

Vertical Rescue Scripts as used by NSW SES

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The following Scripts demonstrate correct application of Vertical Rescue calls (prowords for both commands and acknowledgements) as used by NSW SES. The actual sequence of events will vary from job to job, but these scripts demonstrate the correct application and implied meaning of vertical rescue calls (prowords).

These scripts are intended to provide examples of how NSW SES Vertical Rescue calls are to be correctly applied to avoid confusion, misunderstanding, operational errors, excessive commands, explanation and chatter, and confusion with other prowords.

Safety during Vertical Rescue Operations is paramount. Prowords for Vertical Rescue calls are used to increase understanding, simplicity and aid effective communication in adverse conditions.

Script for Knot Pass through the Loadline Descender while Lowering

Operator	Call	Meaning / Notes / Actions following the call
		System Status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VR System is being operated during major lowering operations (i.e. through the loadline descender) when the end of the rope or a knot joining two ropes is encountered by the Loadline Descender Operator.
Loadline Descender Operator	Knot Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loadline descender operator stops lowering, and locks off the descender (Note the Stop and Loadline Locked Off calls are implied so the Knot Pass call must not be made until AFTER the descender is locked off!). If the knot is not already in place a second rope is joined onto the end of the loadline to allow further lowering. Reversible safety operator attaches reversible safety. Edge Assistant relays Knot Pass call to Litter Attendant.
Reversible Safety Operator	Reversible Safety On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loadline Descender operator lowers until the load is on the reversible safety.
Loadline Descender Operator	Loadline Descender Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loadline descender Operator re-rigs the loadline through the descender so that the knot is below the descender. The descender is locked off to avoid creep during the load transfer.
Loadline Descender Operator	Loadline Locked Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reversible safety operator lowers on the reversible safety until the load is on the loadline descender, and then removes the reversible safety.
Reversible Safety Operator	Reversible Safety Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loadline descender operator recommences lowering operations. Reversible safety operator resets the reversible

		safety if required and anticipated time permits.
Edge Assistant and/or Team Leader	Knot Pass Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relayed to Litter Attendant purely for information.

Script for Commencement of Lowering Operations using a Larkin Frame

Operator	Call	Meaning / Notes
		<p>System Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VR system has been rigged to the Team Leader's instructions. • All is in readiness for commencement of operation to lower the stretcher and attendant. • Load line is Locked Off. • Reversible safety is On. • Haul System is On. • Casualty is securely packaged if appropriate. • Stretcher Attendant is on rope, has had a gear check and is ready to be lifted. • First Responder has been dispatched to access the casualty if appropriate. • Larkin Frame Back Guy has been adjusted to prevent excessive luff. Larkin Frame foot on Loadline attachment side is secured to prevent step back.
Team Leader	Prepare to Haul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any team member not ready to proceed must call a STOP. • Edge Manager prepares to assist the Stretcher Attendant to maintain control of the stretcher during the initial lift, and also stands on the Larkin Frame foot on the Loadline attachment side to prevent step back. • Team Leader (or his delegate) foots the back apex of the Larkin Frame to prevent an uncontrolled luff during the initial lift. • Reversible Safety Operator performs an additional check of the reversible safety and ensures the Reversible Safety is On. • Haul Team Leader checks the haul system is On and the haul team is ready.
Team Leader	Haul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haul team commence hauling and lift the stretcher and attendant off the ground. • Stretcher Attendant positions himself to comfortably control the stretcher. • Edge Manager steadies the stretcher. • Team Leader (or his delegate) foots the back apex of the Larkin Frame to prevent an uncontrolled luff.
Team Leader	Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called when the stretcher is high enough for the luff to commence or before the stretcher attachment point is chock a block on the top redirection pulley of the Larkin Frame. • Haul Team stop hauling.

Haul Team Leader	Reset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haul Team drop the haul line. Haul Team Leader resets the haul system. This step is optional if required and time permits.
Team Leader	Prepare to Luff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leader delegates an operator for the back guy descender, and haulers to assist with the luff.
Team Leader	Luff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luff haulers take tension on the back guy on the leg to the back guy descender. Team leader controls the initial luff action and smoothly transfers load to the back guy. If the back guy is fully extended and the luff is insufficient, the back guy descender operator unlocks the descender and continues the luff to the correct position.
Team Leader	Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The luff haul team or back guy operator stop luffing and maintain the Larkin Frame in the current position. Any slack is removed from the back guy and the back guy descender is locked off.
Back Guy Descender Operator	Back Guy Locked Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luff Haul team smoothly transfer load to the Back Guy Descender if appropriate.
Team Leader or Stretcher Attendant	Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luff Haul Team and Back Guy Operator return to previously delegated roles. Haul Team Leader detaches the haul system from the loadline. Loadline Descender Operator removes slack from the load line and locks off the loadline descender.
Haul Team Leader Loadline Descender Operator	Haul System Off Loadline Locked Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both these conditions must be met before the Reversible Safety Operator can transfer the load to the loadline.
Reversible Safety Operator	Lowering on Reversible Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reversible Safety Operator lowers on the reversible safety to transfer load to the loadline descender. Reversible Safety Operator detaches the Reversible Safety from the Loadline.
Reversible Safety Operator	Reversible Safety Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reversible Safety Operator resets the Reversible Safety.
Loadline Descender Operator	Lowering on Loadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loadline descender operators lowers on the loadline descender.
Stretcher Attendant	Stop, Lower, Haul, Faster, Slower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretcher Attendant makes appropriate calls as required to negotiate obstacles on the pitch and when at the bottom. Edge Manager relays these calls to the team if necessary.
Stretcher Attendant	Slack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leader (or his delegate) steadies the Larkin Rescue Frame to prevent it falling when tension comes off the loadline. Edge manager relays Slack to Loadline Descender Operator if required. Loadline Descender Operator pulls rope through

		the loadline descender, dereeving the descender is required.
Stretcher Attendant	Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called when sufficient slack is received (perhaps to detach the stretcher, etc). • Loadline Descender Operator re-reeves the Loadline Descender and double locks it off to make the loadline safe.
Loadline Descender Operator	Loadline Locked Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Team Leader may luff the Larkin Frame back into a safe stable position if this has not been done already. • End of lowering operation.

Script for Commencement of Hauling Operations using Larkin Frame

Operator	Call	Meaning / Notes
		<p>System Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretcher Attendant and First Responder are at the bottom of the pitch with the casualty packaged and attached to the load line ready to lift. • The top systems are rigged and ready to go– it is assumed they were already used to lower the stretcher and attendant.
Stretcher Attendant	Haul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This implies a Prepare to Haul command. • Edge Manager relays command if required. • Reversible Safety Operator attached the Reversible Safety to the Loadline. • Team Leader and/or Edge Manager luff the Larkin Frame into position to take the load and steady it there. • Edge Manager stands on Larkin Frame foot on the loadline attachment side to prevent step back. • Haul Team prepare to haul.
Reversible Safety Operator	Reversible Safety On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loadline Descender Operator and/or Haul Team Leader haul on the loadline to remove any slack. • Haul Team Leader attaches the Haul System when all slack has been removed from the Loadline.
Haul Team Leader	Haul System On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haul Team take positions and remove slack from haul system.
Haul Team Leader	Hauling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haul Team take the load and commence hauling. • Edge manager relays command to Stretcher Attendant if required.
Stretcher Attendant	Stop, Lower, Haul, Faster, Slower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretcher Attendant makes appropriate calls as required to negotiate obstacles on the pitch. • Edge Manager relays these calls to the team if necessary. • As Stretcher approaches the top, the Edge Manager watches for the Stretcher Attachment point to approach the top redirection pulley on the Larkin Rescue Frame.
Edge Manager	Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called when the stretcher is high enough to luff in or the stretcher attachment point has almost reached the top redirection pulley on the Larkin Frame.
Team Leader	Prepare to Luff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leader delegates an operator for the back guy descender, and haulers to assist with the luff.
Team Leader	Luff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luff haulers take tension on the back guy on the leg to the back guy descender. • Luff Haul Team commence luffing using the 2:1 MA to advantage. • Team Leader takes control of the back apex of the

		Larkin Frame as it comes into reach, guides it smoothly to the ground and foots the frame to prevent an uncontrolled luff.
Team Leader	Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haul Team Leader detaches the Haul System.
Haul Team Leader	Haul System Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This signals the Reversible Safety Operator is now clear to lower.
Reversible Safety Operator	Lowering on Reversible Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversible Safety Operator lowers the stretcher and attendant to the ground. • Edge manager assists the stretcher attendant to land the stretcher within the Larkin Frame base.
Stretcher Attendant	Slack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversible Safety Operator provides slack.
Stretcher Attendant	Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversible Safety Operator locks off the reversible safety. • Stretcher is detached from the loadline.
Reversible Safety Operator	Reversible Safety Locked Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leader delegates a crew to carry the stretcher from the edge. The Edge Manager and Stretcher Attendant lift the end closest to the edge and pass the stretcher to the stretcher crew.
Team Leader	Prepare to Lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretcher Crew prepare to lift the stretcher. • Any member not ready to lift safely must call a STOP.
Team Leader	Lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretcher Crew Lift the stretcher. Edge Manager and Stretcher Attendant pass the stretcher to the remainder of the stretcher crew to be carried to a safe location.
Team leader	Prepare to Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretcher Crew prepare to lower the stretcher. • Any member not ready to lift safely must call a STOP.
Team Leader	Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretcher Crew lower the stretcher. • Stretcher Attendant leaves the edge maintaining safety within 2m of edge if required. • End of Hauling Operations.

Script for First Responder Access to Casualty by Abseiling

Operator	Call	Meaning / Notes / Actions following the call
		<p>System Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local of the casualty has been determined. • Suitable anchors for the First Responder access line have been chosen to provide access close to but outside the fall zone above the casualty. • The First Responder has rigged the access line, attached a descender (which is locked off) to the rope and is ready for a gear check. This is visually signified by standing “spread-eagled” (legs apart, arms in the air) as well as calling for a gear check.
First Responder	Gear Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Responder’s buddy, Team Leader or other available team member performs a complete gear check of all personal VM gear, PPE, and rigging of the rope, anchors and anchor system. • The check is performed by inspecting, touching and verbalizing each check.
Buddy	All OK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Responder has been checked and is ready to descend.
First Responder	Abseiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Responder unlocks his descender and approaches the edge.
First Responder	Rope Below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call warns anyone below that the access line is about to be deployed down the face. • Rope is thrown down the face. The rope should be rigged with a stopper knot (figure eight) in the bottom unless there is a risk of the rope becoming entangled in tree branches or inaccessible cavities in caves which could strand the rescuer or jeopardize the rescue. In such a case, no knot shall be used in the end of the rope, but a check shall be made that the rope reaches the bottom of the pitch. If this cannot be guaranteed, the first responder may proceed only by using sufficient friction to ensure good control at all times, and proceeding no further than 5 metres from the end of the rope unless it is safe to do so. • This call is not required when abseiling out of the bag which is the preferred method for initial access. • The First Responder continues to abseil to the bottom of the pitch. When safe, the First Responder detaches all equipment from the access line.
First Responder	Off Rope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This signifies the rope is no longer in use and may be used by others. • End of Access Operations.

Script for Abseiling with a Bottom Belay

Operator	Call	Meaning / Notes / Actions following the call
		<p>System Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A static access line is established. • An abseiler rescuer is about to descend the rope. • A person at the bottom of the pitch is able to perform a bottom belay. • For whatever reason a bottom belay will be requested. • The abseiler is approaching the rope from the same side as their normal brake hand.
Abseiler	Stepping Over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Abseiler steps over the rope. Verbalizing the action alerts others to that action, and heightens awareness of the action and the risks involved. • All personnel working on or near the rope know the person is stepping over the rope and stop any action which may move the rope, cause a trip hazard, etc. • The abseiler attaches his/her descender to the rope and stands spread-eagled to visually signify that a gear check is required.
Abseiler	Gear Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abseiler's buddy, Team Leader or other available team member performs a complete gear check of all personal VM gear, PPE, and rigging of the rope, anchors and anchor system. • The check is performed by inspecting, touching and verbalizing each check.
Buddy	All OK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abseiler has been checked and is ready to descend.
Abseiler	On Belay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a belay from the person below.
Belay	Belay On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement that the belayer is in position and ready to belay the abseiler. • The bottom belayer should be positioned outside the fall zone below the abseiler to minimize the risk of impact from falling debris, and facilitate observation of the abseiler.
Abseiler	Abseiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abseiler unlocks his descender and approaches the edge. • The Abseiler continues to abseil to the bottom of the pitch. The belayer may cease belaying within 2 to 3 metres of the bottom if required and safe to do so.
Belay	Belay Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When safe, the Abseiler detaches all equipment from the access line.
Abseiler	Off Rope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This signifies the rope is no longer in use and may be used by others. • End of Abseiling Operations.

