SCOUTS BUSHCRAFT

ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT

SHELTER BUILDING

60-minute practical session • Planning, construction, inspection & dismantling

Activity Build a small lean-to or A-frame using approved poles, cordage and covering.	**Participants** Scouts / young people; adapt to age, ability and experience.	**Location** Authorised woodland or outdoor site, inspected before use.	**Duration** 60 minutes
Assessment completed by Name: _____	**Date / review date** _____	**Group / section** _____	**Approval** _____

1. RISK ASSESSMENT – HAZARDS, CONTROLS & RESIDUAL RISK

HAZARD / WHO MAY BE HARMED	CONTROL MEASURES	PERSONS AT RISK	INITIAL RISK	RESIDUAL RISK
Site hazards: uneven, slippery or wet ground; holes, roots, slopes and water edges.	Leader inspects and marks the work area before arrival. Avoid steep, boggy or flooded ground and water edges. Keep routes clear; set boundaries and a safe meeting point. Suitable footwear required.	All participants; leaders	**Medium**	**Low**
Overhead hazards: dead, hanging or unstable branches; falling timber.	Do not build or gather materials beneath suspect trees or branches. Leader checks overhead conditions from a safe position. Stop and relocate if branches move in wind or a hazard is identified.	All participants; leaders	**High**	**Low**
Materials: unstable, rotten, heavy, sharp or splintered poles.	Use leader-selected, manageable materials only. Do not use rotten, cracked, excessively heavy or sharp pieces. Check for nails, thorns and splinters. Do not cut, snap or pull branches from living trees.	Participants handling materials	**Medium**	**Low**
Manual handling: strains, dropped poles, trapped fingers.	Demonstrate safe lifting. Use short/light poles, team-lift awkward items, communicate before lifting and keep hands clear of pinch points. Never throw, swing or carry poles at face height.	Participants; leaders	**Medium**	**Low**
Lashings and cordage: trips, entanglement, tight loops or rope burns.	Use suitable soft cordage and pre-cut lengths where possible. Keep spare cord tidy and out of walkways. Never wrap cord around hands, neck or body. Supervise tensioning and remove loose loops promptly.	All participants	**Medium**	**Low**
Shelter collapse: falling poles, unstable frame, impact or entrapment.	Use a simple low structure on stable ground. Leader checks supports, joints and stability before approach. Do not climb, hang from or load the shelter. No one crawls underneath or enters until the leader has approved it; stop use if movement or instability is seen.	All participants; leaders	**High**	**Low**
Tools: cuts or punctures if knives, saws or axes are introduced.	No cutting tools are required for this lesson. If tools are added, this RA must be reviewed and the activity separately authorised, with trained supervision, tool-specific controls and safe working distances.	All participants; leaders	**High**	**Low**
Weather: wind, rain, cold, heat, lightning or reduced visibility.	Check forecast and conditions before and during the session. Do not build under trees in strong winds or during lightning. Stop if weather compromises trees, shelter stability, visibility or participant comfort. Have warm/dry layers and a sheltered alternative.	All participants; leaders	**High**	**Low**
Wildlife and plants: disturbing nests, dens, habitats or causing bites/stings.	Inspect the site without disturbing habitat. Do not handle animals, nests, fungi or unknown plants. Keep clear of nests, dens and burrows; relocate if wildlife is present. Check for ticks after the activity and follow local guidance.	All participants	**Medium**	**Low**
Slips, trips and collisions during teamwork.	Set a clear work zone and one-way movement where practical. Keep poles low and pointed away from others. Only one person adjusts a joint at a time; maintain spacing and active leader supervision.	All participants	**Medium**	**Low**
Unauthorised collection or environmental damage.	Use supplied materials or only those the landowner/site manager has specifically permitted. Do not strip bark, remove moss, damage roots, cut live wood or trample sensitive areas. Dismantle and restore the site as agreed.	All participants; leaders	**Medium**	**Low**
Emergency, injury or missing participant.	Maintain headcounts, clear boundaries and a known meeting point. Leader carries first-aid kit and charged phone/radio, knows site access/location and emergency procedure. Stop activity, make area safe and follow organisation emergency arrangements.	All participants; leaders	**High**	**Low**

2. SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK

- **Before:** Confirm permission, group needs, competent supervision, weather, site inspection, emergency access and approved materials. Brief all leaders on roles and stop-work conditions.
- **During:** Explain boundaries and safe handling. Maintain active supervision and headcounts. Leader approves the location and checks the frame before anyone approaches. Stop work immediately if a hazard or unsafe behaviour arises.
- **After:** Dismantle under supervision, remove cordage and equipment, check for litter or damage, account for all participants and equipment, and report any incident or near miss.

3. EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Injury	Stop the activity, make the area safe, provide first aid within training, summon additional help and call 999 where required. Do not move a casualty with a suspected serious injury unless there is immediate danger.
Severe weather / falling-tree risk	Stop work, move the group away from trees and structures to the pre-identified safe area, take a headcount and follow the site emergency plan.
Missing participant	Stop activity, secure the group, notify the responsible leader and follow the organisation's missing-person procedure. Contact emergency services if required.
Emergency location	Site name / address: _____ Grid reference / What3Words: _____

4. BRIEFING, APPROVAL & REVIEW