



DEFINITIONS / GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AATC - Australian Army Adventurous Training Centre (now a training wing)

ANTA - Australian National Training Authority (Federal)

Abseiling - Abseiling, quite simply, is the skill of sliding down a rope using a mechanical braking device, at a speed safe enough to prevent injury. A German-Swiss term for rappelling widely used in Europe.

Abseil/ing Instructor – prior to 2002 common title, no longer in use, for an adult trained to undertake abseiling activities in Scouting. Position replaced by Activity Leader – Abseil/ing

Abseil/ing Leader (See ¹ & ²) – from 2002 the generic term for an individual trained in the Abseiling Adventurous Activity competencies at various levels within Scouting.

Abseil/ing Leader (Basic)¹ – an adult who has trained in the Abseiling Adventurous Activity and completed the basic core competencies. (Sections 7 and 9 Basic CORE and 9 Specialist - Abseiling).

New title of Abseil Guide (Artificial) Trained but limited to working (not running) abseil activities on man made towers;

Abseil/ing Leader (Advanced)² – an adult who has trained in the Abseiling Adventurous Activity and completed the basic and advanced leadership (7 and 9) and Specialist Activity 9 competencies.

New title of Abseil Guide (Natural or Advanced) fully trained but not holding the Activity Leader Warrant.

Abseil/ing Activity Leader – specific warrant held within scouting for an adult within an activity unit – specifically trained in Abseiling.

Abseil Participant – a youth or adult who has undertaken a formal course in abseil instruction and is qualified to assist in abseiling activities some under direct supervision of a more senior qualification holder. Previously known as Assistant Instructor/Leader.

Activity Leader – specific warrant held within scouting for an adult within an activity unit. This warrant allows an adult to work with youth as would a section leader. May be a second warrant held for section leaders.

ANTA – Australian National Training Association.

Ascender - A mechanical device used in abseiling / climbing attaching the Abseiler to the ascent line allowing control through the application of friction.

Assistant (Abseil/ing) Instructor – prior to 2002 common title for a youth member / in training adult to assist in the sport of abseiling, see Abseil Participant (new title)

Assistant Abseil/ing Leader - see description above

Active rope - The rope between the climber and the belay point.

Alloy - A mix of light metals in abseiling / climbing equipment to save on weight based on aluminium

Amphitheatre - A very large recess in the cliff face.

Anchor - A secure point, such as rock projections, cave features, trees, expansion bolts and other hardware to which a rope can be safely attached.

Arapiline - Trade name of an abseiling rope made by Kinnears Australia between 9 and 16mm diameters.

Arete - A sharp rock feature rather like the outside corner a building, a steep ridge.

Ascender - A climbing device.

Assessor (Abseiling) – A Nationally recognised position in training. One who is competent to assess individuals to the position of Abseil Leader, Skills Leader (Abseiling) and other levels. An person who have completed the WoodBadge in Adventurous Activities (Abseiling) together with Train the Trainer Lvl 1 to 4, PLA, Core Basic & Advanced Modules and been accepted by National Training Team.

Ascending - The process of moving upward, usually by rope or ladder.

ASV - Ambulance Service Victoria. (*old term*)



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Australian Style - An American term to describe a run down, which is not permitted under the V.B.A.C. policy.

BAC - see VBAC.

BAL - Branch Activity Leader, like a Group Leader but responsible for an Activity Unit in scouting.

Backup - Any redundancy for safety.

Belay - A method of controlling the descent of an abseiler by connecting a safety line to them.

Belayer - A person who safeguards a climber and controls the rope that is attached to the climber.

Belay Plate - Small alloy device used by the Belayer in the control of falls / lowering.

Bend - Where a rope passes around an object or when it turns but not crosses.

Bight - A U shaped bend in the rope where it does not cross itself.

Biner - An abbreviated term used for a karabiner.

Black Marlo - A brand of rope (UK) normally 11mm with a loose weave mantle.

Blue Water - Brand name of the first ropes specifically designed for abseiling and caving.

Blue Water 2+ - Brand and Trade name of Blue Waters new abseiling static rope, 11mm

Block - A squarish lump of rock that may or may not be attached to the cliff.

Bobbin - French descending device, consists of two fixed pulley sheaves inside an aluminium frame.

Bottom Belay - Alternative name for the action or position of the Brakeman.

Bolt - Artificial protection placed by drilling a hole in the rock and inserting a bolt into the hole.

Bolt Plate - A metal plate that is placed over the bolt for attaching a karabiner. The plate can be removed from the bolt.

Bombproof - Slang for something that is designed rigidly and able to withstand large amounts of

punishment, abuse or shock loading.

Bottom belay - Another term to describe the action of the brakeman.

Bouldering - This is climbing on small cliff and boulders close to ground level without the use of protection.

Bounce / Shatter zone - Area where dropped items/rocks may bounce too after contact with face or object

Bowline - A knot commonly used to make a non-slipping loop in the end of a rope.

Brake bar - A short metal bar with a hole at one end where it is threaded onto a rack or karabiner. On the other end is a slot that fits snugly against the other arm of the abseiling device.

These bars provide the primary source of friction for both the karabiner (Brake bar rig) and the rappel rack.

Brake hand - used to control the rope feeding into a descending device.

Often referred to as the control hand.

Brakeman - Person at the bottom of a descent responsible for controlling the speed and safety of people abseiling.

Brake Plate - Another term for a Belay Plate.

Bulge - A small overhang.

Buttress - A very prominent section of the cliff.

Caver - Also known as spelunkers or speleologists. Someone who explores caves in a safe manner, while showing respect for the cave.

Carabiner - (correct Karabiner) Also known as biner, c/krab, D, springgate, snaplock or snaplink. An oval or offset oval shaped, aluminium alloy or steel link with spring loaded gate in one side. Used as a universal connector in abseiling.

CFA - Country Fire Authority

Chimney - A large crack big enough to contain the entire body.

Chock - Artificial protection consisting of pieces of metal of different shapes and sizes, which are threaded with rope, tape or wire which are placed into cracks or hollows in the rock.



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Chock pick / Nut key - A slender metal bar with a hook that is used for the removal of chocks/nuts.

Clog - A British company that makes climbing and Abseiling equipment.

Crab – An abbreviated term used for a karabiner.

Corner - A feature like the inside corner of a building.

Cow Tail – A form of connecting loop or tape which has a karabiner at one end to facilitate ease of dis/connection.

CMI - Colorado Mountain Industries, a American company that makes climbing and Abseiling equipment, located in West Virginia.

Cradling hand - The hand that varies the friction in a rappel rack by moving the bars up or down, or removing them as needed for the control of the descent.

Cross Crabs – an old form of descent device made by laying one karabiner through another at right angles and using the resulting bar as a device. Not an approved form of descender as this side loads the gates on the biners.

Crux - The most difficult section of a climb on pitch. A pitch or route is rated by the difficulty of the crux.

'D' – An abbreviated term used for a karabiner.

Death rig - A climbing system or anchor point that is totally unsafe.

Descender - A mechanical device used in abseiling attaching the Abseiler to the descent line allowing control through the application of friction.

Dihedral - Where two faces of rock meet to form a corner.

D.M.M. - Denny Morehouse Mann. A British manufacturer of climbing and abseiling equipment.

Dress - (said of a knot) To orient the rope parts of the knot, so that they are properly aligned, straighten or bundled and thus look like the illustrations in the books.

Dressing - (said of a knot) see Dress.

Dynamic belaying - A method of

reducing the impact forces generated by a falling climber by allowing the rope to slip through the belay device.

Edge rollers - Stationary pulley-type device used at the edge of long drops or buildings to lessen or soften the angle of the lip and avoid rope abrasion.

Edging - Climbing by precise placement of the edge of the climbing boot sole or tiny ledges.

Feed or Feeding - The act of pushing the rope through an abseiling device, or to pay out rope over the edge.

Figure 8 - Abseiling device that looks like an eight.

Figure of eight - (Figure Eight meaning knot) A useful knot that looks like an eight.

First Aider - A person who can give initial care to an injured person.

Flake - A thin slab of rock attached to the main wall or lying against it. A flake may vary in size from a thumbnail to a feature as big as a house.

Flared crack - A crack or chimney that is wide on the outside and narrows inward.

Free climbing - Climbing using only the holds that the rock provides. Equipment and ropes used for protection only.

Freefall - A drop that can be rigged without the rope touching a wall.

French Prusik - Alternative name for a Kleinhiest Knot.

Frendo - Brand name of abseiling / climbing hardware.

FM - Frequency Modulation, radio bandwidth.

Gardening - Clearing loose rock and debris from a cliff face that present a hazard to people.

Glacis - An easy angled slab of rock.

Goldtail - Abseiling descent device manufactured by SRT. Ability to alter friction prior to descent by use of



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different rigging.

Girth Hitch - The knot formed when an abseiling rope pulls up and over the lower part of a Figure 8 descender.

Similar to a Larks Head Knot.

Groove - A shallow corner.

Gully - A deep chasm usually running the entire length of the crag.

Hairy - Slang for an especially, difficult, exposed or dangerous climb, manoeuvre, lip, descent or ascent.

Half hitch - A loop that runs around an object in such a manner as to lock itself.

Hard Eye - see Thimble.

Harness - Strapping or equipment used to connect abseiling devices, tethers or ascending equipment to the body.

Heads - Call given by Abseiler, Jumpmaster, Site Controller to indicate to those below something has been dislodged or dropped

Hex / Hexcentric - An artificial chock with a symmetric hexagonal cross section.

Huit - A type of figure 8 descent device manufactured by Petzl. Basically the same as a standard 8 although square with rounded corners.

Horn - A projecting piece of rock, which may serve as natural anchor.

Inactive rope - The rope between the belay device and the anchor point.

Initial instruction - is the amount of time required until the student has achieved a level of proficiency suitable to the instructor.

Instructor - *Prior to 2002* common title of a person trained to undertake abseiling activities within Scouting.

Instructor - *2003 ANTA*. A person who is qualified to teach and lead Instruction in Adventurous Activities in a certain discipline. Has completed Train the Trainer Lvl 1 to 3 (PLA) and been accepted by the National Training Team as an Adult Leader

Trainer. Below the level of Assessor but above the Skills Leader.

Jugs - Good big hand holds.

Jumars - A spring-loaded cam ascender made by Walter Marti Apparatur of Switzerland. Also used as a generic term for mechanical ascenders.

Jumpmaster - A person who is responsible for the safe attachment of a student onto a line, before descent.

Karabiner - Also known as biner, c/krab, D, springgate, snaplock or snaplink. An oval or offset oval shaped, aluminium alloy or steel link with spring loaded gate in one side. Used as a universal connector in abseiling.

Kern - The inner part of Kernmantel design rope. It consists of bundles of continuous, parallel fibres that contribute about 70% of the strength and mass of rope, and determines its breaking strength and stretch.

Kernmantle - being of 2 parts, a kern or inner and a mantle or outer.

Kernmantle Rope₍₁₎ - A rope of 2 parts, the kern being the inner bundles and the mantle being a woven outer casing.

Kernmantle Rope₍₂₎ - A rated rope of two parts used in abseiling / climbing. Made as dynamic (allows elongation under load) and static (minimal elongation under load).

Kernmantle Rope₍₃₎ - Non-rated two part rope used mainly in yachting as sheets, halyards and other lines.

Kinnears - A rope manufacturer, Australia.

Krab - An abbreviated term used for a karabiner.

Kong - Manufacturer of abseiling/climbing hardware.

Laid rope - (lay) A type of rope construction, usually made of three twisted strands of continuous filament



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nylon or natural materials such as manila or sisal. General name for a twisted design rope.

Ledge - A flat area on the face. It can be anything from a few centimetres to a few metres.

Load absorption - A rope's capacity to withstand a shock load. Depends on the amount of stretch built into it.

Locking Karabiner - A karabiner equipped with a locking sleeve, such as a screw gate or twist gate

Locking Karabiner - see Locking Karabiner

Locking off - To wrap an abseiling device with the line rope in such a way that descent is positively stopped.

Loop - A Loop is a simple bend in the rope where the rope crosses itself.

MAD/s - Motorised Ascending Device.

Mallions Rapide - Alternative to a Karabiner. Normally made of steel and rated above a similar sized biner. Industrial strength device. Rather than a spring-loaded gate, the gate is a slot and screw opening. Designed for anchor systems or semi-permanent connections not harness use.

Man made fibres - Also synthetic fibres. Usually petroleum-derived fibres, which all modern climbing and abseiling rope are constructed from, due to the desirable properties of continuous fibre, weather and water resistance and superior strength.

Mantel - The outer braided protective sheath on Kernmantel design rope.

Mantle - A flat ledge above an overhang.

MAS - Metropolitan Ambulance Service

MFB - Metropolitan Fire Brigade

MHz - Megahertz, radio bandwidth.

NADA - Australian standards, design and testing authority

Natural anchor - A solid object occurring naturally such as a boulder or tree. The anchor should be at least

as strong as the rope being tied to the anchor.

Natural fibre - Organic in nature. Ropes made of natural fibres usually employ a twisted construction e.g. hemp, manila and sisal.

Niche - A shallow, cave like feature.

No Duff - Command used in Training. Means that a real problem exists and the Trainers are taking over the activity.

Nut - A form of chock. A small protection (anchor) device used in climbing. See Anchors module.

Offset Karabiner - A distorted D-shaped karabiner where one end is larger than the other.

Offset Karabiner - see Offset Karabiner

ORCA - Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia. This body has now been superseded.

Overhang - A roof of a rock.

Pedestal - A flat topped, detached pinnacle.

Petzl - A French company that makes a large range of good climbing and Abseiling equipment.

Pinnacle - or Rock Tower. A detached feature rather like a church steeple associated with mountains or rock features.

Pitch - An uninterrupted drop. One long drop could be rigged with several ropes, each section drop becomes a pitch.

Pre-Jump Talk₍₁₎ - Normally an Instruction activity prior to a abseiling activity held in the meeting place of the prospective group.

Pre-Jump Talk₍₂₎ - Session of instruction and introduction at a cliff face prior to the day's activity.

Prow - A rock feature rather like the prow of a ship.

Prusik Cord - 4 to 8mm rated kernmantle cord or rope, also known as Utility Cord.



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Prusik knot - an ascending knot made popular by Dr. Karl Prusik. It is a basic knot used for climbing a fixed rope.

Prusiking - A method of climbing up a fixed rope by means of rope gripping devices such as knots or mechanical ascenders.

Puff - Exposed core of kernmantel rope poking through the sheath.

Rapides - Alternative to a Karabiner. Normally made of steel and rated above a similar sized biner. Industrial strength device. Rather than a spring-loaded gate, the gate is a slot and screw opening. Designed for anchor systems or semi-permanent connections not harness use.

Rappel - Same as Abseiling. The word in French, means 'to recall'. Hence, its original meaning: a method of descending a retrievable rope, doubled through the anchor point.

Rappel rack - A multiple brake bar descending device that features variable friction control.

Rap Rack - A small version of the Rappel Rack, designed for use with 9mm ropes

Rated - A rating applied to an object as a result of University Tests, NADA or UIAA investigations providing a recognised value from which the SWL may be assessed.

Rescue eight - A form of figure 8 descender with ears to prevent a girth hitch forming and large enough wrap around twice for extra friction.

Rib - A prominent, slender feature, more rounded than an arête.

Rocks - Call given by Abseiler, Jumpmaster, Site Controller to indicate to those below something has been dislodged or dropped.

Rockfall zone - Possible landing area of any item dropped from any point within that drop.

Rope₍₁₎ - Flexible cordage. Commonly made of synthetic materials such as nylon or natural materials such as manila or sisal.

Rope₍₂₎ - Call given by Jumpmaster or Site Controller just prior to throwing the descent line over an edge to indicate danger to those below of the rope/rope-bag.

Rope drag - Frictional resistance of the rock against the rope.

Rouges Yarn - A coloured thread or repeated colour scheme / pattern in a rope or cord designed to indicate ownership or manufacturer (*circa 1700s*)

RTO - Registered Training Organisation. The Scout Association has held an RTO Accreditation since 1999. Adventerous Activities units eg Abseiling provide approved courses to the national standard recognised by ANTA.

Running end - This is the free end of a rope that is not fastened to an object.

Safe Working Load (S.W.L.) - of a line is 10% (1/10th) of the yield strength, used in identifying safety in work/activities (measurement factor used in Scouting)

SAR - Search and Rescue.

Scoop - An indentation in the rock face, not as pronounced as a niche.

Self belay - A method whereby an abseiler can, independently of a descender, stop a descent.

Self-equalising anchors - An anchor that provides several places to tie a rope so that the weight of the rope can be dispersed equally between all anchor points.

Self-locking Karabiner - A karabiner with a spring-loaded locking collar.

Self-rescue - Technique for getting oneself out of trouble while on a rope.

Semi-variable friction device - A device that provides limited friction adjustment, usually in stepped amounts.

Senior Instructor - Prior to 2002 refers to the training personal within VBAC. Title now not used, see Skills Leader, Instructor and Assessor.

SES - State Emergency Service

Setting a knot - (setting) Tightening all



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parts of the knot so that the rope parts touch, grab and cause friction upon the other parts of the knot rendering it operational. Loosely tied knots can easily deform under strain and change in character.

Shatter / Bounce zone - Area where dropped items/rocks may bounce to after contact with face or object

Shear strength - Resistance to being broken by forces acting at 90° to the major axis.

Sheath - See mantel

Shock loading - Causing a sudden force or impact on a rope or anchor point.

SITB – *prior to 2002*. Senior Instructor Training Board. The collection of Senior Abseiling Instructor who determine training levels and processes and manage high level investigations within the VBAC.

SITB – *after 2002*. Skills Leader and Instructor Training Board. Encompasses all Skills Leaders, Instructors and Assessors within the VBAC who determine training standards and course materials together with managing investigations and making determinations not controlled by the Constitution and Policy of the VBAC (within the general membership rights).

Site Controller - A person responsible for the overall control and safety on the jump site.

Skills Leader - A person who has completed a course of specialist / Advanced training in an Adventurous Activity. Completed Train the Trainer Lvl's 1 and 2 and applied for a Training support position.

Sling - An endless loop made of rope or webbing, used primarily for forming knot climbing systems or for wrapping around a stationary point when rigging.

Snaplink (Snaplock) – A term used for a karabiner type which has no locking device to hold the gate closed.

Spelean - An Australian company that makes climbing and Abseiling equipment. Based in Sydney.

Spike - A finger of rock.

SRT - Single rope technique or static rope techniques. Method of ascending or descending a fixed rope.

SRT₍₂₎ - Single Rope Technique, manufacturer of hardware, Sydney Australia.

Standing end - This includes all the rope that is not fastened to an object.

Static rope - Ropes that stretch between 2% and 5% under an approximate load of 82kg (180lbs). Also called no stretch or low stretch rope.

Sticht plate - A mechanical belaying device.

Stop - A generic name given to type of descent device that incorporates a parking brake.

Student - A person who has no or limited experience and no formal training but is undertaking activity, or experiencing it.

Super Static - Ropes that stretch between up to 2% under an tested approximate load of 82kg (180lbs). No longer manufactured due to excessive cost low need in market place. See Static Rope.

SWL - see Safe Working Load

Tape - Webbing, flat or tubular.

Tensile strength - Breaking strength with the major axis.

Thimble/s - Grooved sleeves that allow for ropes and cables to curve gently through an eye.

Tie off - A mechanical process to secure oneself to prevent movement during a descent.

Traverse - To move sideways.

Troll - European equipment and harness manufacturer.

Tube tape - Nylon strapping that appears flat, yet when pinched from the sides reveals its hollow weave. Manufactured around a bobbin core to achieve hollow tube whilst providing strength near to a similar piece of 50mm (2") flat tape



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UHF - Ultra High Frequency, radio bandwidth.

UIAA - Is the Union of International Alpine Associations. Their standards are the most known standards on specific rock climbing / abseiling equipment.

Utility Cord - 4 to 8mm rated kernmantle cord or rope, also known as Prussic Cord.

Variable friction - A term used to describe a descender with gradual friction adjustment, such as rappel rack.

VBAC - Activity Service Unit of Scouts Australia - Victorian Branch. The governing body that controls abseiling and provides abseiling instructor training within scouting in Victoria.

Vertical₍₁₎ - Manufacturer of hardware and harnesses.

Vertical₍₂₎ - Referring to the direction of drop of a cliff face.

Vertical₍₃₎ - a direction or description.

VHF - Very High Frequency, radio bandwidth.

Victorian Branch Abseiling Council (V.B.A.C.) - see VBAC

VSFAS - Victorian Scout First Aid Service

Water knot - Originally any knot used by fisherman or anglers. The fisherman's, grapevine and barrel knots were once known as water knots. Also refers to the original ring bend knot.

Webbing - Nylon strapping. Commercially available in flat or tubular construction.

Whaletail - A machined fixed bar position descender. This device became popular in the early 70's. Commercially made by Spelean in Australia.

Wild Stuff - (WS) Australian manufacturer of harnesses and equipment.