



RISK / BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

This Risk / Benefit Assessment has been prepared as a “generic” document and is used to guide Forest Skills Leaders to incorporate appropriate controls into the Phoenix Forest Skill’s planning and activities, to provide reduced or minimized risk at a level appropriate to the participants.

Risk Benefit Assessments are like Risk Assessments but with a clear emphasis on the benefits as well as the risks. To do this a judgement is made on the level of risk, and a judgement is made on the level of benefit. These are then compared to see if the activity is worth doing.

In addition to this document, the Forest Skill’s Leader should carry out a Daily Risk Assessment including weather forecast / temperatures, ground conditions, group size and history, user group / individuals, planned activities, equipment needed, site visit conducted, group confirmed, other Centre activities / restrictions.

A dynamic risk assessment should be carried out continually during the activity session. This should include counting heads, checking supervision is in place and adequate, “stranger danger”, falls from heights assessment, managing the safety of the area, etc. Any risks identified should have appropriate control measures introduced and noted in the Daily Risk Assessment after the session.

<p>Probability Score:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <5% chance that it will occur – very unlikely 2. <25% chance that it will occur 3. <50% chance that it will occur 4. <75% chance that it will occur 5. >95% chance that it will occur – very likely 	<p>Severity Score:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not serious – no first aid required 2. Minor Injury – requiring basic first aid 3. Injury – requiring non immediate professional medical attention 4. Serious injury/multiple injuries – requiring immediate medical attention 5. Major accident – multiple injuries or fatality 	<p>Calculate the risk levels:</p> <p>The rating is calculated from the probability multiplied by the severity which will give a rating between 1 & 25.</p> <p>Phoenix Outdoor Centre will not be carrying out any activities deemed to have a revised rating of over 12 as they are deemed too dangerous.</p> <p>Combined Points score of :</p> <p>1-6 = Low risk; 7-12 = Medium risk; 13-25 = High risk</p>
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RISK / BENEFIT ASSESSMENT KEY	
<p>GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF RISK / BENEFIT ASSESSMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An element of risk is an essential part of children’s development through play • This process focuses on the benefits to children and the risks to children • The reasons (benefits) give the context from which to judge the risk • Benefits must be great enough to warrant the associated level of risk and be maximised without creating unnecessary risk • Risks should be minimised without losing major benefits • Risk Benefit Assessments should capture the risks, the benefits and the reasons for the judgements of safety • Risk Benefit Assessments are a useful planning tool, or decision making tool as well as a supporting document to demonstrate a considered approach <p><i>“Play is great for children’s well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risks, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool”</i> Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 2012</p> <p>GENERAL BENEFITS</p> <p>G1 – Strengthens the community G2 – Saves money / resources / work G3 – Encourages more people to play G4 – Provides good role models G5 - Respect for nature & conservation</p>	<p>PHYSICAL BENEFITS: Improved: P1 – Co-ordination P2 – Fine motor skills P3 – Gross motor skills P4 – Strength P5 – Stamina – cardiovascular & aerobic fitness</p> <p>MENTAL BENEFITS: Improved: M1 – Problem solving skills M2 – Decision making skills M3 – Risk awareness & judgement (physical & emotional risks) M4 – Sense of self / autonomous thinking M5 – Independence M6 – Sense of place in the world / belonging M7 – Understanding of, and connection to, the world M8 – Social skills – communication, negotiation, relationship building M9 - Responsibility / looking after each other M10 – Awareness of other people M11 – Interest for understanding more</p> <p>EMOTIONAL BENEFITS: Improved: E1 – Confidence E2 – Resilience E3 – Recognition of emotions & ability to respond appropriately E4 – Ability to work through emotions E5 – Feeling of controlling one’s own life</p>

**PHOENIX CANOE CLUB & OUTDOOR CENTRE – RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – FOREST SKILLS ACTIVITIES
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HAZARD / RISK TO WHOM	PROBABILITY X SEVERITY	ACTION / RISK CONTROL MEASURES	REVISED RISK RATING P X S	RISK / BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (REFER TO KEY ON PAGE 2 OF ASSESSMENT)
Forest Skills activities				
General Risk - non-specific activities Staff, Volunteers, participants.	1 x 1 = 1 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure work area site is checked prior to participants arriving for dangers in horizontal and vertical planes • Ensure Forest School Team are fully briefed on activities taking place • Ensure all tools, craft materials, equipment required is packed and checked • Ensure First Aid and Burns Kit are packed and checked • Ensure emergency clothing suitable for group are packed and checked • Ensure VHF radios or mobile phones are fully charged and working • Ensure participants are welcomed, briefed for the session activities and participate in a group risk and safety agreement • FS Leader to take "Safety Briefing Sheet" and Planning Sheet for each activity planned • After session participants have left site, ensure work area site is checked, tools and equipment cleaned and stored • If needed update First Aid / Incident Accident Book and notify people required by the policy 	1 x 1 = 1 Low	G3, G5, M3, M5, M7, M9, M10, E5
Trips and slips Staff, Volunteers, participants	3 x 3 = 9 Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief all participants to watch out for mud, puddles, tree roots, uneven ground, holes etc. • Dangerous areas to be roped / coned off or marked with flags 	2 x 2 = 4 Low	G2, G3, G5, P3, M2, M3, M7, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5

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Climbing / falls from height Staff, Volunteers, participants	3 x 4 = 12 Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants that they can only climb trees when an adult is present and feet no higher than they can reach standing on the ground Check tree for rotting or loose branches and check around base for hazards. Ensure no one stands directly below the tree climber Brief all participants on the dangers of falling off / no pushing etc. on trees, logs etc 	2 x 4 = 8 Medium	G5, P1, P3, P4, P5, M1, M2, M3, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2
Water / drowning Staff, Volunteers, participants	1 x 4 = 4 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants on the dangers of falling in the water. Keep away from the reservoir! If fallen in, stand up, turn to shore and walk out – report to FS Leader 	1 x 4 = 4 Low	G5, M2, M3, M9, M10, E5
Running / injury Staff, Volunteers, participants	2 x 3 = 6 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants to be careful when moving through wooded areas to avoid collisions with branches and twigs, especially around the eyes and face. Participants to be briefed on no running in woodland Be aware of brambles, nettles and barbed wire fences and wear protective long sleeves and trousers Make sure the participants are aware of the extra hazards posed when things are being carried Ensure participants are carrying tools appropriately 	1 x 3 = 3 Low	G3, G5, P1, P3, P5, M3, M4, M5, M7, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5
Public access Staff, Volunteers, participants	2 x 1 = 2 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all youth participants on “stranger danger” Brief all participants how to behave around dogs and dog walkers in area Brief participants to be polite to members of the public if they need to communicate with them 	2 x 1 = 2 Low	G1, G3, M2, M3, M5, M8, M9, M10, E1, E3, E5

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Separation from group Staff, Volunteers, participants	2 x 1 = 2 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors to count heads regularly Participants to be briefed on finding their way back to main camp or POC. Follow the procedure set out in the Forest Skills handbook 	2 x 1 = 2 Low	G1, G3, M2, M3, M5, M8, M9, M10, E1, E3, E5
Equipment / injuries Staff, volunteers, participants	2 x 3 = 6 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing provided on the dangers of planks, crates, poles, hooks, ropes All users should demonstrate safe technique and handling of equipment. Use, transport and store all tools in line with the advice in the Forest Skills handbook 	1 x 3 = 3 Low	G3, P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, M5, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5
Carrying / dragging Staff, volunteers, participants	2 x 3 = 6 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants on safe lifting practices - bend knees, straight back, slide and glide, care and share Children can carry sticks on their own if shorter than their arm length Longer sticks no longer than they are tall can be dragged behind them Heavy sticks must be carried between two or more people Ensure that participants are aware of the hazards associated carrying and dragging sticks and logs. Understand the importance of clear communication when working with other people 	1 x 3 = 3 Low	G2, G3, P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, M5, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5

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<p>Using Sticks and Stones</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, participants</p>	<p>2 x 3 = 6 Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticks and stones must not be thrown unless part of a supervised activity • Using sticks as swords / toys must be kept below chest height and played carefully and without force • Participants to be briefed about dangers of injuries to head and body 	<p>1 x 3 = 3 Low</p>	<p>G2, G3, P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, M5, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5</p>
<p>Fires & Cooking</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, participants</p>	<p>3 x 4 = 12 Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fires are sited in areas where they will not be a fire risk to trees or harm the environment. • All fires to be lit in metal fire pits or Kelly kettles • Brief all participants on safe use of fire site, wood collection, “respect” kneeling position in front of fire, use of gloves, walk around outside of fire circle, don’t step or lean over fires, etc • Ensure emergency water bucket or fire blanket available nearby • Ensure First Aid and Burns kit available • Ensure staff supervision suitable for the age and experience of the group • Make sure participants wash hands at each stage of preparing, cooking and eating food • Ensure all food prepared is fully cooked before eating • Check Parent Permission Forms for any information for dietary requirements • Ensure fires are extinguished and ashes disposed of – leave no trace! 	<p>2 x 4 = 8 Medium</p>	<p>G1, G2, P1, P2, M1, M2, M3, M5, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, E1, E2, E5</p>

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<p>Natural crafts</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, participants</p>	<p>2 x 3 = 6 Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief participants No Picking or Licking • Brief participants on correct use of tools, “blood bubble” area for sharp tools • Ensure sufficient space and working room is available • Selection and safe handling of natural materials 	<p>1 x 3 = 3 Low</p>	<p>G3, G5, P1, P2, M1, M2, M3, M5, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, E1, E2, E5</p>
<p>Playing games</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, participants</p>	<p>2 x 3 = 6 Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure games are suitable for the age and experience of the participants and rules are agreed and applied • Brief participants on games area and what to do in the event of getting lost – consider use of whistles / “1,2,3 where are you” • Count heads regularly at intervals to suit age group • Ensure good supervision for scavenger hunts / wide games to suit age group 	<p>2 x 2 = 4 Low</p>	<p>G3, G5, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2, E3, E4, E5</p>
<p>Nature exploration</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, participants</p>	<p>2 x 3 = 6 Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief participants No Picking or Licking. • Brief participants on avoidance of skin irritations – nettles, brambles, thistles, thorns etc. • Brief participants on avoidance of contact with glass and sharp objects • Brief participants on the area that they can use and any off-limits areas and what to do in the event of getting lost – consider use of whistles • Staff to rope / cone off dangerous areas as needed • Count heads regularly at intervals to suit age group • Brief participants on no running in woods 	<p>2 x 2 = 4 Low</p>	<p>G1, G3, G5, P1, P3, P5, M2, M3, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, E1, E2, E3, E4, E5</p>

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Building dens & shelters Staff, volunteers, participants	2 x 3 = 6 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check site is suitable for den building – sharps, dog faeces, falling branches etc. • Brief participants on finding and transporting suitable branches – use wood on ground only, no cutting or breaking off live branches • Brief participants on appropriate styles of den and how to build safely and avoiding injury to self and others with sticks • Check finished shelter before use by group. Adapt if needed to make safe 	2 x 2 = 4 Low	G3, G5, P1, P2, P5, M1, M2, M3, M4, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, E1, E2, E4, E5
Rope swings Staff, volunteers, participants	3 x 4 = 12 Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only use rope swings set up specifically for the group • Check ropes for damage / wear and suitable thickness • Check appropriate knots are used to secure to tree and add a solid stick or knot as a seat at a height to avoid damage to feet but not more than 30cm gap between feet and floor • Ensure area around is clear of hazards to swinging participant at tree and ground level 	2 x 4 = 8 Medium	G3, G5, P1, P3, P4, P5, M2, M3, M8, M9, M10, E1, E2, E3

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Tools & Equipment				
Equipment checks Staff, volunteers, participants	3 x 4 = 12 Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors to check all equipment in use is serviceable for the activity. Participants should be encouraged to check their own equipment to instil a “personal safety ethos” All faulty equipment is to be removed from use, identified with a tag and logged into the equipment folder Team Building equipment, slacklines, hammocks or shelter structures should be checked by the staff in charge of the activity before use by the participants and any necessary adjustments made. 	2 x 3 = 6 Low	G2, G4, M3, M9, M11, E1, E5
Use of tools Staff, volunteers, participants	3 x 4 = 12 Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools such as knives, saws, axes, billhooks, drills can only be used following a full safety brief and instructions how to use, walk with, pass, place and use of glove(s) Use of tools is to be fully supervised by a Forest Skills Leader with support from other adults, in ratio to suit the age group and experience of the group Safe area (blood bubble) to be formed around each participant two arm and tool lengths away from anyone else and participants instructed to stop using tools if the others come too close Ensure tools are kept in one place and knives and sharp tools are securely stored Ensure tools are fully cleaned and maintained before storing at POC Ensure First Aid Kit and first aider are on work area site 	2 x 4 = 8 Medium	G1, G3, G4, G5, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, M1, M2, M3, M5, M8, M9, M10, M11, E1, E2, E4, E5

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Weather Conditions				
Lightning can cause severe injuries Staff, Volunteers, participants	1 x 5 = 5 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All land based activities cancelled or halted during severe weather conditions which include lightning. Return to building. 	1 x 5 = 5 Low	G5, M2, M3, M9, M10, E3
Injury or ill health caused due to exposure to severe weather conditions Staff, volunteers, participants	1 x 4 = 4 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors are to ensure appropriate clothing is worn and that participants are able to change soon after becoming wet/cold. Brief participants to wear long sleeved clothing to protect arms and legs. Staff to erect suitable tarp cover to provide protection from inclement weather 	1 x 4 = 4 Low	G1, G2, G3, G5, M2, M3, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5
Hot weather Hyperthermia/sunburn Staff, volunteers, participants	2 x 3 = 6 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants advised to take precautions against over-heating / sun. Course users advised to avoid dehydration. A source of cool, clean and potable water in sufficient quantities is provided Staff to advise use of suitable sun protection Staff to erect suitable tarp cover to provide protection from sunlight 	2 x 2 = 4 Low	G1, G2, G3, G5, M2, M3, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5
Cold weather Hypothermia Staff, volunteers, participants	2 x 3 = 6 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are to wear clothing appropriate for the prevailing conditions. Mobile phone or radio to be carried by the FSL Main building is short distance away from the location All participants should have a dry change of clothing and spare footwear. 	2 x 2 = 4 Low	G1, G2, G3, G5, M2, M3, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5
Strong Winds Staff, volunteers, participants	2 x 5 = 10 Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong winds can be damaging to trees and dislodge dead wood from the canopy. Ensure activities are stopped and participants moved to place of safety in case of high winds 	1 x 4 = 4 Medium	G1, G2, G3, G5, M2, M3, M9, M10, E1, E2, E5

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Illness From Existing Medical Conditions				
Issues arising from pre-existing medical conditions Staff, volunteers, participants	1 x 4 = 4 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Permission Form requires details of any disability, medical, dietary or behavioural requirements and any medicines needed. Medical questions asked prior to activity • Ensure Forest Skills Leader staff and volunteers are briefed on declared requirements • Trained first aiders on site at all times with First Aid Kit • Follow Emergency Action Plan if needed 	1 x 4 = 4 Low	M7, M8, M9, M10, E2, E3, E5
Conserve areas of use				
Ecological Impact Staff, volunteers, participants, public	2 x 1 = 2 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief participants on importance of protecting the area from damage caused by activities to woodland ground, field, shrub, canopy layers, nesting birds, footpath and habitats • Ensure fires are properly supervised and kept off the ground, properly extinguished and ashes disposed of – leave no trace • Consider ways to limit impact of compaction, pollution and denudation affecting the FS area – review POC WH Ecological Impact Assessment regularly and promote good stewardship to all staff, helpers and participants 	2 x 1 = 2 Low	G2, G3, G4, G5, M3, M6, M8, M9, M10, E2
Buildings and Compound				
Vehicles Staff, volunteers, participants, public	1 x 5 = 5 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all vehicles on site are driven slowly in the compound area and are aware of Centre Users especially when reversing. • Ensure vehicles are parked neatly and away from the activity areas with their engines off 	1 x 5 = 5 Low	G1, G2, M2, M8, M9, M10, E1, E5

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Fire Staff, volunteers, participants	1 x 5 = 5 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all participants are aware of fire drill, emergency exits and Emergency Assembly Point • Ensure all fire alarms, detectors and extinguishers are checked and in good working order 	1 x 5 = 5 Low	G1, G2, M2, M8, M9, M10, E1, E5
Catering Staff, volunteers, participants	1 x 4 = 4 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all participants are aware of the need to wash hands before eating or drinking • Staff to ensure all food preparation surfaces are kept clean and tidy and fridge / cupboards are clean and stocked with food and drink within its “use by or best before” date 	1 x 4 = 4 Low	G1, G2, G4, G5, M3, M9, M10, E5
Public access Staff, volunteers, participants, public	1 x 1 = 1 Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure buildings are locked when not occupied • Ensure valuables are kept in the locked building 	1 x 1 = 1 Low	G1, G2, M9, E2, E5

NOTES:
Checked and renewed 07.02.25 PA/MU