



KiwiCanyons.org

Canyon bolting guideline

As canyoning in NZ rapidly increases in popularity, it is essential to the safe and responsible development of the sport that a Canyon bolting guideline is adopted.

This document provides guidance for bolting in recreational canyoning situations. For guidance on bolting for commercial canyoning, see the relevant section of the [Canyoning Activity Safety Guideline](#) on the Support Adventure website.

This guideline should be read in conjunction with;

- The [New Zealand Alpine Club \(NZAC\) Position on Bolting](#) and [Technical Guidelines](#), and
- The relevant DOC [Conservation Management Strategy](#) or [National Park Management Plan](#).

Anyone considering placing bolts in NZ canyons should ask themselves three questions;

Are we allowed to bolt? Should we bolt? And if so, how do we bolt?

Are we allowed to bolt?

Legitimacy

- Bolting on private land must only take place with the permission of the landowner,
- On public land, bolting may only be authorised by the Department of Conservation (DOC), in accordance with the relevant conservation management strategy and/or national park plan.

Should we bolt?

Ethical Standards

Planned Bolting

- Representative views of the relevant canyoning community and other stakeholders should be sought to determine whether bolting is considered appropriate for a particular canyon or canyoning area.
- Bolting may be considered appropriate if the benefits of bolting significantly outweigh the potential impacts on the environment and impact on the practise of canyoning in that canyon.
- Bolted anchors should allow Canyoners to safely descend in close proximity to the water. Canyons where the flow is too high, requiring an excessive numbers of bolts to establish a contrived line clear of the water should not be bolted.
- Planned bolting should only be conducted after several descents, so the most appropriate anchor locations can be determined.
- Bolts should only be placed by competent people with experience in the correct bolting techniques.

Emergency Bolting

- In the event of unforeseen changes to established anchors, or during the first descent of a canyon, emergency bolts may only be placed as a last resort where no other practical means is available to descend or escape the canyon.

Moral responsibility

- Although individual Canyoners must assume all personal risk when using a bolted anchor, those that place the bolts have a moral obligation to ensure anchors are as safe as possible.
- Bolts that do not meet the legal, ethical or safety standards of this guideline should be removed.

How do we bolt?

Safety Standards

Technical Standards

- Bolts and anchor stations in NZ canyons should meet or exceed the [NZAC Bolting Technical Guideline](#);

Positioning of Anchors

The location of an anchor station is critical to maximise safety and anchor longevity and to minimise environmental impacts.

Anchor stations should be positioned such that;

- They are easily reached by a canyoner of average skill and height, across a durable surface, in all reasonable flow conditions.
- They are positioned such that it is difficult for a careless canyoner to shock or incorrectly load the bolts.
- The bolts are oriented in a way that allows the use of single rope technique, minimises wear on the rope and allows for easy retrieval.
- They encourage a line of abseil descent which is on a durable surface and minimises the risks of hydraulic danger in all reasonable flow conditions.
- They are protected from damage in floods by being clear of the anticipated current.