



Outdoor Council of Australia

National
Outdoor
Leaders
Registration
Scheme

Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces) REGISTRATION LEVELS AND ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

NOLRS VERSION 2.2

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Outdoor Council of Australia

Ph: (08) 9248 6677 1800 660 540 Fax: (08) 9248 5799

Email: nolrs@outdoorcouncil.asn.au

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Introduction

This document contains information on the minimum skills required to achieve Registration within the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS) at specific levels within the activity of Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces).

Additional documents are available at www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au that provide information about the Scheme and the registration process include:

- NOLRS *Registration Guide* - information about the registration requirements and process
- NOLRS *Re-registration Guide* - information about the re-registration requirements and process
- *Application for Registration*
- *Application for Subsequent Registration*
- *Application for Re-registration*
- NOLRS *Partnered Assessment Providers* - a guide for organisations that conduct assessment of outdoor leaders, detailing how to have their course outcomes recognised as equivalent to the skill and knowledge requirements of the NOLRS.

What Is Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces)?

Abseiling (also known as rappelling) on artificial surfaces involves descending vertical (or near vertical man made features (such as portable walls, fixed towers and bridges) using ropes and descending (friction) devices. This document refers to the independent activity of abseiling and not necessarily to the abseiling conducted by a climber to descend after a climb.

In the majority of situations, abseiling involves descending by walking or bouncing backwards. Some groups undertake forward facing (Geneva or rundowns) descents and where this is the case, the leader must consider the added risks. It must also be considered that standard harnesses are NOT designed to have an attachment on the back so specialist equipment is required for forward facing descents.

Artificial Climbing Structures (ACS) generally have a more controlled environment (with constant conditions, emergency access, lack of remoteness, etc) than natural surface sites which significantly altering the inherent risks and the skills required of the leader.

Abseiling Registration Levels and Description

Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces) registration levels apply to guides and instructors who conduct abseiling activities on artificial or man made features (such as portable and fixed walls, fixed towers and bridges) that may be single or multi-pitch, indoors or outdoors.

The following registration levels are available within the NOLRS within the activity of Abseiling (Artificial Surfaces):

- Restricted Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces)
- Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces)
- Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces)
- Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces)

Restricted Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces):

A person designated as a Restricted Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) has the knowledge, skills and experience that enable them to work autonomously within a defined range of skilled operations. These should involve known routines, methods and procedures, where minimal discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures.

Restricted Abseiling Guides (Artificial Surfaces) may work within clearly defined contexts conducting abseiling activities on artificial surfaces acting according to clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures and relevant documented guidelines. Persons at this level of competence may only conduct abseiling activities on Artificial Structures, NOT natural rockfaces. The Restricted Abseiling Guide may only conduct abseiling on artificial surfaces for which they have received instruction on how to operate that particular facility and how to respond in an emergency at that facility. Both the normal operation and emergency response have been determined and documented by someone with a higher level of skill, such as those held by a Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces).

A Restricted Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) works as a guide in a context where there is no intention of imparting skills or knowledge to participants beyond that which is necessary to enable their safe participation in climbing. At the end of a session or program with the guide, the intent is not for the participant to have acquired the skills to independently participate in abseiling activities.

Persons at this level of competence may also work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs (e.g. with “at risk” participants).

Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces):

A person designated as a Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) has the skills, knowledge and experience to work autonomously within a closely defined range of skilled operations involving known routines, methods and procedures, where a small amount of discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures. This person may conduct activities independently only within clearly defined contexts where there are clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and relevant documented guidelines for the activity, they are familiar with those SOPs, and where assistance is readily available should a non-routine situation arise.

A Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) leads or guides reliant participants in single pitch abseiling activities. There is no intention of imparting skills or knowledge to participants beyond that which is necessary to enable their safe participation in the abseiling activity. At the end of a session or program with a guide, the intent is not for the participant to have acquired the skills to independently participate in the activity

A Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) may conduct activities only at sites which have documentation that defines the key safety features and risk management procedures for the activity. *They may only work at sites that:*

- Provide the opportunity for single pitch abseiling
- Have fixed anchors

A Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) does not have the ability to adequately assess the suitability of a new artificial abseiling facility/site and its anchors or to independently develop procedures for the conduct of abseiling activities. They may work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs (e.g. in multi-pitch situations).

Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces):

A person designated as a Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces) facilitates skill transfer or development to participants in order that they may independently abseil on single pitches on artificial surfaces. This requires the instructor to be able to transfer required skills and knowledge, apply a variety of appropriate instructional strategies, and assess a participant's skill and knowledge acquisition during and at the end of a program or session.

Single Pitch Abseiling Instructors (Artificial Surfaces) may only work at sites which:

- Provide the opportunity for single pitch abseiling
- Have fixed anchors

A Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces) has the knowledge, skills and experience of a Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) as well as additional skills and experience in training and assessment. A person at this level of competence may instruct participants to enable them to:

- Apply single pitch abseiling skills on artificial surfaces
- Establish ropes for single pitch abseiling on artificial surfaces
- Perform vertical rescues on artificial surfaces

Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces):

A person designated as a Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces) has the skills, knowledge and experience to instruct participants in order that they may acquire single-pitch abseil guiding or multi-pitch abseiling skills or multi-pitch abseil guiding or instructional skills to enable independent operation. This requires the instructor to be able to transfer required skills and knowledge, apply a variety of appropriate instructional strategies, and assess a participant's skill and knowledge acquisition during and at the end of a program or session.

Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructors (Artificial Surfaces) also have the skills, knowledge and experience to operate independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different participant groups and within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. A person with this level of competence may perform a broad range of skilled applications. These may include the evaluation and analysis of current practices, development of new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.

A Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces) may work at sites that :

- Have fixed anchors
- Are multi-pitch artificial surfaces
- Have the potential to provide non-routine situations (e.g. adverse weather conditions, complex rescue situations).

Abseiling Skill, Knowledge and Experience Requirements

Restricted Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces):

Critical aspects of a Restricted Single Pitch Abseiling Guides skills and knowledge include:

- Ability to identify, and plan for, basic requirements of a single pitch abseiling activity (i.e. equipment, food, water, clothing)
- Knowledge of first aid procedures relevant to abseiling
- Facilitation of a group including conflict resolution strategies
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant Occupational Health and Safety requirements
- Ability to follow workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant laws and legal requirements
- Application of risk analysis principles in an abseiling context
- Knowledge of environmental impact issues associated with abseiling and methods to minimise impact
- Underpinning knowledge about abseiling equipment (advantages, disadvantages, limitations, Australian and international standards, manufacturer's design specifications and recommendations, accepted industry best practice or recommendations)
- Underpinning knowledge of knots (end-of-rope knots e.g. rethreaded figure 8, figure 8 on bight, mid-rope knots, eg, alpine butterfly, in line figure of 8, friction hitches, e.g. Prusik, Leimheist, knots that have at least 50% of the static strength of the original, rope joining knots, e.g. Double Fisherman's)
- Knowledge of equipment storage and maintenance requirements relevant to abseiling equipment
- Independent selection of abseil and belaying equipment appropriate to the situation and participants
- Information about sites to abseil (appropriate to skill level)
- Efficient abseiling in single pitch situations using a self-belay
- Single pitch abseiling skills on artificial surfaces
- Selection of appropriate fixed anchors (e.g. beams, eye bolts, chains)
- Rigging of ropes to accommodate different belayer and abseiler abilities
- Establishment of belay systems at the top of the pitch which ensure abseiler and belayer safety and facilitate rescue and establishment of back up belay systems, where required
- Establishment of belay/braking systems at the bottom of the pitch, where required
- Establishment of communication systems with belayer(s) and abseiler
- Single pitch abseiling on an artificial surfaces including efficient abseiling using a self belay
- Efficient belaying of participants to accommodate different participant abilities and situations and an ability to arrest falls, using a minimum of two (2) different categories of belay device *from the following:*
 - Auto locking devices, e.g. gri gri, stop descender
 - Circular devices, e.g. figure 8 type descenders
 - Plate devices, e.g. Sticht Plate
 - Tubular devices, e.g. Pyramid, Air Traffic Controller (ATC)
 - Improvised devices, e.g. crossed karabiners
 - In line devices, e.g. rappelling rack, whale-tail, gold-tail
- Identification of and 'safe areas'

- Ability to plan and guide abseiling sessions to suit available resources and different types of participant groups with differing needs and activity aims
- Maintenance of a participant's physical and emotional safety during an abseiling session
- Briefing of participants, covering aspects such as safety procedures, correct abseiling techniques, communication systems, safe areas/boundaries, etc
- Maintenance of a participant's physical and emotional safety during an abseiling session
- Conducting abseiling activities *to suit*:
 - Different types of participant groups/participant needs
 - Different activity aims
- Ability to respond to emergency situations and perform rescue of participants using procedures specific to the particular artificial surface for which they have received instruction

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of four (4) abseiling sessions (minimum of three hours per session) on artificial surfaces in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' vertical rescue training within the past twelve (12) months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants using the specified procedures for one artificial surface.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of six (6) abseiling sessions (minimum of three hours per session) on artificial surfaces and 'in-house' vertical rescue training or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants using the specified procedures for one artificial surface.

Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces):

Critical aspects of a Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) experience, knowledge and skills include the Restricted Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) knowledge and skills **PLUS**:

- Ability to efficiently ascend and descend rope in different situations with different obstacles
- Ability to respond to emergency situations and perform self rescue and rescue of participants including:
 - Release of jams (clothing and equipment jams) of self and others
 - Assistance to frozen abseiler
 - Approach from above and below
 - Raising and lowering of conscious abseiler) with assistance from others with a similar or more advanced level of skill
 - Raising and lowering of unconscious abseiler with assistance
 - Lowering of conscious participants and equipment in a controlled manner with assistance from others with a similar or more advanced level of skill
 - Raising or lowering an unconscious person with assistance
- Establishment of simple pulley systems (e.g. Z drags) or compound pulley systems (e.g. pig-rig)

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of four (4) abseiling sessions on artificial surfaces (minimum of three hours per session) in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external vertical rescue training within the past twelve (12) months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of six (6) abseiling sessions on artificial surfaces (minimum of three hours per session) at least two (2) different locations.

Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces):

Critical Aspects of a Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces) skills and knowledge include Single Pitch Abseiling Guide (Artificial Surfaces) skills and knowledge **PLUS** the following:

Skills to:

- Plan an instructional session for teaching abseiling skills on artificial surfaces
- Select appropriate resources required to teach abseiling skills on artificial surfaces
- Establish a positive learning environment
- Introduce, conduct and conclude and evaluate an instructional abseiling session
- Apply appropriate teaching techniques for an abseiling session, recognising different participant abilities and teaching to suit individual needs
- Provide constructive feedback which enhances the participant's learning
- Demonstrate abseiling techniques or skills accurately
- Apply knowledge of safety practices to conduct a safe instructional session in accordance with risk management plans, industry guidelines and occupational health and safety requirements

Ability to demonstrate and/or teach the following:

- Independent selection of abseil equipment appropriate to the situation
- Underpinning knowledge about abseiling equipment (advantages, disadvantages, limitations, Australian and international standards, manufacturer's recommendations, industry accepted practice, storage and maintenance requirements)
- Information about sites to abseil (appropriate to skill level), access and egress, ethics and philosophy of abseiling
- Environmental impacts of abseiling and ways to minimise
- Hazards associated with abseiling and ways to minimise risk
- Selection of fixed anchors (e.g. beams, bolts, chains)
- Rigging of ropes using single and multiple anchors
- Establishment of belay systems at the top of the pitch
- Establishment of belay/braking systems at the bottom of the pitch
- Efficient belaying to accommodate different abilities and situations
- Efficient abseiling in single pitch situations using a self belay
- Knowledge of, and ability to perform, vertical rescue techniques appropriate to single pitch abseiling

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of four (4) abseiling sessions (minimum of three hours per session; at least three sessions must be instructing) in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external vertical rescue training within the past twelve (12) months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of six (6) abseiling sessions (minimum of three (3) hours per session; at least three (3) sessions must be instructing) at different locations.

Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces):

Critical Aspects of a Multi Pitch Abseiling Instructor's skills, knowledge and experience include critical aspects of a Single Pitch Abseiling Instructor (Artificial Surfaces) skills and knowledge **PLUS:**

- Ability to identify, and plan for requirements of a multi pitch abseiling activity (i.e. equipment, food, water, clothing) where extreme environmental conditions could potentially occur; and/or at a diversity of locations
- Ability to coordinate a response to emergency situations associated with multi pitch abseiling situations
- Group leadership techniques
- Ability to identify and record the potential risks and hazards in an activity, and develop management strategies to lessen their potential impact, evaluate risk management and risk management plans
- Ability to deal with complex, unpredictable and non-routine situations
- Coordination of emergency response and performance of self rescue in complex situations
- Selection of fixed anchors and establishment of abseiling rigs on artificial surfaces demonstrating the ability to:
 - Use different types of anchor
 - Use different equipment
 - Adapt to different pitch requirements
 - Cater to different abilities of group members
- Establishment of belays for multi pitch abseils (top belay, bottom brake and self belay) using all types of belay device [plate devices, e.g. sticht plate, auto-locking devices, e.g. gri gri, tubular devices, e.g. air traffic controller (ATC)], Prusik cord and suitable friction hitch] to accommodate different belayer and abseiler abilities, types of anchor and location requirements
- Establishment of suitable safety systems in multi pitch situations and efficient rope handling on multi pitch abseils
- Multi pitch abseiling skills on artificial surfaces using a minimum of four different types of descending device (auto locking devices, circular devices, plate devices, tubular devices, improvised devices, in line devices) in a wide variety of contexts in different locations encountering varying hazards, obstacles and situations
- Ability to perform complex rescues of self, equipment and participants, including:
 - Self-rescue in complex situations (e.g. multi pitch, numerous obstacles to negotiate, limited human resources, extreme environmental conditions)
 - Raising conscious participants in complex rescue situations with assistance from others with limited rescue skills
 - Lowering conscious participants in a controlled manner in complex rescue situations with assistance from others with limited level of skill
 - Raising or lowering an unconscious person using the assistance of an unskilled person
 - Rescuing persons in situations without assistance from others
 - Participation in the rescue of a person on a stretcher
- Knowledge of the requirements of an instructor in potentially complex and challenging abseiling situations
- Ability to plan and instruct multi pitch abseiling sessions appropriate to participants needs, available resources and environmental limitations at a broad range of venues

Skills to:

- Plan an instructional session for teaching multi-pitch abseiling skills on artificial surfaces
- Select appropriate resources required to teach multi-pitch abseiling skills on artificial surfaces
- Establish a positive learning environment
- Introduce, conduct and conclude and evaluate an instructional multi-pitch abseiling session
- Apply appropriate teaching techniques for abseiling, recognising different participant abilities and teaching to suit individual needs
- Provide constructive feedback which enhances the participant's learning
- Demonstrate multi-pitch abseiling techniques or skills accurately
- Apply knowledge of safety practices to conduct a safe instructional session in accordance with risk management plans, industry guidelines and occupational health and safety requirements
- Ability to demonstrate and/or teach the following:
 - Independent selection of abseil equipment appropriate to the situation in multi-pitch abseils
 - Discrimination between features of different equipment
 - Underpinning knowledge about abseiling equipment (advantages, disadvantages, limitations, Australian and international standards, manufacturer's recommendations, industry accepted practice, storage and maintenance requirements)
 - Information about multi-pitch sites to abseil (appropriate to skill level), access and egress, ethics and philosophy of abseiling
 - Environmental impacts of multi-pitch abseiling and ways to minimise
 - Hazards associated with multi-pitch abseiling and ways to minimise risk
 - Selection of fixed anchors (e.g. beams, U bolts, chains, bollards, pitons)
 - Rigging of ropes using single and multiple fixed anchors on multi-pitch abseils
 - Establishment of belay systems for multi-pitch abseils
 - Efficient belaying to accommodate different abilities and situations
 - Efficient abseiling in multi-pitch situations using a self belay, in routine and non-routine situations

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of instructing a minimum of four (4) multi-pitch abseiling sessions (at least two (2) must be instructing on artificial surfaces) in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external multi-pitch vertical rescue training within the past twelve (12) months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants in multi-pitch situations.

Newly trained instructors require verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of six (6) multi pitch abseiling sessions (minimum of three (3) hours per session; at least three (3) sessions must be instructing) at different locations.