



**Risk Assessments
&
Key Operating Principles
2018**

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Introduction

This document lists the key operating principles that ensure safe practice and high quality learning in activities supervised by instructors at Thorpe Woodlands. It is every instructor's responsibility to familiarise themselves with this document and ensure that these principles are followed with the activity groups they supervise.

Risk Assessment

All activities offered at Thorpe Woodlands are subject to risk assessment. By deploying appropriately qualified staff, and following the principles contained in this document, we ensure that appropriate safety precautions are in place to reduce the risks to acceptable levels.

Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and all staff are invited to contribute to this process. It is your duty to report any safety concerns that you have to the Head of Centre, or through the Centre's "Speaking Up" procedure.

Instructor Judgement

As an instructor you will have undergone training in the activities you supervise as well as holding relevant national governing body awards where they exist. You are expected to act in accordance with the principles of safe practice taught during your training.

All groups are different, and the weather, the needs, abilities and morale of the group and other circumstances vary from session to session. You will be expected to use your judgement to make appropriate decisions as required, but always guided by your training and experience and these operating principles. All statements included in this document that permit instructors to use their discretion are to be understood in this context.

Interpretation

Key words used in this document are to be understood as follows

The word "must" implies that the procedure described must be followed in all circumstances,

The words "should", "normally" or "recommended" imply that the procedure described is recommended good practice in the large majority of circumstances. Instructors may exceptionally use their judgement to vary the procedure.

Certain tasks during an activity session may be delegated to adult visiting staff, assistant instructors or volunteers or competent participants. The words "responsible" or "competent" in this document imply that you, as instructor, have made a reasonable judgement that the person concerned is competent to undertake the task safely, with the level of supervision you are able to provide.

Emergency Procedures

This is the recommended order of action in the event of a serious incident. Group Supervisors/Instructors should be prepared to initiate any or all of these actions depending on the seriousness of the incident.

1. SAFEGUARD THE GROUP

Ensure that you and your group are safe, warm and sheltered. Stabilise the situation as far as possible and delegate supervision roles if necessary. Evacuate the group from any hazardous areas.

2. SEND FOR HELP

If possible, send for help from other instructors or staff working in the centre. Assess casualty and if necessary, also get somebody to call emergency services (see notes below).

3. GIVE EMERGENCY FIRST AID

If necessary, give first aid to any casualties and treat injuries until emergency services arrive. Consider delegating emergency aid to a qualified assistant if available.

4. ALERT OTHER CENTRE STAFF

Other staff members can give practical and emotional support and advice where needed as well as ensuring that all group members are sufficiently well cared for following any sort of incident.

5. TRANSFER ANY CASUALTY INTO MEDICAL CARE

Arrange for any casualties to be accompanied to hospital if possible. Ensure that any relevant personal medical details are sent with them. Casualty's parents must be alerted – Agree with any group leaders who will do this. Be aware that news travels fast and therefore it may be necessary to contact all parents in order to avoid panic and unwanted media interest.

DO NOT TALK TO THE MEDIA.

6. ESCALATE

Ensure that the Head of Centre is informed promptly of the incident, and that an incident report form is completed. If immediate support is required it may be necessary to contact Trustees. Depending on the nature of the incident you may need to instigate the Major Incident Plan – Copies of this document and a step-by-step guide can be found in the centre office and the Staff hut.

7. RECORD AND REPORT

Ensure that an incident report form is completed. It may also be useful to write a report detailing exactly what happened to whom, where and when. The Head of Centre will inform you of any other paperwork which needs to be completed.

SUMMONING THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

If you sending somebody to summon the emergency services (ambulance, fire, police), or calling them yourself, it is important that the following information is given:

Your name and contact number: Thorpe Woodlands Number is 01842 763564

Location of incident: Thorpe Woodlands Adventure Centre, IP24 2RX. If you are away from the centre use local reference points such as roads, forest block numbers, buildings, or river features. It may be useful to direct the emergency services to the centre so that a member of staff can lead them directly to your actual known location.

Description of incident: Accident, fire, rescue, missing person etc.

Number casualties: If any. Along with brief description of any symptoms, injuries etc.

KOP's – All Activities

The following KOP's apply to all activities and must be followed.

- All centre equipment is safe to use and appropriate to participants, age, ability and needs.
- Participants are involved in identifying risks and control measures.
- Activity leader is aware of any participants with relevant pre-existing medical conditions or additional needs and has checked that emergency medication (asthma inhalers, EpiPen etc) is being carried if necessary.
- Sessions are conducted in a safe and orderly manner.
- Participants receive a safety briefing at the start of an activity.
- All activities are facilitated by appropriately qualified and competent staff who have up to date first aid training.
- All activity staff must be familiar with the Thorpe Woodlands emergency procedures.
- At the end of an activity session – all participants must be accounted for and returned safely to the Thorpe Woodlands site.
- Any incidents, accidents, near misses, breakages, hazards or concerns arising from the activity session must be reported and recorded in the centre diary as well as completing an incident report form if necessary.

KOP's – Archery

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Participant or other person being shot by arrow**
- **Injury caused by equipment failure**

Safety

- Bows are strung and checked by competent person before use.
- Archery range (including back-stop netting) is set-up and checked by competent person before use.
- Arrows are stored separately from bows and used under the supervision of a competent person.
- Participants should have their forearm covered on the bow holding arm.
- Maximum 6 people shooting at any time.
- Arrows must only be shot towards targets and never pointed in the direction of other people when 'loaded'.

Learning

- Archery is a traditional skill and physical activity which is fun and relatively easy to learn.
- Participants that show self-discipline, are able to follow instructions and respond to feedback generally improve more quickly than others.
- Participants can gain satisfaction and feel positive about hitting the target and achieving a high score or improving on a previous attempt.
- An archery session can include team games and activities as well as an element of competition.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: GNAS Archery Leader

KOP's – Campfires

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Burns from direct contact with fire**
- **Burns/scalds from cooking on the fire**
- **Injuries from sawing or chopping firewood**
- **Uncontrolled spread of fire into surrounding forest**

Safety

- Safety briefing should include boundaries, behaviour around the fire and what to do if they receive a burn (from ember/flame/marshmallow etc.)
- Fire buckets must be filled prior to lighting the fire.
- Flames must be fully extinguished prior to leaving unattended.
- Bow saws must be used under close supervision of competent person.
- Fire lighting equipment and saws must not be left unattended.
- Flaming or hot sticks must be kept over the fire and not waved around or pointed at people.
- Cooking on the fire (marshmallows, damper bread etc.) must only be allowed in small groups and under strict supervision by a responsible person.
- Petrol and other highly flammable liquids must not be used to light fires
- There must always be a competent person supervising when young people are present

Learning

- Campfire sessions are really where the magic happens! Participants often use this time to reflect on their experiences and to talk to others about how they are feeling.
- Participants can develop fire lighting skills (much more difficult than it looks) by being involved in building and tending the fire – baking bread or even toasting marshmallows can enhance this experience.
- Participants can feel connected to nature whilst sitting beside the campfire as people have done for thousands of years.

Competencies

Inducton Training and signed off by Head of Centre

KOP's – Caving

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Head injury resulting from contact with cave roof or walls**
- **Cuts and abrasions caused by rough cave surfaces**

Safety

- Safety briefing at the start of the session will include moving carefully inside the cave and what to do if there's a problem.
- Correctly fitted helmets must be worn at all times whilst moving around inside the cave.
- Arms and legs must be covered – caving suits are recommended.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Caving can be really challenging to some participants and is a good activity for confidence building
- Participants can experience disorientation and perceived danger in a controlled environment.
- Participants can gain satisfaction and feel positive about finding their way in the cave or discovering a hidden chamber
- Working as a team
- High levels of physical activity and movement

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: First aid, site specific training

KOP's – Canoeing/Kayaking

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Drowning**
- **Hypothermia as a result of extreme cold**
- **Injuries from paddles and boats**
- **Back injury from moving/rescuing boats and participants**

Safety

- The planned session takes account of prevailing weather conditions, river levels/flow as well as participant's age, ability and needs.
- Correctly fitted buoyancy aids are worn by all participants when on the water.
- Participants are dressed appropriately (including footwear) for the prevailing weather conditions and planned activity.
- All equipment (boats, BA's, Paddles etc.) must be checked by competent person prior to use.
- Appropriate safety kit (e.g. first aid, group shelter, spare clothing, phone etc.) must be taken with group on the water if moving away from landing stage area.
- Safety briefing will include (as a minimum) the following points: Staying together as a group, what to do in the event of capsize and how to avoid injury from paddles.
- Whenever possible, canoes should be moved by 'teams' rather than individuals.
- Canoes should slide on and off of the water rather than be lifted.
- Deliberate capsize and pushing people into the water should be discouraged as this can lead to injury and distracts attention away from other participants.
- Jumping in sessions must be conducted in a safe and orderly manner.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Canoeing is an adventurous and fun activity where participants can explore the river with a degree of self-determination.
- Good co-operation and communication is essential and results in rapid progress.
- High levels of physical effort and coordination.
- Canoeing can help to build confidence and trust in others.
- Canoeing can help to develop an appreciation for the outdoors and nature.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre BCU Level 3 Coach

Qualifications: UKCC Level 1 (or equivalent), First Aid plus Site Specific Training

KOP's – Cycling

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Injuries resulting from participants crashing or falling off bike**
- **Injury caused by mechanical failure**
- **Hyperthermia/Hypothermia in extreme weather conditions**
- **Collision with cars and other road users**

Safety

- The planned session and chosen route takes account of prevailing weather conditions as well as participant's age, ability, needs and the bikes being ridden.
- Participants are dressed appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions and planned activities.
- Safety briefing will include riding as a group, safe stopping and what to do if there's a problem.
- Appropriate safety kit (e.g. first aid, tools, spare tubes, group shelter, water/squash, phone etc.) must be carried if going off-site.
- Helmets will normally be worn by participants unless riding a specialist bike where there is a very low risk of falling off.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Mountain biking is a physical skill which can be challenging and fun.
- Participants can explore and develop an appreciation for a variety of landscapes (forest, heath, farmland, parks etc.) within a short distance.
- High levels of physical effort and coordination.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: First aid plus site specific training or Relevant NGB Award

KOP's – High Ropes/Climbing

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Injuries resulting from fall from height**
- **Injury caused by equipment failure**
- **Injuries caused by objects falling from height**

Safety

- All equipment and apparatus must be checked for damage by competent person prior to use.
- The planned session takes account of prevailing weather conditions as well as participant's age, ability and needs. Activities are not attempted during gale force winds (32mph or over) or thunderstorms.
- Participants wear correctly fitted harness and are attached to a recognised rope safety system when participating in activities at height.
- Participants are dressed appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions and planned activities. Items which could be a hazard to anybody below the activity must be removed from participant's pockets or securely fastened.
- Safety briefing will include correct fitting of harnesses, attachment of karabiner to belay loop and the importance of listening to instructions.
- All activities must be conducted in accordance with the High Ropes Manual and training.
- Helmets should be worn where appropriate – see training manual for guidance.

Learning and Wellbeing

- High Ropes challenges are designed to inspire confidence and to take participants outside of their 'comfort zone'. Successfully overcoming a fear can be a very positive and life-affirming experience but this can be lost if participants feel forced or pressured into taking part.
- Receiving the support and encouragement from others can help to build trust, confidence and self-esteem.
- High levels of physical effort and coordination.
- Participants can experience risk taking in a controlled environment.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Teresa Thorpe MIA

Qualifications: First aid, site specific training and Assessed by MIA

KOP's – Orienteering

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Participant getting lost in forest**
- **Tick bites, stings and scratches**
- **Injuries from slips, trips and falls**

Safety

- Safety briefing will include checking for ticks, site boundaries and the importance of staying together in groups.
- If session is taking place in the dark then it may be necessary for participants to carry torches.
- Participants must be aware of what to do if they become lost.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Orienteering is a good introduction to navigation and participants can quickly develop these skills.
- Participants who work together and plan their routes usually score more points.
- There are positive benefits to participants exploring the forest environment independently.
- High levels of physical effort.
- Many participants will respond positively if an element of competition is introduced to the activity.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: Signed off by Head of Centre

KOP's – Raft Building

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Drowning**
- **Hypothermia as a result of extreme cold**
- **Injuries from paddles and raft equipment**
- **Back injury from moving rafts**

Safety

- Before building the raft participants are briefed on safe manual handling of equipment.
- All participants must wear an appropriately fitted buoyancy aid and helmet when on the water or when involved in launching/taking out raft.
- The planned session takes account of prevailing weather conditions, river levels/flow as well as participant's age, ability and needs.
- Participants are dressed appropriately (including footwear) for the prevailing weather conditions and planned activity.
- Raft design and construction should be overseen by instructor and safety checked (remove loose ropes, sharp edges etc.) before being boarded by participants.
- Before going 'afloat' participants are briefed on how to avoid entanglement, what to do in the event of capsize or somebody entering the water.
- Rafts should be moved by 'teams' rather than individuals.
- Rescue equipment (canoe, knife, throwline) must be readily available at all times when rafts are on the water.
- Deliberate capsize and pushing people into the water should be discouraged as this can lead to injury.
- Jumping in sessions must be conducted in a safe and orderly manner.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Raft Building helps develop a team approach and requires goal-setting, planning and sharing of ideas.
- Participants can be creative in their raft design and can learn to use group resources and skills.
- Good communication and negotiation will usually result in positive (drier) outcomes.
- High levels of physical effort.
- An element of competitiveness can motivate some participants.
- Consequences of not collaborating are obvious.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre BCU Level 3 Coach

Qualifications: UKCC Level 1, First Aid plus Site Specific Training

KOP's – Shelter Building

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Injury resulting from collapsed shelter**
- **Injury caused by dropped logs and large sticks**
- **Injury from falling trees and branches**

Safety

- Safety brief will include safe manual handling of logs, appropriate design and how to avoid using rotten wood.
- Chosen site should be checked for hazards (broken glass, hanging branches, unstable trees etc.)
- Shelter design and construction should be overseen by instructor in order to prevent collapse.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Shelter Building helps promote collaboration and requires goal-setting, planning and time management.
- Participants can be creative in their design and can learn to use available resources and skills.
- Good communication and negotiation will usually result in positive outcomes.
- Moderate levels of physical effort.
- An element of competitiveness can motivate some participants.
- Effective teamwork usually results in a superior shelter.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: First Aid plus Site Specific Training

KOP's – Team Challenges

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Participant injured as a result of falling off platform or element**
- **Injuries resulting from slips, trips or falls**
- **Injuries from poles or ropes if incorrectly handled**
- **Back injury from moving or lifting people or objects**

Safety

- Safety briefing will include spotting of participants and the particular hazards associated with each activity which may include overcrowded/slippery platforms, moving along cables, manual handling of equipment, lifting people, swinging on ropes etc.)
- Helmets to be worn by participants when at height (Zip wire, the Wall, Totem Pole).
- Activity areas, safety surface and equipment must be checked for hazards prior to use.
- All activities must be conducted in accordance with the Thorpe Woodlands Activity Manual and training.

Learning and Wellbeing

- Each team challenge activity subtly focuses on a different aspect of 'teamwork'. Most will require excellent communication and collaboration in order to successfully complete the task set by the instructor.
- By completing a range of team challenges, participants will discover where their team's strengths are and which areas they need to work on. Participants will quickly learn from their mistakes and realise the benefits of working together.
- Participants will recognise which behaviours are helpful in achieving a task (listening, cooperating, supporting etc.) and may experience frustration and failure if team members cannot work together.
- Participants will have an opportunity to develop leadership skills in some activities.
- Good communication and negotiation will usually result in better outcomes.
- High levels of physical effort.
- Consequences of not collaborating are obvious and real.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: First Aid plus Site Specific Training

KOP's – Wide Games, off-site Walks, Ice-Breakers and Energisers

Significant Risks/Hazards

- **Injuries caused by collisions with participants, trees or other objects**
- **Injuries resulting from slips, trips or falls**
- **Participants getting lost (off-site)**
- **Tick bites, stings and scratches**

Safety

- Safety briefing will include boundaries for games, rules and any particular hazards associated with each activity, which may include: running on uneven surfaces, collisions with objects/people, road crossing, climbing on trees/buildings/equipment etc.)
- In low light or darkness extra care must be taken with games which involve running
- Head counts must be carried out when leaving the site and on return
- Participants must be appropriately supervised when using forest 'trim trail' equipment

Learning and Wellbeing

- Wide Games can be used as energisers, icebreakers or just as fun large group activities
- High levels of physical effort
- Some wide games require participants to work together in teams
- Forest walks provide an opportunity for participants to explore the forest environment and potentially spot flora and fauna
- Night-walks provide a great opportunity to star gaze and to experience being outdoors in the dark. You can often hear owls and deer in the forest at night.

Competencies

Technical Lead: Head of Centre

Qualifications: First Aid plus Site Specific Training

KOP's – Equipment Hire (Bikes and Boats)

When hiring activity equipment directly to individuals, families or groups it is important that they are made aware of the inherent risks associated with the activity they are about to undertake. An 'acceptance of liability form' (wording below) must be read by the lead member of the group and signed before any equipment is released to them. There must also be an opportunity for the person signing the forms to ask questions relating to the hire of the equipment.

We do not offer any instruction on how to use the equipment and do not require any evidence of competence to use the equipment other than the very basic and obvious (checklist below).

Cycle Hire

- Bikes size appropriate to individuals (demonstration of how to adjust saddle height)
- Bikes 'M' checked before being issued (tyres, wheels, brakes, steering and drive chain)
- Helmets are issued and correctly fitted
- 'acceptance of liability form' has been read and signed by the main hirer

Canoes and Kayaks

- Appropriate numbers of seats in boats for number of participants
- Boats and paddles are inspected for damage prior to being issued
- Buoyancy aids issued to each participant and correctly fitted
- Participants are assisted to get on the water and advised to paddle 'up river' as far as the concrete weir – all participants advised not to attempt to paddle into the fast-flowing water in the weir as this is very likely to cause a capsized
- 'acceptance of liability form' has been read and signed by the main hirer

On return of the equipment it must be checked for damage and any defects, incidents or accidents should be recorded.

Acceptance of Liability form wording

In signing this agreement, the hirer agrees to the following:

- Thorpe Woodlands Adventure Centre is not responsible for the use of the equipment. We require no proof of ability and offer no advice or instruction in the use of the equipment.
- The hirer acknowledges that they are responsible for their own safety and that of their group when using equipment.
- The hirer will pay for any damaged, lost or unreturned equipment (Charged at full retail price or £100 for recovery).
- The hirer is satisfied with the condition of the equipment.
- Canoeing/Cycling are physically demanding activities, which obviously has inherent hazards associated with them

Thorpe Woodlands Adventure Centre accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any loss or injury resulting from the use of the hired equipment. Furthermore, it is understood and agreed by the hirer that individuals participate at their own risk.

Instructor Matrix

Activity	Qualification	Recommended Ratio (Instructor: participants)
Open Canoes	Paddlesport Leader & above/equivalent	1:12 (Max 6 Boats)
Closed Cockpit Kayaks	Paddlesport Leader & above/equivalent	1:8
Sit-on-Top Kayaks	Paddlesport Leader & above/equivalent	1:10
Mixed Craft	Paddlesport Leader & above/equivalent	1:10
Raft Building	Paddlesport Leader & above/equivalent	1:12
Archery	GNAS Archery Leader	1:12
Caving	In-house training	1:12
High Ropes/Climbing	In-house training and assessment by MIA	1:12
Cycling	In-house training	1:10 Exc. Competent adults
Cycling	NGB in off-road cycling (MIAS, BSCA, SMBL etc.)	1:12
Team Challenges	In-house training	1:12
Wide Games, Shelter Building, campfires	In-house training	No set ratio

GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT – CENTRE AND SITE

Missing Persons	<p>Welcome briefing should be given to groups on arrival. This briefing should include details of site boundaries, location of key buildings and rules about going off-site.</p> <p>Regular head-counts should be carried out throughout the day (meal times are best).</p> <p>Visitors to the centre are immediately greeted and directed to where they need to go. Members of the public are quickly informed that the site is private and politely asked to leave.</p>
First Aid Emergencies	<p>Welcome briefing will include details about what to do in the event of an accident and where to go.</p> <p>All TW staff are first aid trained and first aid kits are available throughout the centre and site.</p>
Fire	<p>Welcome briefing will include fire evacuation procedures and muster point as well as what to do if a fire is discovered.</p> <p>Strictly no smoking inside the building and only in designated areas on the Thorpe Woodlands site.</p> <p>The buildings fire alarm system, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers are regularly checked/maintained.</p> <p>Only competent people to use kitchen area – strictly no deep fat fryers to be used.</p> <p>Young people only to use kitchen for meal preparation under the close supervision of a responsible adult.</p> <p>Campfires supervised at all times by responsible adult and extinguished prior to leaving unattended.</p> <p>Cooking stoves and barbecues must not be used anywhere near buildings or tents.</p> <p>Barbeque coals must be fully extinguished with water, before disposal</p>
Scalds	<p>Young people should not normally prepare hot drinks unless supervised by a responsible adult.</p>
Slips, Trips and falls	<p>Doors, corridors and fire exits must be kept clear and free of obstruction at all times.</p> <p>Any spillages should be cleaned up immediately or area cordoned off until dry.</p> <p>Careful Consideration should be given before allocating top bunk beds to younger children or people with mobility difficulties.</p>
Falling from height	<p>Young people using top bunk beds should be reminded to ascend and descend the ladder carefully.</p>

	<p>Participants must be discouraged from climbing on activity equipment/trees or any other object when unsupervised.</p> <p>High Ropes apparatus is strictly out of bounds unless supervised by an instructor.</p>
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GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT – FOOD PREPARATION

Burns and scalds from hot liquids.	<p>A competent and responsible person must directly supervise all food and hot drink preparation and serving.</p> <p>People not involved in food preparation should not enter the kitchen area while food is being prepared.</p>
Food poisoning	<p>All employees involved in food preparation must hold food hygiene certificate.</p> <p>Work surfaces must be cleaned before and after any food preparation takes place.</p> <p>Hands must be washed with hot water and soap before food preparation.</p> <p>Left-over foods must be labelled stored correctly.</p> <p>Perished food must be disposed of.</p> <p>Raw and cooked meats must be stored separately.</p>
Fire	<p>Ovens, Hobs and toasters should never be left unattended when in use.</p> <p>Deep-Frying is not allowed.</p>
Cuts from knives or other cooking utensils.	<p>Knives and other sharp utensils should be used under the supervision of a responsible adult.</p>