

Embercombe Risk Assessment

Woodland Activities

Description of main hazards and hazardous events:

Low branches, injury to eyes and face. Trips or slips. Fallen branches, leaf litter, uneven ground. Steep ground. Broken bones. Scatting in the woods, infection, illness due to poor hygiene. Lymes disease carried by ticks. Heavy lifting causing muscular injury. Sharp sticks, eye injury. Collapse of shelter due to poor construction. Crushing injuries. Sleeping in the woods, cold weather, hypothermia. Injury or illness. Woods have poor access for emergency services. No mobile reception. Delay caused by this. Falling branches or trees. Reaction to poisonous plants through contact, consumption or inhalation of spores. Infection, illness due to contact with scat or animal remains. Injury to skin or below skin from blade. Knives stored in correctly or dropped on the ground. Moving around the woods at night. Poor light or tiredness cause misjudgement. Hazards hard to spot. Injury, bruising, broken bones. Stress caused by fear of the woods. Getting lost from the group, stress. Handling wood, cuts or splinters on hands. Infections. Cooking in the woods using basic facilities, infection or illness due to poor hygiene. Burns to the skin, contact with hot water, food or fire. Illness due to food poisoning.

Persons exposed: Employees Volunteers Clients / Public
Contractors Vulnerable groups

Existing controls:

Moving around: Low branches removed from major pathways. When on minor pathways ensure branches are not flicked back. First Aid box in base camp. Weather and ground conditions considered in dynamic risk assessment. Suitable footwear advised. Paths cleared of large trip hazards.

Building shelters and sleeping out: High risk branches are removed. A site visit is made before the activities. Shelters must be placed in suitable locations. Awareness raised about checking for ticks. If ticks are found people are advised to report it to their GP. Tick removal tools are available. Shelter building is done in groups so heavy branches can be lifted together. Group are monitored to see that they are aware of other people as they move sticks around. Checks should be made that sharp points are sawn off. This is especially so when inside shelters. Group advised to choose suitable materials. Load bearing timber must be inspected by group facilitators. Attention is paid to all members of the group. Campfires, warm drinks and blankets are provided. Sleeping out kit is inspected for condition and suitability.

Emergencies: Facilitators should have a radio link to the rest of the site. If appropriate casualty is moved out of the woods. If moving a casualty is considered dangerous then emergency services should be advised about access. A site visit is made before the activities.

Foraging: Facilitators should have a good knowledge of poisonous plants. Water and soap is provided for washing hands after the toilet and before eating.

Using knives: Participants introduced to looking after their knife. Instructions are given regarding how to pass knives, and never to leave a knife lying around. Tools are packed away unless needed. Facilitators continuously monitor the energy levels and light conditions. Knives should not be used if the conditions are not suitable.

Night games and walks: Facilitators should know how many participants are present and check regularly. Groups given time to develop their night vision. Emphasis should be on walking slowly. Whole site is fenced. Suitable instruction given to boundary of activities. Staff supervision. Group establishes a call.

Cooking: Gloves are available for handling hot items. Fire pits and cooking equipment must provide a stable place for pans. Tripods can be used. Food temperature should be checked by facilitators before serving. Hot food or water should be handled with extreme care.

Are there any further controls recommended?

An audit of the most common poisonous plants in the woodland should be made. Individuals who are particularly sensitive or allergic to particular plants should be identified before the activities. All fires that are regularly used for cooking should have their own trivet.

Summary of Safety Advice

Where possible trip hazards should be removed.
Consider the recent and current weather conditions. Are there extra risks?
Activities involving knife work should be restricted to the daytime.
Establish the physical boundaries of the camp or activities.
Branches, sticks or anything else should not be thrown about in the woods.
If cooking, fire pits must be set up so that food and water are stable.
If cooking, facilities to wash hands need to be provided.

Other risk assessments you should read; [Campfires](#), [General Site](#)

Assessment by: Rob Kendall

Job title: Site Manager

Signed:



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