on the tower platform at any one time, including instructors.

4.8 Accidents

If any accidents or first aid takes place as part of the activity, the group leader hiring the session must be contacted. All groups hiring must have their own first aid kit on site. Farnham District have provided a first aid kit inside the tower.

An accident form must be completed as soon as possible before the end of the working day – there is a pad inside the tower. Out of District groups hiring the activity must keep and retain

their own forms. In District Groups must complete one that is kept in the locked filing cabinet inside the hall office in line with to current GDPR procedures.

The activity must be stopped while the first aid incident is taking place unless there are enough qualified personnel to continue to run the activity safely **and** manage the Accident. If the activity needs to be stopped all climbers and abseilers must be lowered to the ground immediately.

4.9 Garners Field Campsite Accident and Emergency Procedure

Garners Field Campsite Accident and Emergency Procedure must be followed:

SUMMONING EMERGENCY SERVICES

Instructions for finding Garner's Field Campsite

Garners Field Campsite is located towards the end of a tarmac single lane branching off Sheephatch Lane near Tilford village, about 3 miles south of central Farnham.

The tarmac track to the Campsite starts beside 'Tilford Mill Cottage' ///lawns,rainy.glow post code GU10 2AQ which is situated adjacent to 'Old Tilford Mill Bridge'. Emergency Services should be made aware that if coming from the Farnham or Tilford direction via Tilford Road into Sheephatch, they will need to cross this narrow bridge which has a weight restriction of 7.5 tons. Once on the Campsite Lane – do not take the first right into 'Herons Way' Girl Guide Campsite but carry straight on. Go past the small holding entrance to the right and just beyond is the entrance to Garner's Field ///fastening.drones.sings on the right. Sheephatch Lane to Garner's Field entrance along the Campsite Lane is about ¼ mile.

In an emergency it is recommended to send a responsible person along the Campsite Lane to the main entrance of Sheephatch Lane to direct any arriving emergency vehicles. At night wear a high viz jacket and carry a light if possible.

4.10 Weather conditions

The instructor must check the weather conditions prior to starting the activity. The campsite warden or District climbing team will inform the instructors of any conditions that might stop the activity.

The activity must not take place in the following conditions

- Electrical storms
- Very high winds (20mph is the recommended maximum wind speed for safe climbing). Wind speeds can be checked using weather apps on smart phones or with the use of an Anemometer.
- Very heavy rain
- Any other condition the instructor in charge deems unsafe

If thunder or lightning is witnessed locally then activities must stop and **wait 30 minutes** before proceeding after the last thunder was heard.

Instructors must inform the campsite warden or district climbing team if the activity has been stopped due to weather conditions.

The instructor has the final say in whether an activity takes place or must be terminated.

4.11 Risk Assessments

The site risk assessment document must be read in conjunction with the activity risk assessment document provided by the operator.

A risk assessment hard copy can be found inside the tower and a soft copy can be found on the district campsite website.

Instructors must have read this document and the risk assessment for this activity before they instruct this activity.

This document and the risk assessment are regularly updated. The campsite warden or district climbing team will update instructors of any changes to these documents. Instructors must ensure that they have read these changes.

Any Group / Section using the climbing tower must also complete their own additional risk assessment specific to the people involved in their own group.

5. Running the Session

5.1 Prior to commencing any activity

The instructor in charge of the session is responsible for checking the equipment is set up correctly, regardless of who set the activity up.

The following list of tasks are required to be completed before the activity can start

- A visual inspection of the tower must be undertaken during set up of the activity. This is to include looking for any damage and checking the area around the tower is free of debris and other trip hazards.
- The instructor must ensure the tower is set up in accordance with Tower Operating Procedures.
- The instructor will check climbers' experience of the fitting and wearing of all personal protective equipment (PPE). For first time or inexperienced climbers the instructor must give a clear demonstration to all participants of the correct method of fitting and wearing of all personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The instructor must check the fitting of all participant's personal protective equipment.
- The instructor must ensure the group are prepared for the session, including correct clothing, footwear, long hair tied back, and jewellery removed.

5.2 Equipment required by participants and instructors

Any participant taking part in the activities once beyond the waiting area inside the compound must have the following:

Equipment	Participant	Instructor
Windproof/coat (weather dependant)	✓	✓
Sunscreen/water bottle (weather dependant)	✓	✓
Closed shoes, no crocs or wellies	✓	✓
Harness	✓	✓
Helmet	✓	✓
First Aid Kit	Mounted inside Tower	

5.3 During the Activity

- There must be at least one adult on the ground to assist with group control and connecting / disconnecting from the equipment. This may be another member of District climbing team or a competent Leader.
- Anyone inside the climbing compound must always wear a helmet.

- Spectators must stay outside the compound unless agreed by the lead climbing instructor.
- Farnham District climbing equipment (harnesses and helmets) may not leave the climbing tower area. Participants must remove all Farnham District equipment and leave it with a member of the District Climbing team, or supervised kit area (e.g. the canvas sheet normally laid just outside of the access gate to the Climbing Tower) prior to walking away from the climbing tower area.

5.4 If peer belaying is being used

- The belaying process must be closely supervised by the instructor.
- Lowering of participants must be carried out under direct supervision of the instructor.
- The safety rope must be tailed at all times.
- There must be a physical check of the climber and belayer(s) before the climber leaves the ground to ensure all equipment is fitted and secured correctly.

5.5 After the activities have ended

- Participants will be instructed to leave equipment ready for the next group.
- If there are no other groups, all the equipment must be returned to the climbing store.
- Any defective equipment must be removed from site by a member of the District climbing team. Any wet ropes or harnesses' to be hung on pegs labelled 'Wet ropes' to dry inside the tower store. In either case inform the campsite wardens.
- Any accident or incident must be recorded appropriately.
- Equipment must be left tidy and ready for use by the next group
- The Climbing Tower usage log should be filled in with relevant details of the activity
- Ensure nobody is left inside the compound when leaving the activity and lock up the compound to prevent unauthorised access.

6. Set Up Instructions

6.1 Visual Inspection of the Tower

As a part of the set up process a routine visual check (RVC) of the tower must take place at the start of each day that the tower is in use. The RVC must be performed by a competent member of the Farnham District Climbing Team. When inspecting the top platform of the tower the person making the inspection must be wearing a harness and helmet and be connected to a safety line.

The RVC should include

- Ground Surface
- Sharp Edges
- Missing components
- Integrity of the safety system
- Trees, including hanging branches
- Vandalism / damage to the tower

6.2 Climbing and Abseiling Equipment

The Climbing and abseiling equipment is stored in 2 locked grey metal toolboxes within the Climbing Store.

There is one plastic tub for each of the four climbs and these should have the rope belayed into them if possible to help avoid the ropes becoming excessively dirty.

Each climb should contain the following

- 1x Dynamic Climbing rope
- 1x Adjustable belay sling
- 1x Steel Maillon
- 1x Belay device, Grigri
- 2x Screw-gate Carabiner
- 1x DMM Belay-master Carabiner (with black clip)

The abseil equipment contains the following

- Two static abseil ropes
- Two dynamic safety ropes
- Four Carabiners and Figures of 8 for participants to abseil with
- Large Steel Carabiners used to hang the static abseil ropes and dynamic safety ropes from

6.3 Ground Anchor

Picture 2 below shows the steel Maillon holding the adjustable belay sling to the ground anchor.



Make sure the gate is screwed shut and tightened with a spanner and the Maillon is orientated with the screw at the lowest point. This helps to prevent the Maillon undoing itself whilst being moved around.

When not in use the Ground anchor is protected by placing a traffic cone over it – this must be replaced for each ground anchor at the end of every climbing session.

6.4 Top rope Set-Up

To set up the top ropes for climbing the climbing instructor must be wearing their harness and helmet, and be connected to a safety line at the top of the tower. The top rope for climb 1 is accessed by standing on a hinged board that goes across the stairs used to access the top of the tower. Climbs 2,3,4 can be accessed directly from the platform at the top of the tower.

Dynamic rope is passed through the reduction block, one for each of the 4 climbs. The rope must pass through the block under the spacer bars, not over the spacer bars.



6.5 Belay Set Up

The belay device (gri-gri) is attached to the climbing rope. The end of the rope used to pass through the belay device must be the one coming from the end of the reduction block facing outwards from the climbing tower. The gri-gri is attached to the person belaying using a carabiner.

The screw gate of the carabiner should be on the left of the device as this makes tying off the device easier. Ensure the carabiner is oriented in such a way that gravity helps keep the screw in place.

Experienced belayers (with relevant permits per section 4.1) may belay climbers with this set up, and do not need to be connected to a Ground Anchor.

Inexperienced belayers must clip themselves to the adjustable belay sling using a screw gate carabiner. The ground anchor is the secondary safety system, and the belaying person is the primary. The decision of the supervising leader is final in terms of whether or not a person must connect themselves to a ground anchor when belaying.



6.6 Live End

The belay master carabiner should be clipped to a neat figure of 8 knot with a stopper knot above. The loop in the figure of 8 should be small enough that a climber cannot put their hand through it.

The end of the rope used as the live end must be the one coming from the end of the reduction block facing inwards from the climbing tower. Avoid twisting the rope to ensure the rope runs through the reduction block smoothly.



6.7 Abseil set up

To set up the Abseil the climbing instructor must be wearing their harness and helmet and be connected to a safety line at the top of the tower, which for the instructor must be connected to one of the cables to the left or right of the tower, separate to the cable used for the participants safety line.

Abseil Rope

A releasable abseil should be created using an Italian hitch using a HMS carabiner attached to a 120mm Maillon.

A slippery hitch and two half hitches should be used to tie off the Italian Hitch.

A suitable length of tail must be left to keep the releasable abseil secure and tidy.

Spare static rope should be kept clear of the area but easily accessible to affect a rescue if needs be.

Safety rope

The safety rope should be set up as per Picture 6.

An Italian Hitch is rigged to belay the abseiler.

A figure 8 on a bight, with stopper knot is used with a DMM belay master carabiner to attach the abseiler to the safety rope.

The spare safety rope must be positioned so as to not get in the way or get caught up in use.



6.8 Abseiling

- When instructed, the participant must ascend the stairs in the tower to the platform at the top carrying a descender device (figure of 8 plus carabiner).
- On reaching the top of the stairs a supervising adult or abseil instructor will clip the participant into the overhead safety system. The participant will then wait for further instructions. Participants only approach the abseil instructor when told to do so by the abseil instructor.
- On completion of the abseil the participant disconnects from the safety mechanism and abseil rope, or ideally a supervising adult performs these tasks for the participant.

7. Emergency Rescue Plan

Should an incident occur whilst using the facility e.g. a climber's foot gets caught on a hold and they are suspended upside down, there are several options to be considered by the lead instructor.

- Pull the climber up by the top rope until able to release the foot.
- An instructor climbs up the adjacent climb on a belay and assists the climber.
- If needed, an extra rope could be set up and a qualified climber could then abseil down to assist.
- A prusik cord and carabiner can be used to create a hoist system to lift a climber if necessary.
- In the event of a serious incident call the emergency services.

If an incident occurs whilst abseiling, then the abseiler is lowered with the safety rope after releasing the Italian hitch and dropping the static rope to the ground.