



Australian Standards Artificial climbing structures and challenge courses

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Standard?

Standards are documents setting out specifications, procedures and guidelines. They are designed to ensure products, services and systems are safe, reliable and consistent.

They are based on industrial, scientific and consumer experience and are regularly reviewed to ensure they keep pace with new technologies.

They cover everything from consumer products and services, construction, engineering, business, information technology, human services to energy and water utilities, the environment and much more.

There are three kinds of standards: international, regional, and national.

- International standards are developed by ISO, IEC, and ITU. Countries can adopt these standards directly for their national use. Wherever possible, Standards Australia embraces the development and adoption of international standards.
- Regional standards are prepared by a specific region, such as the European Union, which develops EN standards. Similarly, joint Australian/New Zealand standards can be considered regional standards.
- National standards can be developed by a national standards body (like Standards Australia) or other accredited bodies. Standards developed under the brand of Australian Standard® are developed within Australia or are adoptions of international standards.

Ref:

http://www.standards.org.au/StandardsDevelopment/What_is_a_Standard/Pages/default.aspx

2. Am I required by law to meet the Australian Standard?

The short answer is no, however of course in the event of any incident or accident, the authorities will refer to the relevant Australian Standard for guidance. Standards Australia is not part of government; they do not make laws or regulations.

Australian Standards are not legal documents. However, when a government references a standard in legislation, it becomes mandatory.

Ref:

[http://www.standards.org.au/StandardsDevelopment/What is a Standard/Pages/Standards-and-the-Law.aspx](http://www.standards.org.au/StandardsDevelopment/What%20is%20a%20Standard/Pages/Standards-and-the-Law.aspx)

3. What are the relevant Australian Standards for ropes and challenge courses (including flying foxes?)

The relevant Standards are **AS 2316.2.1** and **AS 2316.2.2**

Fundamentally AS 2316.2.1 refers to construction (ie how to build a course), AS 2316.2.2 refers to operations (ie how to run your course).

Note:

Please be aware that **AS 2316.1 – 2009 Artificial climbing structures and challenge courses - Fixed and mobile artificial climbing and abseiling walls** remains relevant and current. The two new Standards will be linked to this existing Standard.

4. How do I get a hold of a copy of the Standards?

You can buy the Standard direct from Standards Australia in three ways;

- A PDF version
- A 'Teaching' version that can be used in powerpoints, etc in a teaching or seminar type setting
- In hard copy.

The ACA will have a PDF copy on file and can provide advice based on this. We cannot publish the Standard for general use by members.

To purchase a copy, go to:

https://infostore.saiglobal.com/?gclid=CKS3_9fYz9ACFdgRvQodxg8FjA

5. What are the Standards based on?

The Australian Standards are based on those set by the European Normative committee, which have been in place since 2007 (and revised last in 2015).

Standards Australia has no administrative relationship with the USA, which has two parallel Standards - those set by the PRCA (Professional Ropes Course Association) and the ACCT (Association for Challenge Course Technology). Both of these are recognised in the US.

The European Standards have been adapted for Australian conditions – eg to account for environmental differences such as weather, UV exposure and tree types; to comply with Australian building codes, and to reference other Australian Standards rather than their parallel EN standards (eg things like steel wire rope, or height safety standards or timber types).

6. Do I need to comply immediately with the new Standard?

Standards Australia acknowledges that this is likely to be prohibitive, both by cost and operationally. To help the compliance process they have allowed a two year period of grace.

7. Suggested process to help camps meet the Standards

Have your existing course inspected against the new Standard. You'll need to specify this with your inspector – as some inspectors might prefer to inspect against other standards or codes of practise.

Identify any changes required and create a budget and works plan to enable that to happen in the two year period.

8. Who can inspect my course against the Standard?

Any competent person (ie with the appropriate training and experience) can inspect your course. The following organisations are a good start:

Adventure Developments
Australian Ropes Course Builders
Rescue Training Group
The Highgate Group
Treetop Adventure Australia

Thanks to Murray Tucker (Rescue Training Group) for his advice in compiling this document.