



1st Kesgrave Scout Group

Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk IP5 1JF

Name of activity, section, event, and location	1 st Kesgrave Scout Group - Pioneering / Rope Activities	Date of risk assessment	1 Mar 2025	Name of person who undertook this risk assessment	Alan Comber (working with others)
		Date of next review	1 Apr 2026		

This document covers pioneering. It should be read in conjunction with the section meeting and events risk assessment which covers generic items.

In the context of this document pioneering covers – camp gadgets including camp gates; pioneering structures ie 'A' frames, platforms, rope bridges, rafts etc; aerial runways and zip wires. Please refer to POR and Scout Association fact sheets before undertaking a pioneering project to check if there are any guidelines or standards applicable to the construction or type of kit used (pulleys, ropes, cables etc), and any testing of kit or permits requirements before proceeding with a project.

Definition: pioneering poles covers - wooden spars, canes, sticks, staves, broom handles, wooden/metal poles etc. Pioneering kit covers poles, ropes, metal wire, pulleys, pegs, pickets etc

Hazard identified? Risks from it?	Who is at risk?	How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed?	What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	Controls are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment, or you might change the way you do the activity.	Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change what you are doing or even stop the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.
Protrusions, slips, trips, falls, collisions – injuries to people moving around	All present	Check for natural hazards in the build area especially under structures where participants are off the ground eg rope bridges, aerial runways, platforms etc. Consider barriers / bollards / a cordoned off area to improve safety.	

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Kit / Equipment – injuries to people during the activity.	All present	Ensure the kit used is adequate for the intended purpose. Make sure any ropes, spars, pegs, pickets etc used are of the correct size and strength for its intended use.	
Activity Area – injuries during the activity.	All present	Ensure the project is built on an area that has few obstructions and is as level as possible. For structures where participants will be above ground when using the project, ensure the ground underneath is as free from sharp or hard objects (tree stumps etc) as possible. Consider putting soft material (crashmats) underneath ropes or around trees where it might help to reduce impact injuries. The area immediately around the project should not be walked through; only individuals participating in the activity should be in close proximity. If necessary, consider physically marking out a 'restricted' area. Cordon off any areas that need to be for safety reasons and to make inaccessible to others and the public.	
Pioneering Activity – injuries to people caused by equipment used, failures, use eg cuts, bumps, bruises, rope burns, crush injuries, lacerations, abrasions, puncture wounds, eye damage, sprains, strains and fractures etc	All present	If required for supervision, kit quantities available, keeping participants occupied, creating teams etc, consider sorting participants into smaller groups. If groups are required consider whether they need to be matched in terms of age, ability, temperament, working together, etc. Participants should be briefed/given appropriate training for the pioneering activity and cover as appropriate: • Construction technique(s) to be used, supports, guys etc. • Knots and lashings to be used. • Carrying, lifting, and storing pioneering equipment. Plan the structure before starting to build it and follow any plan provided. For structures where people will be off the ground (ie climbing trees, walking on ropes, climbing rope ladders etc) consider the safety implications and factor in accordingly to make as safe as possible. Where trees are used, ensure they are sturdy enough to take the intended use and consider protecting with hessian sacks where the rope needs to be anchored to the tree. For suspended ropes (walking ropes, handrails etc) use stringer ropes and/or tie downs as appropriate to improve rope stability (ie reduced rope side to side movement and handrail ropes spreading apart too much).	

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		Ensure that any pioneering structures are stable, adequately roped down, sunk in the ground etc to minimise movement and take the weight and forces expected during use. Ensure that the construction of the pioneering project and use of ropes minimises the changes of entrapment and entanglement eg ropes to be tied off neatly with no trailing ends, ropes not creating a web or criss-crossing the structure, etc For projects with catapults or throwing devices ensure they cannot throw objects backwards and can be safely tensioned and used. Also take into consideration the direction and distance they can fire to avoid projectiles going off site, hitting and damaging property or hurting people inadvertently. Any projectiles used should be suitably chosen for the intended task. Ensure inappropriate objects are not used. Considering covering pegs, pickets etc with material (cloths, sacks etc) to cover sharp protrusions to reduce any impact injuries and also to mark pegs, protruding spars etc with hazard tape to make them more visible to reduce trip and bruising injuries. When dismantling the project: • Think carefully about the safest way to dismantle the pioneering structure. • Ensure everyone is safely distanced away before collapsing any parts. • Undo the main supports last when you're dismantling a structure. Aerial runways/zip wires need to be constructed and supervised by adults with detailed practical knowledge of safely doing this so are out of scope. They will deal with the health and safety and risk assessments for these.	
Manual Handling – back injuries, strains, cuts, bruises etc	All present	Consider carrying long spars in pairs to reduce accidental contact/blows to other participants.	
General Behaviour – horseplay, overexcitement, injuries.	All taking part	Participants will only be able to take part in pioneering and rope activities if leaders are sure their behaviour is safe. Have a clear location for those not participating in the activity that is safely out of the way. Participants should be advised of the risks and behaviour required: For example: • Don't interfere with the structure ie unnecessarily rock it, bounce up and down on the rope, overload the rope with too many participants, etc. • Not playing with the pioneering kit ie swinging on it, throwing or waving poles about, using poles as spears, swords etc. The dangers of injury or poking	

		someone in the eye. • Not to use the pioneering project without adult supervision. • That logs and ropes may become slippery when wet. • Be carefully/cautious when climbing on any structure – don't rush, do it at your own pace. • If the project has a catapult or throwing device ensure you don't stand in front of it unless the projectiles are soft enough and in that case specify a minimum distance away. • Making people aware that large poles can fall if not securely held and people need to be careful when lifting or positioning them, and people need to be aware of what poles are near them and may fall. • Risk of falling especially when ropes and poles are damp/wet. • Keeping out of the way when not undertaking a task, especially not being under any construction. • If a pole is falling and the rope's sliding through your hand, let it go! • Don't wrap a rope around your wrist or otherwise fasten it to you - if what it's connected to gives way it'll yank and cause injury. • Don't use inappropriate knots. The activity should be monitored to make sure it is being constructed, used and dismantled safely and the chances of injuries are minimised. Behaviour will be monitored for horseplay, dangerous activities etc and the activity will be stopped or a cooling off period introduced if the activity gets out of hand or injuries are likely to happen. A clear communication method will be used to stop the activity if necessary.	
Leadership – Inappropriate / Inadequate Leadership	Leaders and Helpers	Make sure the activity leader is competent to construct the project. Ensure all necessary permits and permissions are in place especially for high ropes etc (see POR). Young people should be closely supervised at all times. The project should be checked to make sure participants are using the correct knots and lashings and they are fit for purpose (ie tight enough), before being accepted as safe.	

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		Leaders should be positioned so they can ideally see all the participants all the while they are involved with the activity. A spotter(s) should be considered when participants are off the ground. Before using the pioneering project, the person supervising should check and test the structure to ensure it can be used for its intended purpose without become a safety hazard ie can it support the weight, is it stable and does it have any dangerous features ie sharp edges, trip hazards etc, the weather is okay, not too slippery/wet to use etc. The numbers of people or load on the project when being constructed, used or dismantled, at any point in time should be limited to what it can reasonably cope with, and the capabilities of the young people involved. Structures should be periodically checked for potential failures/collapses etc to ensure it is safe to use and stable. If any issues are found participants should be asked to come off / stop using it and the issue(s) resolved before being using again. Ensure structures are secure before leaving them unattended at any time to prevent it collapsing. For pioneering projects consider taping off to warn people passing not to use it whilst unattended/unsupervised.	
Incidents	All present	Ensure participants can easily move away from the area in the event of an emergency ie structure collapsing	
First Aid / Injuries that need treatment	All present	Tweezers should be considered to help with removal of splinters.	
Weather - rain before and during the activity, hot weather causing heat exhaustion or sun stroke, darkness.	All present	Assess the weather risk before and during the activity and act accordingly. Damp / wet weather can make the structure slippery and wet ropes can stretch or tighten. Consider taking the tension out of structure if ropes get wet or the pioneering project is not being used. This will stop putting unnecessary strain on the ropes, stop people using it, stop pegs etc being pulled out the ground by shrinking ropes etc. For structures above the ground do not use when a lightning storm is overhead.	