

## Template Risk Assessment Waterfall Country Gorges (Mellte and Sychryd)

This risk assessment has been compiled by SWOAPG to meet the requirement of clause 4.2.7 of the *Memorandum of Understanding between NRW and SWOAPG (informally referred to as 'the Waterfall Country Activity Concordat')* dated 1 Jan 2025. It reflects the NRW *Waterfalls area risk assessment* dated 20 Nov 2024, taking into account inherent site features and other users; and is intended for incorporation as appropriate by all SWOAPG members using the gorges in their own risk assessments.

Risk / Hazard	Control Measures
Providers' operating procedures put instructors and clients at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers must hold at least £5 million of public liability insurance covering their activities in the gorges.</li> <li>• Providers using the Sychryd and Lower Mellte gorges should operate in accordance with recognised good practise – including a requirement that all instructors are appropriately trained and qualified.</li> <li>• Providers using the Upper Mellte gorge must <i>either</i> hold an AALA licence for gorge-walking <i>or</i> provide to SWOAPG evidence from an appropriately qualified Technical Advisor of their safe delivery of canyoning and/or gorge-walking activity at the site – including a requirement that all instructors are appropriately trained and qualified.</li> </ul>
Providers' operating procedures cause environmental damage or upset local residents or other users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers operating in the gorges must undertake – and ensure that all their instructors leading groups in the gorges undertake – training on the Waterfall Country Gorge Walking Codes of Conduct as provided by SWOAPG from time-to-time; AND must operate within the terms of these Codes of Conduct.</li> </ul>
Difficulty of emergency evacuation from remote areas of Mellte gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should consider requiring their group leaders to carry a copy of the <i>Upper Mellte Evacuation Map</i>.</li> </ul>
Rockfalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should ensure that all participants wear helmets when operating in the gorges.</li> <li>• Providers should encourage instructors to inspect visually all areas for rockfalls before use – particularly any 'high risk' areas that have been notified by SWOAPG 'alerts' – and report any rockfalls to the SWOAPG Coordinator.</li> <li>• SWOAPG Coordinator will send 'alerts' to NRW and gorge users as they are advised.</li> </ul>
Failure of fixed anchors (currently installed only at 'bad step' on path above Sychryd 'ivy pool')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should encourage instructors to inspect visually fixed anchors before use and report any failures to the SWOAPG Coordinator.</li> <li>• SWOAPG Coordinator will send 'alerts' to NRW and gorge users as they are advised.</li> </ul>
Falls from height on steep, unguarded drops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers to reflect this hazard in their own risk assessments and adopt appropriate safe operating procedures.</li> </ul>

Risk / Hazard	Control Measures
Injury resulting from old industrial debris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers to reflect this hazard in their own risk assessments and adopt appropriate safe operating procedures.</li> <li>• Providers should report to the SWOAPG Coordinator any issues concerning old industrial debris.</li> <li>• SWOAPG Coordinator will send 'alerts' to NRW and gorge users as they are advised.</li> </ul>
Slippery surfaces and recirculating water features at man-made weir on Mellte near Pontneddfechan (Grid Ref SN 9148 0816)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers to ensure their instructors know that entering the water at the weir is STRICTLY OUT-OF-BOUNDS.</li> </ul>
Fallen trees causing obstructions on path or in the watercourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers to reflect this hazard in their own risk assessments and adopt appropriate safe operating procedures.</li> <li>• Providers should report to the SWOAPG Coordinator any issues with fallen trees.</li> <li>• SWOAPG Coordinator will send 'alerts' to NRW and gorge users as they are advised.</li> </ul>
Drowning (including entrapment and being swept away), cold-water shock or hypothermia in cold, fast-flowing water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers to reflect this hazard in their own risk assessments and adopt appropriate safe operating procedures.</li> </ul>
Forest operations by NRW (e.g. tree and path works)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWOAPG Coordinator will send 'alerts' to gorge users as they are advised.</li> </ul>
Water borne infections and pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should report to the SWOAPG Coordinator any issues with water pollution.</li> <li>• SWOAPG Coordinator will send 'alerts' to NRW and gorge users as they are advised.</li> </ul>