

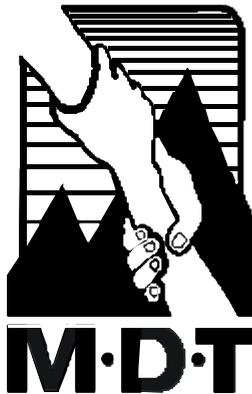
# ABSEIL SUPERVISOR SCHEME

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## PROSPECTUS

**South African Mountaineering  
Development and Training Programme**

**Mountain Training Scheme**



Only trainers and assessors approved and accredited by the South African Mountaineering Development and Training Trust (MDT) may provide training and assessment that will lead to MDT accreditation.

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# Foreword

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The South African Mountaineering Development and Training Programme (MDT), was established to develop and maintain nationally recognised standards for the many clubs, organisations and individuals active in mountain related activities.

The programme, controlled by the South African Mountaineering Development and Training Trust, a legally constituted body registered with the master of the Supreme Court, co-ordinates and administers the functioning of the national Mountain Training Scheme (MTS).

Introduced in 1996, the MTS comprises of eight partially independent schemes, each integrating practical, theoretical and experiential components through a process of training and assessment. From the Basic Mountain Walking Leader Scheme to the Mountaineering Instructor Scheme, each is primarily concerned with good practice, leading to the safe enjoyment of the activity.

Training and assessment courses are run by individuals approved and accredited by the trust.

Since its introduction, the programme has gained the support of the many professional, semi-professional and voluntary guides, leaders and instructors active in South Africa's mountains.

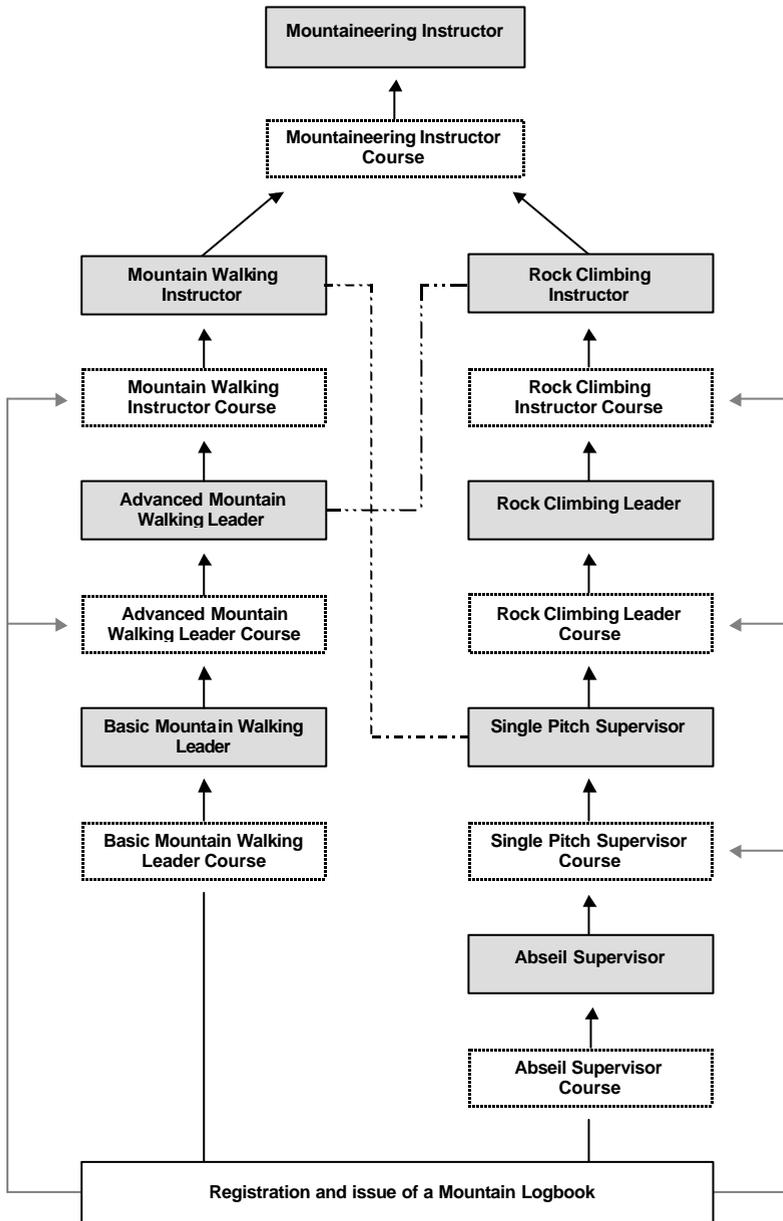
An overview of the Mountain Training Scheme is provided on the next page.

Information on the components of the MDT programme, how to register, or where to go for training and assessment courses can be obtained from:

Administration  
MDT  
PO Box 662  
Gillitts  
3603  
South Africa

Email: [admin@mdt.za.org](mailto:admin@mdt.za.org)  
Website: [www.mdt.za.org](http://www.mdt.za.org)

# The Mountain Training Scheme



# Abseil Supervisor Scheme Prospectus

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## Introduction

The Abseil Supervisor Scheme (AS) provides training and assessment for those who are in a position of responsibility while supervising abseiling. It is suitable for individuals working in a professional, semi-professional or voluntary capacity.

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## Scope

The scheme is primarily concerned with good practice, leading to the safe enjoyment of the activity.

The scheme does not cover:

- the skills needed to approach and retreat from mountain crags;
- access to any location where escape is not easily possible from the top and the bottom of the abseil site;
- multiple abseils, or abseils that involve intermediate stances.

Completion of a training course alone, without taking an assessment course, is not a qualification in itself, although it may be of considerable benefit to the trainee.

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## Stage

The scheme comprises of:

1. registration and the issue of a logbook;
2. training courses comprising of:
  - level 1: three days, addressing short abseils;
  - level 2: one day, addressing the special requirements of long abseils;
3. further experience gained during a consolidation period;
4. a one day assessment course comprising of theory and practical components;
5. continuing experience entered in a logbook.

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## Registration

The candidate wishing to register must:

- be not less than eighteen years of age;
- have completed an introductory rock climbing or abseil course or;
- provide the Director of Training with a record of abseil experience;
- have a genuine interest in abseiling and the supervision of groups;
- complete the registration application and enclose the appropriate fee. This should be submitted to the MDT via an approved course provider.

Course Providers are given a period of 14 days from the date of completion of the course, to submit the registration details of their course attendees. The MDT administration then has a further 14 days to process these registrations, and to supply you with your registration number as recorded on the MDT database

Please feel free to contact the MDT administration at any time to check up on your registration. You should receive an e-mail/sms/phone call confirming receipt of your registration form once the MDT administration has received it. If you do not receive such confirmation, you may contact the MDT administration, who will contact the service provider immediately should the registration details not yet have been submitted.

The purpose of this is to ensure speedy registration, leading to satisfied MDT members. Please be assured of our commitment to aid you in this process.

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## Training

### Level 1:

The candidate must attend a three-day training course run by an approved provider. The course addresses the requirements of short abseils<sup>2</sup>.

### Level 2:

The candidate must attend an additional one-day training course run by an approved provider. The course addresses the special requirements of long abseils.

The training course is for potential supervisors and assumes basic competence in abseiling. It will emphasise those skills, which the candidate might have difficulty in learning without expert guidance.

On completion of training, the Director of Training will endorse the appropriate page(s) in the logbook.

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## **Logbook**

Experience gained by the candidate should be recorded in the MDT AS Logbook. Entries should be concise, easily read and should include abseiling, rock climbing, supervising and other relevant experience.

The log book is divided into five sections and includes:

- a record of experience gained prior to the training course;
  - the particulars of the training course, completed by the Director of Training;
  - a record of experience gained during the period between the training and assessment courses;
  - the particulars of the assessment course, completed by the Director of Assessment;
  - a record of experience gained after the assessment.
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## **Consolidation**

During the period between training and assessment courses, the candidate is expected to gain extensive abseiling experience at a wide range of venues and some practice in the supervision of groups<sup>3</sup>.

The consolidation period will be a minimum of three months.

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## **First Aid**

At the beginning of the assessment course the candidate must hold a currently valid and approved first aid certificate.

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## **Assessment**

Before attending an assessment course the candidate must:

- have registered;
- have attended a training course;
- have acted in the capacity of abseil supervisor on at least twenty occasions, under the direction of a suitably qualified person<sup>3</sup>;
- be familiar with all aspects of the syllabus;
- hold a valid approved first aid certificate.

The candidate will be expected to present a logbook and first aid certificate to the Director of Assessment, to confirm that the requirements of the scheme have been met.

During the assessment course, which lasts one day, the candidate will be tested in accordance with the syllabus requirements.

The Director of Assessment will endorse the logbook in one of three ways:

### **Pass**

Awarded where the candidate has demonstrated proper knowledge and application of the course syllabus and has shown the necessary experience for the application of abseil supervision.

### **Deferred**

Awarded where the candidate has generally performed at the required standard and shown the necessary experience and attributes, but where complete proficiency has not been attained. Written recommendations for further experience will be given, along with details of the proposed one-day reassessment.

### **Recommended Reassessment**

Awarded where the candidate's performance has been weak, or the necessary experience and attributes have not been shown.

## **Reassessment**

The one-day reassessment must follow a minimum period of three months. The candidate may only take two reassessments before being required to take the entire course again. Since the reassessment will be based on information gained during the assessment all reassessments must be completed within a five-year period.

## **Exemption**

The candidate, who has substantial experience of abseiling and the supervision of groups, may apply for an exemption from stages two and three.

The candidate, wishing to apply for exemption, must be able to demonstrate exceptional previous experience.

Applications for exemption must be made in writing to the secretary of the Assessment Panel.

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## Definitions

For the purpose of this scheme:

**Abseiling** is defined as the controlled descent on a rope:

- without the use of intermediate stances;
- allowing the participant to be lowered to the ground at all times.

### **Short Abseils**

Are defined as not exceeding sixty meters in length, where the environment presents little objective danger, with no difficulties of approach or retreat.

### **Long Abseils**

Are defined as exceeding sixty meters but not exceeding one hundred and fifty meters in length.

# Abseil Supervisor Scheme

## Notes

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1. The MDT Administrator, on receiving the registration application and registration fee, will issue a receipt as proof that registration has been successful.
  2. A list of approved and accredited course providers is available from the MDT.
  3. Ideally, the candidate should be under the direction of an Abseil Supervisor, or higher award holder.
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### Scope

It is the duty of the employer or organising authority to decide whether a supervisor possesses the personal attributes needed to take responsibility for the care of individuals, groups or clients. It is the combination of technical skill, wide experience and personal qualities that form the basis for effective supervision. The scheme assesses the technical skills and experience; the employer or organising authority has to gauge the personal qualities.

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### Experience

Candidates often experience some difficulty when compiling their registration forms and logbooks, in trying to determine whether or not they meet the experience requirements of the Scheme.

The Director of Assessment and the Assessment Panel are looking for both depth and breadth of experience since the candidate who only has the minimum experience is unlikely to benefit from either training or assessment courses.

The Mountain Training Scheme is South Africa oriented, therefore, experience recorded should reflect this. Whilst experience gained abroad is undoubtedly valuable it is not necessarily the most appropriate.

# Abseil Supervisor Scheme Acknowledgements

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1. **South African Mountaineering Development and Training Programme**  
Technical Committee.
2. **Mountain Club of South Africa. National Training Sub-committee (1994)**  
*Mountain Leadership Training Scheme. Proposed Policy and Guidelines a Consultative Document.*
3. **Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme**  
Working Group Training Standards  
*Model Training Standards for voluntary Leaders and Instructors.*
4. **Mountain Leader Training Board (UK)**  
*Single Pitch Supervisors Award Prospectus and Syllabus.*
5. **United Kingdom Mountain Training Board (1995)**  
*National Guidelines.*
6. **AEE: Safe Practice in Adventure Programming**  
Simon Priest and Tim Dixon

# Abseil Supervisor Scheme Documentation

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Compiled by Euan Waugh

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