



Beaundesert Outdoor Adventures

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) & Risk Assessment: **Axe Throwing**

Document ID: SOP-BOA-AXE-001

Effective Date: 5th January 2026

Review Date: January 2027

1.0 Purpose

To outline the standardized, safe, and progressive procedure for conducting an Axe Throwing session at Beaundesert Outdoor Adventures. This ensures a high-quality instructional experience while maintaining paramount safety standards through robust in-house training.

2.0 Scope

This SOP applies to all instructors (In-House Assessed) and participants engaging in Axe Throwing activities.

- **Instructor Requirement:** Instructors must have completed the Beaundesert Axe Throwing training pathway and been "signed off" as competent by the Technical Adviser (Operations Manager) or Senior Instructor.

3.0 Location & Ratios

3.1 Location

The activity will only take place at the designated Axe Throwing Range.

- **Demarcation:** The range must be clearly marked with a "Live Range" or "Throwing in Progress" sign.
- **Zones:** The range must have a clearly defined "Throwing Line," "Retrieval Zone," and a safe "Spectator/Waiting Line" (set back to protect against bounce-backs).





3.2 Ratios

- **Standard Ratio:** 1:12 (One Instructor to twelve participants).
- **Maximum Ratio:** 1:15. This may only be increased if the session time is extended to 1.5 hours and the instructor is confident in the group's behaviour.

4.0 Equipment

- **Throwing Axes:** Specifically designed Tomahawks (single bit) or "Angels" (mini-axes). **No knives or double-bit axes.**
- **Targets:** End-grain log targets or softwood plank targets securely mounted on axe throwing wall.
- **Teaching Aids:** Rubber chickens (or soft throw objects) for technique training.
- **First Aid:** Standard First Aid Kit **PLUS a Trauma/Bleed Kit** (tourniquets/pressure dressings) immediately accessible.
- **Maintenance:** File and oil (for burr removal and rust prevention).

5.0 Safety Briefing & Range Rules

Mandatory briefing before any equipment is handled.

1. **Instructor Authority:** The instructor is in charge. Their word is final.
2. **Range Commands:**
 - **"Throw When Ready":** Only throw when this specific command is given.
 - **"STOP, STOP, STOP":** If this command is heard, all axes are placed on the ground immediately.
 - **"Retrieve":** Crucially, **NO** participant moves forward to retrieve axes until the instructor gives the specific "Retrieve" command.
3. **Handling:**
 - **Carrying:** Axes must be carried by the head (blade down and away from the palm), with the handle running up the arm, or strictly by the handle with the head down at the side. Angels carried with fingers under the "Wings"
 - **Passing:** Never hand an axe to another person. Place it on the ground or in the rack/stump.
4. **Throwing Style:**
 - **Overarm Only:** Vertical, over-the-shoulder throws only.
 - **No Trick Shots:** No underarm, side-arm, or spinning throws permitted.
5. **Movement:** Walk, do not run. Be aware of wet/slippery ground.





6.0 Session Procedure

6.1 Pre-Session Checks (Instructor)

- **Range Security:** Ensure fencing is secure and the "Danger Area" behind/around the range is clear.
- **Targets:** Ensure target logs/bosses are secure and not degraded to the point where axes will pass through or bounce excessively.
- **Equipment:** Inspect axe handles for splits and heads for looseness. File off any sharp burrs on the metal. Ensure handles are taped and intact.
- **Welfare:** Check ground conditions (mud/ice) at the throwing line.

6.2 Introduction & Setup

1. **Welcome & History:** Brief history of the Tomahawk (Algonquian origins, trade tool).
2. **Safety Brief:** Deliver the Range Rules (Section 5.0).
3. **PPE/Clothing:** Check for open-toed shoes (not allowed), dangling jewellery, or loose clothing.

6.3 Phase 1: Technique (The "Rubber Chicken")

- *Purpose: To teach body mechanics without risk.*
1. **Demo:** Demonstrate the "Over-the-top" bowling action (Lego Man Arm). Arm straight, elbow locked.
 2. **Practice:** Participants throw rubber chickens/soft objects at the target to learn the release point and follow-through.
 3. **Draw a Line & When to release:** Drawing a line with your arm down the centre of the target will determine side to side movements of the throw. When you release determines the height of the throw.

6.4 Phase 2: "Angels" (Mini Axes)

- *Purpose: managing distance and rotation.*
1. **Setup:** 3 Angels per participant.
 2. **Instruction:** Hold by the handle as briefed.
 3. **Activity:** Participants throw in a **volley** (all throw together).
 4. **Coaching:** Adjust distance (step forward/back) to help the angel stick.





6.5 Phase 3: Tomahawks & Scoring

- *Progression:* Only move to full Tomahawks when the group is safe and competent.
- 1. **Technique:** Start with a **two-handed throw** (provides stability). Progress to one-handed if competent.
- 2. **Ratios:** Max **2 throwers** active at once (unless range spacing allows more with safe separation).
- 3. **Games:**
 - *21/Blackjack:* Score points to reach 21.
 - *Land Grab:* Claim areas of the target.

7.0 Session Conclusion

1. **"Range Cold":** Ensure all axes are accounted for.
2. **Cleaning:** Dry axes if wet. Apply oil / GT85 if necessary to prevent rust.
3. **Storage:** Axes must be locked in the secure toolbox immediately.

They must not be carried loose around the site.

4. **Review:** Debrief the group on skills learned.

8.0 Emergency Procedure

1. **Command:** "STOP, STOP, STOP".
2. **Action:** All activity ceases. Axes grounded. Participants move to waiting area.
3. **Injury:**
 - **Minor:** Treat with First Aid Kit.
 - **Severe (Bleed):** Utilize **Trauma Kit** immediately. Apply pressure.
 - Contact Duty Manager. Follow Site Emergency Action Plan (EAP).



9.0 Risk Assessment

Activity: Axe Throwing

Review Date: January 2027

Assessment by: Martin Kirby – Operations Manager

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls: What are you doing to control hazards?	Risk Rating (with controls)
Being hit by a thrown axe	Participants, Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-House Trained Instructor leading the session (Competence assessed). • Strict adherence to Range Rules (Wait Line, Throw Line). • Max group size 1:12 (or 1:15 extended). • "Volley" fire system (everyone throws together, collects together). • No axes left with participants during collection. 	Trivial
Bounce-backs / Ricochets	Participants, Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range Design: Waiting line set back (min 5m from targets). • Targets: End-grain wood used where possible to absorb energy. • Technique: Vertical throws only (reduces lateral bounce). • Inspection: Burrs filed off axes to prevent "hooking" and bouncing. 	Trivial
Cuts / Lacerations (Handling)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing: Clear instruction on how to hold/carry axes (blade down/away). 	Trivial

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls: What are you doing to control hazards?	Risk Rating (with controls)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing: "Ground it, don't pass it" rule. • Axes are tools, not razor-sharp (edges are kept dull, only points are sharp). 	
Equipment Failure (Head loose/Handle snap)	Participants, Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-session Check: Instructor physically checks every axe head for wobble/cracks. • Damaged kit immediately quarantined. • Axes stored in dry conditions to prevent wood rot. 	Trivial
Slips, Trips & Falls	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrieval route kept clear of debris. • "Walk, don't run" rule strictly enforced (especially carrying axes). • Mud/Ice managed at throwing line. 	Tolerable
Manual Handling (Moving Targets)	Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic Risk Assessment before moving heavy log targets. • Use two people or a trolley/wheelbarrow if moving bosses. 	Trivial
Unauthorized Access	Non-participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range perimeter clearly fenced. • Instructor positioned to view range entry points. 	Trivial
Transport / Legal (Offensive Weapons)	Staff, Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axes must be transported in a secure container/box when moving between stores and the range. • Never left unattended. 	Tolerable



11.0 Document Control & Review History

Document Creation

Action	Name / Role	Date
Created By	Martin Kirby – Operations Manager	December 2025
Approved By	Martin Kirby, Luke Chance & Oliver Tombs (OM / SI / AOM)	January 2026

Review Log

This document is to be reviewed annually or following any significant incident or change to the activity.

Date of Review	Reviewed By	Comments / Changes Made	Next Review Due
January 2026	MKirby / OTombs / LChance	Document Created and Effective (V1.0). Removed NGB requirement in favour of In-House Competence. Added Trauma Kit & Transport protocols.	January 2027

