

Risk Assessment for Adventure Forest Ltd T/as Go Ape! &/or Go Ape! EOT

SUBJECT: Axe Throwing

RISK ASSESSMENT REF: AT 01/2026/V1

WRITTEN BY: Operations Team/Health and Safety Team

REVIEWED BY: Stu King, December 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE: December 2026

Risk Matrix								
Risk rating guidance	Likelihood (L)	5	5	10	15	20	25	Likelihood (L) x Severity (S) = Risk Rating (RR).
		4	4	8	12	16	20	
		3	3	6	9	12	15	
		2	2	4	6	8	10	
		1	1	2	3	4	5	
			1	2	3	4	5	
		Severity (S)						
Acceptability of risk guidance	High-risk: 15 – 25		High-risk activities should cease immediately. Further effective control measures to mitigate risks must be introduced.					
	Medium-risk: 8 – 12		Medium-risks are an acceptable level based on the reduced likelihood after sufficient control measures are implemented.					
	Low-risk: 1-6		Low-risks are largely acceptable. Where it is reasonable to do so, efforts should be made to reduce risks further.					
Guidance. When completing a risk assessment, you should:	1. Identify the persons at risk and the significant hazards. 2. Calculate an initial RR for the activity. 3. Identify risk control measures that reduce the risks to an acceptable level. 4. Calculate a revised RR - you should consider how much safer the task will be if the control measures are followed. Here, you should consider changing both the likelihood (L) and the severity (S) ratings.							
Note. Ideally, you should look to reduce the risks so that the task can be classified as “low-risk”.								

Likelihood	Definition	Points rating
Inevitable	If the work continues as it is, there is almost 100% certainty that an accident will happen, for examples: A broken stair or broken rung on a ladder, Bare, exposed electrical conductors, Unstable stacks of heavy boxes	5
Highly likely	Will happen more often than not. Additional factors could precipitate an incident but it is still likely to happen without this additional factor.	4
Possible	The accident may occur if additional factors precipitate it, but it is unlikely to happen without them.	3
Unlikely	This incident or illness might occur but the probability is low and the risk minimal.	2
Remote possibility	There is really no risk present. Only under freak conditions could there be any possibility of an accident or illness. All reasonable precautions have been taken - This should be the normal state of the workplace.	1

Severity	Definition	Points rating
Very high	Causing multiple deaths and widespread destruction eg. fire, course/building collapse.	5
High	Causing death, serious injury or permanent disability to an individual.	4
Moderate	Temporary disability causing injury (to member of the public, contractor or employees) or disease capable of keeping an employee off work for seven days or more and reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995).	3
Slight	Minor injury (to member of the public, contractor or employee), which would allow the individual to continue work after first aid treatment on site or at a local surgery. The duration of the stoppage or treatment is such that the normal flow of work is not seriously interrupted.	2
Nil	Very minor injury, bruise, graze, no risk of disease.	1

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SER	HAZARD	L	S	RR	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROL MEASURES	FURTHER CONTROL MEASURES:	L	S	RR
001	Struck by flying axe	2	4	10	Participants Instructors / Employees Members of public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barrier around range to prevent members of public walking into range – to be risk assessed locally Barrier of suitable height and distance from target and throwing area to contain all axes; bounce off and miss throws. All participants must be physically able to throw an axe at the target safely; those under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult over the age of 18. All participants and guardians must not be under the influence of Alcohol or drugs. Participants not following the instructions or misbehaving will be asked to sit out. Participants will be invited into the range by the instructor. Maximum of two throwers simultaneously throwing in any one lane. Standard operation one axe thrown at a time with the exception of instructor controlled double throw. Only participants throwing and instructors to be within the range during throwing. Safety line marked on the ground no participants to cross during throwing, red painted wooden board 3.6m from target. Throwing area marked on ground controlling distance from where an axe is thrown. Participants trained to aim at target and only throw straight down the range Range supervised by trained instructor Safety line a suitable distance (3.6m NATF) from targets to reduce likelihood of being struck by rebounding axe No go zone behind throwing area to prevent spectators being stuck by axe that is let go 		1	4	4

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						<div>during backswing</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Axes only to be retrieved when all axes have been thrown – any spare, axes to be secured as required when axes are being collected• No open toed footwear• All participants will undergo a Safety Briefing before starting their session.• The instructor will control safety of the session throughout.• All Axes will conform to the NATF standard.• Instructors to stand behind throwers between lanes always watching down the lane when participants are throwing				
002	Injury from handling axes	2	2	4	Participants Instructors / Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Axes checked for burs and damage• Participants trained to only hold the axe by its handle and how to pass an Axe.• Use of axe supervised by trained instructor• Participants shown how to retrieve an Axe from the target.		1	2	2
003	Bumps, scrapes	2	1	1	Participants Instructors / Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targets weighted and secured to prevent toppling over onto person retrieving• Targets checked for sharp edges		1	1	1
004	Slips, trips and falls.	2	1	1	Participants Instructors / Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All participants must wear appropriate footwear, closed toes.• Area flooded with woodchip, maintained regularly to ensure a level surface.• Safety line and throw line boards partially submerged in chip to remove trip hazard.		1	1	1
005	Inappropriate Clothing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FootwearCovered waists	3	3	9	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre booking and on arrival advice/checks• Refer to supervision policy for agreed requirements by activity		1	3	3

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006	Darkness causing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorientation • Inability to read safety signs • Unable to see landing • Impaired supervision 	2	3	6	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful planning of session availability in line with Sunset times • Adequate supervision • Staff assistance • Torches available • Termination of Activity 		1	3	3
007	Weather <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightning • High Wind • Ice and snow • Extreme Cold • Fog/Mist Excessive Heat	3	3	9	Course users Employees Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course closures and evacuations due to adverse weather policy • Emergency Evacuation Procedure • Suitable clothing guidance and uniform • Communications and use of radios and phones • Rest periods and breaks • Training of staff and customers • Monitor weather reports and forecasts • Patrolling instructors' observations (Beaufort scale) • Provision of water 		1	3	3
008	Medical conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing injuries • Pregnancy • Fatigue • Hearing and Visual impairment • Individual additional needs • Other 	2	2	4	Course users Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Disability, Pregnancy , Additional Support, Deaf Participants, Existing Physical Injuries Policies • Risk Acknowledgement • Terms and Conditions • Staff training • Safety Rules and Advice • Dynamic assessment of risk • Patrolling • Users advised to seek medical advice 		1	2	2

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009	Challenging Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbally abusive • Physically abusive • Failure to follow rules • Aggressive 	2	3	6	Course users Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Customer Conflict Policy • Staff Training • Exclusion from activity • Safety Rules and Advice • Terms and Conditions • Verbal warning, of session being cut short • Emergency Services 		1	3	3
References: HSW Act, MHSW Regs, s, First Aid Regs, Occupiers Liability Act, NATF, WATL, KATTA. Course Guide" (3 rd edition), HSE Information Sheet Entertainment Sheet No 14 ,HSE 5 Steps to Risk assessment INDG 163 ,HSE A Guide to Risk Assessment requirements INDG 218 ,Go Ape Generic Risk Assessments										
Control Measures. Where a control measure has been identified, it is only included once and not repeated under every subject. Therefore, for a specific hazard identified, a control measure noted above may apply to that hazard. (HSE RA guidance.)										
Go Ape operational and training systems. These include the following: Go Ape Operations on how to run a Go Ape Activity, Go Ape Training Manual including training and assessment policy, Practical Session plans and online training and Go Ape Company Handbook.										
Instructor Training. Go Ape staff must undertake relevant training and assessment programme specific to their role. They undergo training in accordance with the Go Ape Online Training Manual										