

UBMBC Guidelines for Canyoners

Canyoning is physically demanding and typically involves off track walking in rugged terrain, steep climbs and descents, abseiling, swimming, negotiating slippery rocks and carrying a backpack containing ropes, a wetsuit and abseiling gear. A high standard of fitness and agility is required. Canyoners must be comfortable with exposed drops and aware of safety issues. They must be prepared to follow the leader's instructions and co-operate.

Members who participate in canyoning must indicate that they have read and accept the Canyoning Waiver by checking the box on the club web site. The waiver describes the risks associated with canyoning. The waiver must be completed annually.

Most canyons are accessed by bushwalking so Guidelines for Walkers applies to canyoning. This includes carrying a first aid kit and emergency contact form in your backpack.

Joining the UBMBC Canyoning Program

Experienced canyoners should discuss their recent canyoning experience with the Canyoning Convenor. If successful you will be accepted into the club program.

Members who are new to canyoning are required to complete the club introductory abseil training program. Before applying for the program, members must complete 3 bushwalks with the Club and a non-abseil canyon such as Wollangambe 1, Wollangambe 2, Rocky Creek, Du Fours, Dargans, Hat Hill or Deep Pass. This enables the walk leader to assess fitness, agility and suitability for canyoning.

Equipment

Members are responsible for the care and maintenance of their own equipment. Climbing or canyoning helmets, harnesses, descenders and carabiners must comply with European or North American standards and be used as intended by the manufacturer. Helmets from other sports are not acceptable.

Members should also have the following:

A safety line or tether
Leather gloves
Spare carabiners
Shoes suitable for slippery surfaces and swimming

A wet suit or thermals
A back pack big enough to carry ropes
A head torch
Prussik Cords
A whistle
Extra Clothing
A knife

Leaders may refuse participation if equipment is missing or damaged

Ropes

The UBMBC does not have ropes. Ropes are supplied by the leader or by group members at the leader's request. The ropes must be in good condition and may be inspected by members. A \$5 fee is paid to the rope owners at the beginning of the trip. This money helps offset the costs of ropes, slings and mallions.

Any damage or wear on ropes should be reported to the leader immediately.

When not in use ropes are to be carried inside back packs. This includes the walk in and out, between abseils and when swimming rivers. The only exception is when anchor points are close to each other. Who carries ropes is decided by the leader.

Ropes will be isolated below the anchor point. (except for the last person who will undo the isolation knot) The leader decides whether the abseil is single rope, double rope or whether team members can choose.

Canyon Safety

ABCDE checks are carried out by every member on every abseil.

1. A the anchor is solid and correctly rigged
2. B harness buckles are tight and correctly rigged
3. C the carabiner is done up (look check, feel check)
4. D the descender is rigged correctly
5. E Everything else – helmet, backpack, gloves, safety line off

Stay at least two body lengths from exposed edges unless you have a safety line attached.

When moving through a canyon do not become isolated. Stay with at least one other person, particularly when swimming or rock scrambling.

Advise the leader if you have any problems: equipment, fatigue, cold, injury or negotiating obstacles
Advise the leader if you identify any hazards: worn anchors, decayed mallions, unstable rocks, carabiners not done up, rope sticking points, slippery surfaces, submerged logs, snakes etc. Call "Rock!" if a rock is dislodged. To avoid dislodged rocks, stay well clear of the area below the abseil unless you are belaying.

The first person down on each abseil may use a French prussik or autoblock.

Canyoners should be proficient in the use of their descender and prussik cords.

The bottom belay person should be alert and concentrate on the abseiler, ready to react.

Helmets are to be worn when abseiling and belaying. The leader may require members to wear helmets on the way in or out of the canyon.

Canyoning

Details of canyons and contact people are listed in the activities program on the club web site. Booking in for a canyon requires commitment, do not withdraw from the trip unless it is an emergency,

Acceptance for the trip is NOT on "first come first served" basis. The leader has the right to accept or refuse participation in the activity based on group requirements and dynamics, difficulty of the canyon and/or other skills specific members may have in order for the trip to be safe and enjoyable.

Advise the leader if you have skills that may be of use: Navigation, medical expertise, rock climbing, knowledge of the canyon

Follow the leader's instructions. The leader decides who sets up the anchors, the order in which members descend each abseil, who belays and who pulls down ropes.

The leader finds the way in, out and through the canyon. Do not go ahead of the leader unless instructed to do so.

Get on and off rope efficiently. Time wasted here can add considerably to the trip.

Co-operate with others and be prepared help with the tasks in the canyon. If requested, give help or advice.

Canyoners should continually upgrade their skills. Each canyon is a learning experience and UBMBC members share their expertise. The club offers a basic training program, skills practice sessions, rescue training and courses with the Australian School of Mountaineering.

Canyons are graded in difficulty from 1 to 5. The grading system is based on a number of factors – length and difficulty of abseils, access to the canyon, difficult starts, swimming, exposure, etc. New canyoners should build experience in easier canyons before attempting difficult ones.

Canyoners should keep a record of the canyons they have done, so they can advise leaders of their experience.

Environment

We aim to have minimal impact on the canyon environment. Walk on rocky areas or established routes and avoid vegetated, moss covered or steep creek banks

Carry out all food scraps and rubbish. Dispose of human waste at least 100m from waterways.

UBMBC does not put bolts in canyons.

Canyon wildlife, birds, yabbies, snakes and lizards should be left undisturbed.

Before the trip clean your footwear and equipment to prevent the spread of soil borne pathogens