

# Authorisation Scheme for Climbing and Abseiling

**info**

Scout  
Information  
Centre

0845 300 1818

## Guidelines for the issue of a District Commissioner's Authorisation

### Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the factsheet, which updates that coded FS120402 and dated Aug 99. It provides the information required for an applicant for authorisation to lead or supervise climbing and abseiling activities with Members of The Scout Association.

These notes form an integral part of the application and should not be detached from the form. If it is necessary to photocopy this material then both the notes and form should be copied.

Further editions may be published in the light of experience. The publication of further editions will be notified in SCOUTING Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

### General

The Rules of the Association relating to climbing and abseiling are contained in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*. The benefits of the authorisation scheme are that it assists District Commissioners to ensure that those leading or supervising climbing and abseiling are competent to do so. It shows clearly to parents that those who introduce young people to these activities have been authorised by The Scout Association and that all relevant training will be supervised or run by an authorised person.

It must be stressed that this scheme is for the safe encouragement of all climbing and abseiling activities within the overall context of the development of young people through Scout training. It is not a qualification for use outside The Scout Association.

Competency in climbing and abseiling will be assessed by the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor, who should take into

account any documentary evidence, log books or certificates. These must be attached to the application and may be photocopies rather than the original.

### To the Applicant

In completing this form you are openly and honestly declaring your background knowledge and experience. You will be aware of the importance of party leadership when with young people and the areas of responsibility as a leader or supervisor of any particular climbing and abseiling activity.

Consider the possible serious implications of overstating experience gained when you were perhaps physically more able. The effects of any physical, medical or mental condition on your ability to act in an emergency should also be considered. Be sure to state all recent experience. In claiming successful completion of any formal training, e.g. **you must** enclose the original or a photocopy of the page or pages which indicate your successes. In addition a log of your activities in the past three years will assist the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor to come to a reasoned recommendation. An example of a suitable log sheet is included in this Factsheet.

You should complete the attached form giving as much detail as possible. Do not be afraid to attach additional sheets of paper if the space on the form is inadequate, or if you wish to add information not covered in any of the spaces available. You may also wish to indicate the level of authorisation sought.

Having completed the form, you should forward it to the appropriate Commissioner (normally the District Commissioner), via your Group Scout Leader. If the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor is not already aware

of your experience you should expect to hear from your County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor about arrangements for a practical assessment to be carried out. If you have heard nothing within one month of submitting your application form, you should contact your Group Scout Leader and/or the appropriate Commissioner.

You must be familiar with *Single Pitch Climbing and Abseiling*, published by The Scout Association and the Rules of The Scout Association as contained in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*.

### **To the Commissioner responsible**

On initial receipt of this form you should consider the applicant and decide whether or not that person is suitable for authorisation. The fact that a person holds a Scouter's warrant does not necessarily mean that he or she is suitable to lead or supervise young people in potentially hazardous activities.

This is no reflection on a person's ability as a Scouter, but age, physical disability, general health and fitness etc., may be reasons why you should not allow this application to go forward. What is important is that you are satisfied in general terms about the suitability of the applicant to be responsible for a party of young people engaged in such activities collectively or individually. Your acceptance at this stage is probably the key signature on the form. Wherever possible consult with the ADC (Mountain Activities) or (Activities) or ACC/AAC (Activities) as appropriate before signing.

You should now send the form to the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor for a recommendation on the level of authorisation to be granted. In the case of difficulties forward the form to the Programme and Development Department, Gilwell Park, Bury Road, Chingford, London E4 7QW.

It is important for the satisfaction and encouragement of the applicant that you complete your part of the process quickly. Seven days is the maximum time that the application should be with you.

On receiving the form back from the County/Area Activity Assessor, you should decide on the level of authorisation to be granted

in the light of the recommendation given by the County/Area Activity Assessor. You should note that you are in no way bound by what has been recommended by the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor. It is within your right to reduce the scope of any authorisation. If you intend to give an authorisation that differs from that recommended by the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor, you must consult the County/Area Climbing and Activity Assessor.

Having decided on the level of authorisation, sign the bottom of the form and return the form to the applicant.

As the authorisation is valid for the maximum period of five years it is important that your County/Area or your District maintains a record of all authorisations granted. It is for the County/Area to determine who monitors the records and takes the subsequent action to cancel or renew authorisations.

You may also wish to make use of the facility to record this authorisation in the Leader's record book, the record of authorisation or the authorisation card, these being available from the Resource Centre at Gilwell Park.

### **To the County/Area Activity Assessor**

On receiving the form from the District Commissioner, you should assess the level of technical experience and ability claimed by the applicant and check any supporting documents. It is for you to decide whether to carry out a practical assessment. If the applicant does not hold a formal qualification, and is not known to you from previous experience, you will normally want to do so. In this case you should contact the applicant directly to discuss suitable dates.

It is not envisaged that such an assessment will last for more than one day. The format of the assessment is for you to decide. While seeing the applicant actually leading a party of young people is the ideal, this is not mandatory.

While a practical assessment should be considered the norm it may be that the applicant's mountain experience and ability is well known to you. If you are satisfied with the applicant's capability, it is acceptable to dispose with the practical assessment since no useful

purpose is likely to be served by its formal completion.

It is unlikely that the applicant will have the same depth of knowledge or the same breadth of experience as yourself and you should not expect it. A proven satisfactory assessment by The British Mountaineering Council or one of the National Mountain Leader Training Boards should be accepted and you should have good reason before giving a lesser recommendation. There is no reason for an applicant, necessarily, to have personal experience of an area before a recommendation can be given for that area. Knowledge of a similar area, or construction in the case of climbing towers or walls, should be taken into account.

When considering the level of authorisation that should be recommended you should consider the following possible options:-

- a) Authorised to act as a rope leader. This could be given to a Scout, Venture Scout or Leader who is carrying out climbing as an individual activity and does not intend to instruct or supervise other Members of the Movement. It is envisaged that this recommendation will allow a young person to climb with a friend who is already a climber and to do so within the framework of Scouting.
- b) Authorised to instruct and/or supervise climbing and abseiling on a tower or artificial rock face. Sometimes such an authorisation will be for a stated tower or face. The individual concerned may not have the experience of natural rock faces necessary for the safe selection of anchorage points and so on but will be able to safely use the points provided on a man made structure.
- c) Authorised to instruct and/or supervise climbing and abseiling on single pitch natural rock face. The applicant's experience must be sufficient to select safe anchorage points and so on but additional skills needed for multi-pitch climbing are not required. Authorisation would not exceed three rope systems in any combination of climbing or abseiling.
- d) Authorised to instruct climbing to a stated grade on multi-pitch routes. This could be

given to a Venture Scout, Leader or Instructor who is intending to instruct Members of the Movement in climbing. The applicant would normally have considerable technical experience (at least to the grade authorised) and would be familiar with the areas that would be used for instruction.

After deciding on your recommendation you should complete your section of the form and return it to the District Commissioner concerned. Like the District Commissioner you are expected to process this form quickly or contact the applicant directly if any delay is anticipated.

#### Notes for all

1. Should an applicant gain further experience, another application may be submitted at any time in order that the authorisation may be reassessed. When this new authorisation is given it begins a new period of validity, i.e. normally five years.
2. The applicant need not be a warranted Scouter nor a Member of the Movement.
3. There is no upper or lower age limit for any applicant - suitable Scouts or Venture Scouts may be authorised. Any authorised person under 18 years of age may only operate with the permission of his or her Scout Leader or Venture Scout Leader on each separate occasion.
4. The possible outcome of overstating any experience gained by the applicant when physically more able should always be borne in mind by applicant, Commissioner and County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor.
5. Those applying for authorisation must have completed the Scout and Guide Associations' First Response Course within the three-year period prior to the application. Holders of a valid First Aid Qualification, where the syllabus equals or exceeds that of a First Response Course, especially in respect of hypothermia and hyperthermia, meets this requirement.
6. Applications should be accompanied by all documentary proof available, certificates of attendance at courses, log books, etc. or

clear photocopies of these documents. The originals should be made available if requested by the appropriate Commissioner or County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor.

*First Aid and the Saving of Life* FS120051 5/97  
*Single Pitch Climbing and Abseiling*  
ISBN-0-85165-255-7

7. It is expected that the complete authorisation process should be completed as soon as possible and certainly within one month.
8. The authorisation is granted by the appropriate Commissioner, who may grant an authorisation which differs from the recommendation of the County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor. The County/Area Climbing and Abseiling Activity Assessor must be informed before issuing the authorisation.
9. It is for the Scout County/Area to decide where the record of authorisations granted is kept. This can be at County/Area or District. That body is then responsible for initiating the renewal or cancellation of the authorisation granted near the end of the period (normally five years) for which it was granted.
10. The authorisation scheme does not affect Groups wishing to make use of professional instruction and leadership. The Leader concerned must check that, if required, the Instructor(s) are registered in accordance with the Adventure Activity Licensing requirements. If the activity is outside the scope of the Adventure Activity Regulations the Instructor(s) must hold the appropriate qualification of the British Mountaineering Council or one of the National Mountain Leader Training Boards.

### **Publications Cross Reference**

*The Current edition of:*

*Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association, ISBN-0-81565-290-5*

*First Response*      *The Guide Association*

*Role and Qualifications of the County Mountain Activity Assessor and Adviser* FS120405 2/95

*Record of Authorisation*      CT120191

*Authorisation Card*      CT120095

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*Item code: FS120402 December 2000*

The Scout Association, Information Centre, Gilwell Park, Bury Road, Chingford, London E4 7QW. Email: infocentre@scout.org.uk  
Website www.scoutbase.org.uk Direct: 0208 498 5400 Local rate call: 0845 300 1818 Fax: 0208 498 5407

**Activity Authorisation -  
Climbing and Abseiling**

**Title:** ..... **Full Name:** .....

**Maiden Name:** (where applicable) .....

**Full Postal Address:** (including postcode) .....

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.....

**Tel. no. - Daytime:** ..... **Evening:** .....

**Contact details:** (e.g. Mobile, fax, e-mail) .....

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**Date of Birth:** .....

**Health Factors:** (Things that may affect the activity e.g. diabetes, asthma)

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**Current Scouting appointment:** (if any) .....

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**Previous Scouting experience:** (if any) .....

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**Do you hold membership of any relevant club or society?**

*Please give details:*

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**First Aid:** *Please state any relevant courses attended, e.g. First Response, and give dates.*

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**Is this your first application for authorisation?** **Yes/No**

*If No, please give details of previous applications.*

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**Has a previous application been refused?** **Yes/No?**

*If Yes, please give details.*

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**State which activities you wish to be authorised for:**

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**In which geographical location(s) s do you want to carry out these activities?**

.....

**Are these activities to be held on:**

Natural surface  Artificial surface  (tick box)

**Is your role to be:** Leading  Supervising  (tick box)

**How many years experience have you relevant to these activities?** *Please give details on the form on the back page or attach a copy of your log book*

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**Please give details of relevant training courses attended.**

*Please attach photocopies of all relevant documents including log book and/or licence.*

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**I have read and understood P.O.R. - Activity Rules and Single Pitch Climbing and Abseiling.**

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**Signature of Applicant**

**Date**

I am satisfied as to the maturity, ability to lead and supervise young people and the general suitability of the applicant.

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Signature of the GSL

Name in block capitals

Date

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Group

District

County

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Signature of the DC

Name in block capital

Date

I recommend that authorisation be given within the following limits:

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Signature of County Assessor

Name in block capitals

Date

I hereby grant authorisation within the following limits:

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Signature of the DC

Name in block capitals

Date

**Review Date** .....

**Signature of DC** .....

