



Adventure

Northumberland

Combined Risk Assessments

Coasteering | Sea Kayaking | Kayak Coasteering | Rock Climbing | Abseil

Version 3.1

Issued: 1st April 2025

Updated 23rd April 2025

Review: Annually



At **Adventure Northumberland**, the safety of our participants, staff, and the general public is of the highest priority. All activities we deliver are guided by robust risk management principles, national best practices, and technical oversight from experienced professionals.

We operate in a range of dynamic outdoor environments including coastline, cliffs, and open water. Each of these presents unique challenges, and we manage them through a combination of:

- Qualified and experienced instructors
- Regular and thorough site-specific training
- High-quality, well-maintained equipment
- Clear and consistent safety procedures
- Dynamic risk assessment throughout each session

Risk Assessment Overview

Each activity undertaken by Adventure Northumberland is supported by a **Generic Risk Assessment**, which outlines the foreseeable hazards, control measures, and emergency procedures relevant to that specific activity.

Activities covered include (but are not limited to):

- **Coasteering**
- **Sea Kayaking**
- **Kayak Coasteering**
- **Rock Climbing**
- **Abseiling**

These generic risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation, environmental conditions, and operational experience. In addition, **Dynamic Risk Assessments** are conducted by instructors on-site before and during each session to address real-time risks such as weather, sea state, group ability, or unforeseen hazards.

Technical Oversight and Staff Competence

All activities are led by instructors with relevant **National Governing Body (NGB)** qualifications or equivalent in-house sign-off where no formal qualification



exists. Additionally, staff undergo site-specific training and are **signed off by our Technical Advisors** before delivering high-risk activities independently.

All lead instructors hold a minimum of a **16-hour Outdoor First Aid** certificate and participate in continuous professional development and monitoring.

Participant Safety Briefing

Before any session begins, all participants receive a **comprehensive safety briefing** including:

- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Emergency signals and protocols
- Environmental hazards
- Expected behavior and group movement
- Procedures for incidents or unexpected events

We believe that **informed participants** are safer participants, and we promote open communication and questions during these briefings. Risk assessments are available to all clients and can be viewed on our website along with insurance and other legal documents.

Adventure Northumberland – Coasteering Risk Assessment

Location: Howick Haven to Craster including Rumbling Kern, Cullernose Point and Black Hole, Northumberland

Activity: Coasteering

Assessor: Michael Curry

Date: 1st April 2025

Review: Annually

1. Hazard Identification and Risk Controls

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Drowning	Participants, Staff	- All participants wear CE-approved buoyancy aids - Group led by trained and qualified guides - Emergency response plan in place	Low
Cold Water Shock / Hypothermia	Participants	- Winter-grade wetsuits (5mm) - Pre-activity checks for suitable clothing - Activity curtailed in extreme weather - Group monitoring throughout	Low
Slips, Trips, Falls	Participants, Staff	- Safety brief before each feature - Helmets and sturdy footwear required - Spotting and support by instructors	Medium

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Impact Injuries (Jumping)	Participants	- Features assessed by staff before use - Water depth checked before jumps - Proper jump technique demonstrated and enforced	Medium
Tidal Changes / Cut-Offs	Participants, Staff	- Activity planned around tides - Staff trained in local tidal behavior - Dynamic risk assessment conducted before and during activity	Low
Entrapment in Caves / Gulleys	Participants	- Staff familiar with all features - Features like "Death Gully" avoided during unsuitable tide/swell - Group management to limit numbers per section	Low
Fatigue / Exhaustion	Participants	- Regular breaks - Clear session limits - Leaders monitor participant energy levels	Low
Panic in Water	Participants	- All participants confirmed as swimmers - Close supervision during water-based features - Calm and controlled instruction at all times	Medium

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Struck by Waves	Participants	- Use of protected entry/exit points - Avoid swell-heavy zones like Cullernose in rough conditions - Position instructors for support	Medium
Equipment Failure	Participants, Staff	- Equipment checked pre/post use - All PPE logged and maintained - Faulty gear immediately removed	Low
Medical Conditions	Participants	- Pre-session medical check - Staff carry first aid kit and phone - Emergency contact info collected in advance	Low
Lost / Missing Persons	Participants	- Group kept together with headcounts - Late-back procedures in place - Staff with mobile phone and shore contact available	Low

2. Emergency Procedures

- **Minor injuries:** Treated on-site by trained first aider.
- **Major injuries / evacuation:** Call 999; inform Adventure Northumberland base; manage group safety.

- **Missing person:** Follow emergency protocol, alert coastguard if required.
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3. Staff Qualifications

- Minimum: Sign-off from Technical Advisor + 16hr Outdoor First Aid
 - Trainees under supervision with in-house sign-off
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4. PPE Required

- 5mm wetsuit
 - CE-approved helmet
 - CE-approved buoyancy aid
 - Hard-soled footwear
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5. Additional Notes

Dynamic Risk Assessment: A constant dynamic risk assessment is ongoing throughout; adjustments may be made based on group abilities and prevailing conditions.

- **Dynamic Risk Assessment** is continuous throughout the activity.
- Group size kept within 8:1 ratio (Instructor: Participant).
- All participants briefed on hand signals, emergency contact protocols, and expected behavior before entering the water.
- Routes are not fixed, guides will use their discretion and improvise as opportunities arise. The nature of coasteering means a lot of features are improvised although safety remains paramount.

The images below show some of the frequently used features

		
Smash Alley	Rumbling Kearn Traverse	Rumbling Kearn Tunnel
		
Example Jump Zones		
		
Crawl Through @ The Coffin	Exploring Caves	Cullernose Point

Adventure Northumberland – Sea Kayaking Risk Assessment

Location: Craster Harbour to Cullernose Point and Dunstanburgh Castle, Northumberland

Activity: Sea Kayaking (Sit-on-Top Kayaks)

Assessor: Michael Curry

Date: 1st April 2025

Review: Annually

1. Hazard Identification and Control Measures

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Drowning	Participants, Staff	- CE-approved buoyancy aids worn at all times - Sit-on-top kayaks reduce entrapment risk - All staff hold British Canoeing or equivalent qualifications	Low
Cold Water / Hypothermia	Participants	- Wetsuits issued to all clients - Sit-on kayaks result in greater exposure to splash and wind—sessions adjusted accordingly - Group monitored constantly	Low

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Capsize / Falling Off Kayak	Participants	- Sit-on-top design allows easy remounting - Self-rescue techniques taught - Group kept within safe distance of shore and instructor	Low
Strain from Paddling	Participants	- Proper paddle technique taught - Session route and pace adapted to group ability - Rest breaks planned	Low
Collision with Other Water Users	Participants, Staff	- High-visibility helmets/clothing used - Stay out of main navigation channels - Pre-brief includes etiquette and awareness	Low
Rip Currents / Tidal Races	Participants	- Instructors aware of local tidal features	Medium

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
		(Castle Point, Little Carr) - Route planned to avoid hazards - Emergency towlines carried	
Sudden Weather Changes	Participants, Staff	- Weather checked prior to session - Sit-on-tops easier to exit in emergency - Dynamic risk assessment ongoing throughout activity	Medium
Getting Lost / Separated	Participants	- Group stays together with clear visual contact - Staff carry phone/VHF - Late-back procedure in place	Low
Launch / Recovery Falls	Participants, Staff	- Stable sit-on-tops reduce instability - Launch/landing areas checked for	Low

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
		slip hazards - Staff support clients physically if needed	
Equipment Failure	Participants	- Sit-on kayaks inspected for cracks, loose fittings - Spare paddles carried - Equipment logged and maintained as per policy	Low
Medical Emergencies	Participants	- Pre-activity checks for health issues - Staff carry first aid and phone - Emergency contacts and procedures reviewed in pre-brief	Low
Wildlife Interaction	Participants	- Passive observation policy - Avoid haul-outs and sensitive breeding areas	Low

2. Emergency Procedures

- **Capsize or fall off:** Sit-on-tops allow quick and easy re-entry; instructor assists if needed.
 - **Medical emergency:** Evacuate to shore, call 999 if needed, notify Adventure Northumberland base.
 - **Lost person:** Late-back and missing-person protocol followed. Coastguard contacted if necessary.
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3. Staff Qualifications

- **Lead Instructor:** British Canoeing Sea Kayak Leader or Coach, trained in sit-on-top and coastal environments or sign-off from Technical Advisor
 - **Assistants:** Under supervision, site-specific sign-off required
 - **All staff:** Current 16hr outdoor first aid, trained in local risk features
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4. Equipment and PPE

- Sit-on-top kayak (stable, open design—reduces entrapment risk)
 - CE-approved helmet (where required)
 - CE-approved buoyancy aid
 - Wetsuit or appropriate thermal clothing
 - Hard-soled footwear
 - Optional: paddle leash, dry bag, emergency kit
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5. Notes

- **Ratios:** Max 8 participants per instructor (adjusted for conditions)
- **Dynamic Risk Assessment:** Conducted continuously

Wind Speed Operating Limits

To ensure safety and session quality, activities will not proceed when wind conditions exceed the following thresholds:

- **Onshore Winds:**
 - Maximum sustained wind: **Beaufort Force 2**
 - Maximum gusts: **Beaufort Force 4**
- **Offshore Winds:**
 - Maximum sustained wind: **Beaufort Force 2**

Monitoring and Assessment

- Wind forecasts must be checked at least **twice** on the day of the session: once in the morning and again immediately before launch.
- Instructors will assess actual conditions on site using real-time observations and anemometers where needed.
- If wind conditions are marginal or expected to worsen during the session, the activity must be modified, relocated, or cancelled at the discretion of the lead instructor.

Rationale

High wind speeds significantly increase:

- Risk of group separation
- Capsize probability
- Fatigue from paddling against resistance
- Loss of control in coastal surf or swell zones

Consent:

All participants must complete a declaration and safety briefing prior to launch

Adventure Northumberland – Kayak Coasteering Risk Assessment**Location:** Black Hole, and Coastline North of Craster, Northumberland**Activity:** Kayak Coasteering (paddle-accessed coasteering activity)**Assessor:** Michael Curry**Date:** 1st April 2025**Review:** Annually

1. Description of Activity

Kayak Coasteering involves paddling to a remote location (e.g. Black Hole) via sit-on-top kayaks and then engaging in coasteering activities including rock traverses, swims, and controlled jumps. This combines hazards of both kayaking and coasteering in a dynamic marine environment.

2. Hazard Identification and Control Measures

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Drowning	Participants, Staff	- CE-certified buoyancy aids worn throughout - Sit-on-top kayaks used to reduce entrapment risk - All staff qualified and first aid trained	Low
Cold Water / Hypothermia	Participants	- 5mm wetsuits provided - Activity limited by weather and water temp	Low

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
		- Dynamic assessment prior to launching	
Capsize / Entrapment	Participants	- Sit-on-top kayaks for easy remount - Rescue drills completed in training - Group stays close to shore for safety	Low
Impact from Jumping / Wash-offs	Participants	- Staff inspect jump spots before use - Briefing and demonstration for proper jump technique - Water depth checked dynamically	Medium
Tidal Changes / Swell at Black Hole	Participants	- Tide and sea state checked before session - Activity cancelled or relocated if swell or tide makes Black	Medium

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
		Hole entry unsafe	
Strainers / Underwater Hazards	Participants	- Known strainer risk mitigated by timing entry/exit with low tide - Avoid submerged bridge features at high tide - Staff position to intercept incidents	Medium
Slips, Trips, Falls (on rock)	Participants	- Helmets and firm-soled shoes mandatory - Staff lead and assist during climbs - Movement on wet rock minimized	Medium
Fatigue / Panic	Participants	- Clear brief and progressive build-up to jumps/swims - Frequent rests on kayaks or ledges - Group	Low

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
		monitored continuously	
Kayak Drift / Loss of Equipment	Group	- Kayaks secured or beached above tide line - Paddles tethered or stored together - Staff equipped to tow or retrieve if needed	Low
Medical Emergency	Participants	- First aid kits carried on water and at site - Emergency contact procedures in place - Closest access point pre-identified for rescue	Low

3. Emergency Procedures

- **Minor injury:** Treated onsite, session adapted or participant removed by kayak
- **Major injury or evacuation:** Kayaks used to transport casualty to accessible egress point; 999 and base notified

- **Lost participant:** Group kept tight with regular headcounts; incident triggers emergency search protocol
 - **Swamping / group evacuation:** Raft up kayaks, guide to safe landing zone or exit to nearby beach
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4. Staff Qualifications

- Lead: British Canoeing Coach or Sea Kayak Leader or sign-off from technical advisor
 - Coasteering elements overseen by staff signed-off by Tech Advisor
 - First Aid: 16hr outdoor minimum
 - All staff trained in dynamic risk assessment and site-specific hazards at Black Hole
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5. PPE Required

- Sit-on-top kayak
 - Paddle, leash, buoyancy aid
 - 5mm wetsuit
 - CE-approved helmet
 - Hard-soled footwear
 - Optional: gloves, dry bag with emergency kit
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6. Additional Notes

Dynamic Risk Assessment: A constant dynamic risk assessment is ongoing throughout; adjustments may be made based on group abilities and prevailing conditions.

- **Tide Timing is Critical:** Black Hole access and safety depend on tide height and swell. Avoid if large swell or poor visibility inside the gulley.

- **Jumping Restrictions:** Staff must verify depth and entry safety immediately prior to use.
- **Supervision Ratio:** Max 8:1; reduced if conditions are challenging or group contains less experienced participants.
- **Dynamic Risk Assessment** ongoing from launch through return.

Environmental Wind Limits

Wind Speed Operating Limits

To ensure safety and session quality, activities will not proceed when wind conditions exceed the following thresholds:

- **Onshore Winds:**
 - Maximum sustained wind: **Beaufort Force 2**
 - Maximum gusts: **Beaufort Force 4**
- **Offshore Winds:**
 - Maximum sustained wind: **Beaufort Force 2**

Monitoring and Assessment

- Wind forecasts must be checked at least **twice** on the day of the session: once in the morning and again immediately before launch.
- Instructors will assess actual conditions on site using real-time observations and anemometers where needed.
- If wind conditions are marginal or expected to worsen during the session, the activity must be modified, relocated, or cancelled at the discretion of the lead instructor.

Rationale

High wind speeds significantly increase:

- Risk of group separation
- Capsize probability
- Fatigue from paddling against resistance
- Loss of control in coastal surf or swell zones

Adventure Northumberland – Rock Climbing Risk Assessment

Location: Corby's Crag, Near Alnwick, Northumberland

Activity: Outdoor Rock Climbing (Top-rope and Bottom-rope)

Assessor: Michael Curry

Date: 1st April 2025

Next Review: Annually

1. Site Description

Corby's Crag is a sandstone outcrop offering multiple single-pitch climbs up to ~12 meters. The site is accessible by foot and is suitable for beginner to intermediate top/bottom rope climbing. Weather, rock condition, and land access must be checked before sessions.

2. Hazard Identification and Control Measures

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Falls from height	Participants, Staff	- All climbers belayed by trained staff - Harnesses, helmets, and ropes checked before use - Clear instruction on tie-in and belay technique	Low

Rockfall / Loose rock	Participants, Staff	- Helmets worn by all - Route checked for loose rock before use - No climbing under another active climber	Medium
Injuries from equipment misuse	Participants	- Staff supervise all harnessing and knot tying - Only trained staff set up anchors and manage ropes - Ongoing visual checks during activity	Low
Belayer error	Participants	- Staff act as primary belayers or actively supervise participants - Ground anchors used if needed - Belayer training before climbing begins	Low

Ground slips / trips	Participants, Staff	- Area checked for uneven ground and trip hazards - Participants wear sturdy footwear - Clear instruction around rope handling zones	Low
Weather exposure / heat / cold	Participants, Staff	- Weather forecast checked before trip - Group briefed to bring appropriate clothing - Shelter and water available	Low
Insect bites / stings / animals	Participants	- Participants briefed to avoid wasps/nests - First aid for bites/stings available - Avoid leaving food exposed	Low

Access route hazards	Participants, Staff	- Route to crag checked in advance - Group briefed on walking safely with equipment - Group kept together	Low
Medical issues	Participants	- Pre-session checks for medical needs - Staff carry first aid kit and mobile - Emergency access identified prior to session	Low
Anchor/rope failure	Participants	- All equipment meets EN/UIAA standards - Anchors double-checked and set up by qualified staff - Rope	Low

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
		condition checked and inspected regularly	

3. Emergency Procedures

- **Minor injuries:** Treated on site; participant may continue or be withdrawn
- **Major incident:** Activity stopped; emergency services contacted (999); Adventure Northumberland base notified
- **Evacuation:** Group moved to car park; casualty evacuated by staff or emergency services depending on severity
- **Lost child:** Staff conduct area sweep; emergency contact called; police notified if required

4. Staff Qualifications

- Lead: Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI) or higher
- Assistants: In-house trained and supervised
- All: 16hr Outdoor First Aid minimum
- Technical Advisor sign-off on new anchors and set-up methods

5. PPE and Equipment

- CE/UIAA approved harness, helmet, rope
- Anchor system (slings, karabiners, rope protectors)
- Sturdy footwear and appropriate clothing
- First aid kit and emergency phone

6. Additional Notes

Dynamic Risk Assessment: A constant dynamic risk assessment is ongoing throughout; adjustments may be made based on group abilities and prevailing conditions.

- **Supervision Ratio:** 1 instructor to max 8 participants on rope. Additional supervision for larger groups
- **Weather Monitoring:** Climbing suspended in rain or high winds; alternative activity or postponement if unsafe
- **Risk Communication:** Pre-session safety brief covers hazards, signals, and expectations

Staff Qualifications

- **Lead Instructor:** RCI / SPA or sign-off from Technical Advisor
- **Assistants / Trainees** operate under supervision and working toward relevant qualifications
- **First Aid:** All staff hold a minimum 16hr Outdoor First Aid certificate
- **Site-Specific Training** completed for each activity location
- **Sign-Off by Technical Advisor** is required for all staff delivering activities where no NGB exists or where site-specific conditions require additional oversight
- Staff competence is maintained via observation, refresher training, and logged practical experience.

Adventure Northumberland – Abseiling Risk Assessment (Man-Made Structures)

Location: Man-made structures (e.g. towers, buildings, viaducts, indoor climbing walls, castle walls)

Activity: Abseiling (fixed anchor systems, single descent line)

Assessor: Michael Curry

Date: 23rd April 2025

Review: Annually

1. Hazard Identification and Control Measures

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Control Measures	Residual Risk
Fall from height	Participants, Staff	- Designated edge zones - Participants clipped to safety line before edge - Staff monitoring at all times	Low
Anchor/structure failure	Participants	- Anchors inspected & signed off by competent person - Structures risk assessed & load-bearing certified	Low
Incorrect equipment use	Participants	- Harnessing done by trained staff - Belay devices set up by instructor - Pre-use checks	Low
Equipment failure	Participants	- All PPE meets CE/UIAA standards - Logged inspections - Edge protection in place	Low
Edge slips or missteps	Participants	- Secure edge area with handrails/ropes - Clear brief before approach - Staff assist at edge	Medium
Panic/refusal mid-abseil	Participants	- Pre-session reassurance and brief - Backup belay system - Verbal guidance during descent	Low
Rope burn	Participants	- Gloves recommended - Controlled descent by instructor if needed	Low
Overhanging objects or drop zones	Participants	- Area below kept clear - Marshals and signage used to manage public access	Low

Weather exposure (outdoor sites)	Participants, Staff	- Weather checked before session - Activities paused in wind/rain extremes	Medium
Public interference	Participants, Staff	- Site perimeter secured - Barriers and signage in place - Public kept away from edge/top	Medium
Medical issues (e.g. fainting)	Participants	- Pre-session screening - First aid kit on-site - Rescue protocols rehearsed	Low

2. Emergency Procedures

- Minor injury: Treated on-site; participant withdrawn from activity.
- Major incident: Activity stopped; emergency services contacted (999); site manager and base informed.
- Stuck or panicked participant: Lowered via backup line or instructor-assisted descent.
- Lost communication or public interference: Site secured and additional staff deployed.

3. Staff Qualifications

- Lead Instructor: Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI) or IRATA Level 1+ / In-house sign-off
- Technical Lead (setup): IRATA Level 2+/RCI with structural rigging experience
- All Staff: 16hr Outdoor First Aid minimum
- Volunteers or event staff: Briefed and supervised

4. PPE and Equipment

- CE/UIAA approved climbing harness, helmet, and ropes
- Belay device (e.g., figure 8, ATC) with backup safety
- Cowstails/lanyards for edge management
- Gloves (recommended)
- Radios or whistle for communication

- Anchor slings, karabiners, edge protectors
- Barriers/signage for public safety
- First aid kit and emergency phone/radio

5. Additional Notes

- Setup Sign-Off: All anchors and rigging must be signed off by technical lead before use
- Dynamic Risk Assessment: Ongoing throughout the event
- Briefings: All participants receive safety instructions before approach
- Public Events: Additional risk controls for crowd management, signage, and visibility