



Australian Government

SISOABS004 Abseil multi pitches, natural surfaces

Release: 1

SISOABS004 Abseil multi pitches, natural surfaces

Modification History

Not applicable.

Application

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to abseil multi pitches on natural surfaces such as cliff face and cave pitches. It also requires the ability to belay abseilers and to self-belay.

It applies to leaders, guides or instructors who use these skills when leading participants during abseiling activities. Leadership skills are provided in complementary units.

This unit applies to any type of organisation that delivers outdoor recreation activities including commercial, not-for-profit and government organisations.

No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

Pre-requisite Unit

Nil

Competency Field

Abseiling

Unit Sector

Outdoor Recreation

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENTS

Elements describe the essential outcomes

1. Prepare for the abseil.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.

- 1.1. Select clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment suitable for the abseil and conditions.
- 1.2. Confirm activity safety and emergency response procedures to ensure compliance during activities.
- 1.3. Confirm protocols for communications between abseiler and belayer.
- 1.4. Interpret route description; identify position of natural features and the abseil route.

- 1.5. Attach descending device to abseil rope and tie knots suitable for the established belay system.
 - 1.6. Complete equipment safety checks prior to abseiling or belaying.
2. Abseil using multi pitch descent techniques.
 - 2.1. Use safety procedures at top of and throughout all descents to minimise risk to self and others present.
 - 2.2. Use appropriate posture and abseiling techniques to execute descents to each station.
 - 2.3. Safely approach, avoid or negotiate hazards to descend to stations in a controlled manner.
 - 2.4. Maintain effective communication with belayer throughout all descents.
 - 2.5. Retrieve ropes at bottom of each pitch, as last person down.
 - 2.6. Use techniques that minimise damage to equipment and the surface during abseil.
3. Change over safely at belay stations.
 - 3.1. Maintain continuous attachment to anchor points, traverse line or belay system.
 - 3.2. Changeover personal equipment from one rope system to another at belay stations, tie suitable knots and handle ropes without entanglement.
 - 3.3. Complete safety checks prior to loading belay system and before completing subsequent descents.
4. Belay abseilers during multi pitch descents.
 - 4.1. Avoid or negotiate hazards and use safety procedures to minimise risk to self and others present.
 - 4.2. Establish belaying position and attach self to anchor, as required, to allow effective and safe use of belay system.
 - 4.3. Maintain rope tension to minimise fall distance and ensure abseiler movement is not unduly restricted.
 - 4.4. Monitor abseiler progress constantly, and maintain clear communication with abseiler.
 - 4.5. Arrest falls promptly using technique suitable to belaying device and situation.
 - 4.6. Safely and efficiently secure abseiler using tie off techniques; release tie off and allow abseiler to continue.
5. Self-belay during multi pitch descents.
 - 5.1. Attach self to suitable belay device for descent with back up to maintain safety in the event of a fall.
 - 5.2. Use appropriate posture and abseiling techniques to execute self-belayed descents.
 - 5.3. Control self-belay system to execute safe and controlled descents.
 - 5.4. Utilise features of back up belay system in the event of a fall to self-arrest, self-rescue and complete descent.

Foundation Skills

Foundation skills essential to performance in this unit, but not explicit in the performance criteria are listed here, along with a brief context statement.

SKILLS	DESCRIPTION
Reading skills to:	interpret detailed and familiar organisational safety and emergency response procedures.
Oral communications skills to:	use clear and unambiguous verbal and non-verbal communications to make intent known.
Numeracy skills to:	visually estimate angles, estimate load on ropes to determine appropriate tension for abseiling and belaying.
Planning and organising skills to:	manage own timing to complete activities within planned timeframes.

Unit Mapping Information

No equivalent unit.

Links

Companion Volume Implementation Guides -

<https://vetnet.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=1ca50016-24d2-4161-a044-d3faa200268b>

Assessment Requirements for SISOABS004 Abseil multi pitches, natural surfaces

Modification History

Not applicable.

Performance Evidence

Evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit in the context of the job role, and:

- complete the following multi pitch abseils on at least two different routes:
 - a total of four descents with a belayer
 - a total of three self-belayed descents with one of those descents as last person down using a doubled rope descent
- during each of the above abseils, consistently:
 - follow safety procedures and safely negotiate hazards to descend in a controlled manner
 - connect self to abseil and belay system using appropriate device and or knots
- complete two additional self-belayed descents, simulating a self-arrest and self-rescue to complete the descent
- belay abseilers according to safety procedures, and complete the following:
 - three top rope, top belayed descents
 - one bottom braked descent
 - two simulated abseiler falls, and safely and efficiently secure and release abseilers to continue.

Knowledge Evidence

Demonstrated knowledge required to complete the tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit:

- organisational safety and emergency response procedures for abseiling activities
- purpose, features, and correct fit for safety, of personal protective equipment for abseiling on natural surfaces to include:
 - clothing
 - footwear
 - gloves, advantages and disadvantages
 - abseiling/climbing helmets
 - harnesses of different types, advantages and disadvantages
- features, functions and operation of abseiling equipment used on natural surfaces:
 - carabiners
 - static and dynamic rope and when each might be used

- tape
- sewn sling
- personal attachment systems, including cow's tails
- Prusik cord
- descending devices:
 - assisted locking
 - inline
 - plate
 - • figure 8
 - tubular
 - improvised
- belay systems:
 - top rope top belay
 - bottom brake
 - self-belay
- belay devices:
 - assisted locking
 - inline
 - plate
 - figure 8
 - tubular
 - improvised
- types of equipment and knots used, and how to tie them, when:
 - attaching descending devices to abseil ropes
 - attaching belay system to anchors
 - attaching self to back up belay system for self-belays
 - attaching self to anchor
- types of personal and equipment safety checks completed prior to abseiling and belaying
- abseiling techniques and appropriate posture for multi pitch descents on natural surfaces to include those for:
 - walking backwards
 - self-belayed descents
 - changing over at re-belays and using personal attachment system
 - self-belayed descent as last person down, doubled rope
- techniques for belaying others during abseils on natural surfaces to include those for:
 - establishing belaying position for effective and safe use of belay system
 - rope handling and maintaining adequate rope tension
 - controlling bottom brake system
 - arresting abseiler falls
 - securing abseiler, tying off belay system and releasing

- reasons for attaching belayer to anchor system when belaying others including:
 - minimising belayer movement to retain stable position and stance
 - minimising effects of force of abseiler fall and risk of injury to belayer
 - minimising risks of belayer fall
- communication protocols used between abseilers and belayers to include:
 - calls
 - hand signals
 - whistles
 - radio
- typical hazards for multi pitch abseiling on natural surfaces, and techniques used to safely negotiate these:
 - falling rocks, water, debris, gear
 - abrasion points
 - sharp edges
 - squeezes and overhangs
 - ledges
 - traverses
 - slippery or unstable terrain
 - dense vegetation and trees
 - strong breezes
 - tangled rope
 - rope catches or jams on natural features
 - abseiling past a belay station
 - limited space at belay station
 - uneven landing at belay station
- how to care for abseiling equipment during activities to avoid damage, and promote long lifespan
- techniques used to minimise damage to abseiling surfaces in natural environments when abseiling.

Assessment Conditions

Skills must be demonstrated in an outdoor environment where recreational multi pitch abseils are completed on natural surfaces which might include cliff face or cave pitches. Pitches can feature:

- undercut edges
- low anchors at start
- vertical and near vertical surfaces.

The following resources must be available to replicate industry conditions of operation:

- first aid equipment
- communication equipment for emergency response
- rescue equipment.

Assessment must ensure use of:

- participants with whom the individual interacts during abseiling activities
- personal protective equipment to include:
 - abseiling, climbing or caving helmets
 - harnesses
 - gloves, as required
- anchors which can include:
 - fixed artificial
 - naturally occurring
 - artificial removable
- abseiling equipment to include:
 - carabiners
 - rope which can include static and or dynamic rope
 - rope protectors
 - tape or sewn sling
 - personal attachment systems, including cow's tails
 - Prusik cords
 - descending devices
 - belay devices
- template safety checklists
- organisational safety and emergency response procedures for abseiling activities.

Assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations requirements for assessors, and:

- have a collective period of at least three years' experience as an abseiling leader, guide or instructor, where they have applied the skills and knowledge covered in this unit of competency: the three years' experience can incorporate full and or part time experience.

Links

Companion Volume Implementation Guides -

<https://vetnet.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=1ca50016-24d2-4161-a044-d3faa200268b>