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Liability Disclaimer

WARNING: Serious injury or death could result from the use of techniques and equipment described in this manual. It is the reader's responsibility to seek qualified instruction on Abseiling, the use of equipment and precautions to take during the activity. Experience tends to be the best teacher, however a mistake or misinterpretation of this material could have irreversible consequences. Every person who practices Abseiling should use good judgement and a great deal of common sense. This manual is produced with no liability to the authors, editors, reviewers, publisher, Scout Australia - Victorian Branch, or the Victorian Branch Abseiling Council (VBAC), expressed or implied, in the case of injury or death to the reader or persons under their charge or control.

For more information on Abseiling contact:

SCOUTS AUSTRALIA - VICTORIAN BRANCH
VICTORIAN BRANCH ABSEILING COUNCIL
P.O. Box 785
MOUNT WAVERLEY, VICTORIA 3149
Internet www.on.to/vbac

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Acknowledgements

The original version of this manual was the brainchild of a group of Abseilers who gathered together all the published [and unpublished] material, manuals, brochures, catalogues and snippets of information they could get their hands on. They sifted through the information they had gathered and, with the combined experience and knowledge of the group, they produced a two-part manual specifically designed for Scout and Guide Association Abseiling Leaders. The manual has progressed somewhat from those early days, and although it looks very dissimilar to the original, it is still based upon that very pair of books. I doubt if the original authors realised it, but they have left a legacy for the Victorian Branch Abseiling Council. A responsibility to all members both present and future to maintain and update this manual, to keep it at the cutting edge of abseiling education.

You may have noticed the manual has been revised almost every 2 years since it's inception and the reason for this is the varying equipment available, new or varied techniques, personal experience of new members of the VBAC, results of studies into Coroner's Inquests and accident reports, and just general trends. These revisions take almost two years to research, review and rewrite, so as you're reading this, be aware that the VBAC is presently researching or rewriting the next version.

Many thanks must go to the following people without whose tireless efforts this process would fall in a heap or be consigned to the "too hard" basket:

- Brad Storey for numerous revisions, updates and complete rewrites of several sections.
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- Other Abseilers, rock-climbers and cavers for their valued opinions.

Don't go away, we'll be back to get your opinion for the next one!

Branch Activity Leader
Victorian Branch Abseiling Council
January 2000



FOREWORD

Abseiling can be an exhilarating experience for anyone, it can also be terrifying. We all harbour a fear of heights from falling in our formative years. From the moment we take our first steps on two feet, to the minute we step over the edge of a cliff, we teeter on the brink of disaster. The attitude, skill, and empathy shown to us at these times dictate how the event will figure in our sub-conscious. A bad experience will feed the fear and perhaps let it grow out of all proportion, whereas support and understanding from those around us at the time can turn the experience into a major confidence builder.

Instructing abseiling does not just mean you must be technically perfect, but you must also be able to instil confidence in your students in an attempt to allay their natural fears and misgivings. It is not natural for a human being to jump off the edge of a cliff and expect to survive, you need to be aware of their fears and reduce the possibility of the student being overtaken by them.

A little bit of fear/trepidation is not a bad thing for an Abseiling Leader to have, it makes them more aware and more careful. Over confidence leads to complacency, and that is not acceptable in a risk/adventurous activity. It can lead to mistakes.

Allyn Evans
Branch Activity Leader, Abseiling (past member)
Victorian Branch Abseiling Council
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