



INDIAN NATIONS COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Climbing and Rappelling Policy As of 05 / 01 / 2022

Climbing and Rappelling activities present exciting challenges and situations that demand proper training and preparation by all personnel involved to provide the safest and most enjoyable event for all in attendance. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions to improve our program, please contact the Program Executive or Climbing Committee Chair identified below.

All Unit level climbing and rappelling activities must follow the most current edition of "Climb On Safely" (CoS) and age appropriate guidelines in Guide to Safe Scouting. Climbing Instructors and Qualified Supervision shall be on hand the entire time while participants are present at the climbing site.

Event Management:

It is recommended that all adult supervision present at any event be trained in CoS to provide knowledgeable support to the Climbing Instructors so that all CoS requirements are properly addressed. CoS training is available online at my.scouting.org and requires just a few minutes to complete.

The Unit shall assure that a properly stocked first aid kit is available, that incident resolution plans are established and the nearest medical facilities and emergency responder information is known by supervision at the event. An individual's health and wellbeing is paramount so any medical response needed shall receive immediate priority and event activities halted as needed. Further, the CoS Coordinator and all Instructors attending the event should be familiar with and adhere to Near Miss and Incident Reporting requirements per BSA's policy.

Climbing Activities:

A Lead Instructor – a Level 2 Climbing Instructor, Climbing Director or other CoS approved professional instructor – shall be identified for the event and their responsibility shall NOT change during the event. The Lead Instructor is the final authority for the climbing activity, the safety of all participants and other Instructors and the proper use of equipment and gear. If staffing, site or environmental conditions change prior to or during an event, the Lead Instructor is expected to adjust or end an event as needed.

Regardless of their level of training, every Climbing Instructor within the climbing site during an event is expected to maintain safe climbing conditions at all times and work within their personal capabilities and experience. Anyone present (instructors, supervision, participants or observers) at the climbing site may halt activities if uncertain about climbing safety, equipment use, operations or actions. Lead and Staff Instructors shall mutually agree and clarify roles or address any concern raised before continuing with event activities.

Instructors shall properly inspect all climbing equipment and gear prior to and after an event, maintain records of same and use/store climbing equipment and gear in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Climbing Instructors:

No assumptions about an individual's qualification or capability is made or implied by this policy or completion of climbing instructor training. Every Climbing Instructor is responsible to know and support current BSA and Council policy and requirements, manage an event within their personal capabilities and experience, properly maintain and use climbing equipment and gear and adjust or end an event if unsafe conditions exists or develop.

All Climbing Instructors must be registered with the BSA and have current Youth Protection Training and successfully complete training provided by BSA (Indian Nations Council or a National Camp School) or any of the qualified professional organizations identified in Climb on Safely. It is recommended for individuals that have received qualified professional training to report their completion of training to the Climbing Committee Chair for record keeping purposes.

Climbing training levels are as follows:

- Climbing Instructor in Training (CIIT) – annual reevaluation for 16-17 year olds.
- Artificial Climbing Structure Level 1 – annual reevaluation for 18+ year olds.
- Artificial Climbing Structure Level 2 – reevaluation every 3 years for 21+ year olds.
- Climbing Instructor Level 1 – annual reevaluation for 18+ year olds.
- Climbing Instructor Level 2 – reevaluation every 3 years for 21+ year olds.
- Climbing Director – National Camping School training, 5 year reevaluation for 21+ year olds.

Instructors should remain active after training and document their efforts in scouting activities at Unit, District or Council efforts. Reevaluation of an Instructor at the end of a term does not necessarily require going back through all training sessions. Responsibilities for each training level above is covered in full detail during training. Please see Council training calendar and climbing page for a description of training classes and dates.

Council Property Use and Site Endorsements:

Standard Operating Procedures exist for every site and identify how equipment and gear shall be used for any structure. A Lead Instructor must have a Site Endorsement before using Council sites or equipment. The process to obtain a site endorsement is covered during Instructor training.

Subject to weather, scheduling and other requirements, the following sites exist on Council property for use by properly trained Climbing Instructors serving either Council or Unit events:

- Indoor Artificial Climbing Wall at Mabee and Hale with Artificial Climbing Structure Level 2 training.
 - Top Rope Climbing only on Outdoor Artificial Climbing Walls at Mabee, Hale or Graves with Artificial Climbing Structure Level 2 training.
 - Climbing / Rappelling on Outdoor Artificial Climbing Tower at Mabee, Hale or Graves with Level 2 Climbing Instructor training.
 - Climbing or Rappelling on Natural Rock Wall at Cherokee with Level 2 Climbing Instructor training.
- A Council Site Reservation form, available at the scout office, on Council web site or from parties below, should be submitted 3 weeks prior to the event date; equipment and usage fees and restrictions may apply.
 - Prior to use of any structure or equipment, state issued identification will be requested by Council staff at location (Ranger typically) to confirm Lead Instructor identity, training status, facility reservation and equipment needs.
 - Council does not supply Climbing Instructors for use by Units. Climbing Instructors may agree to assist at a Unit event but their attendance is not guaranteed nor scheduled by the Council. Please contact parties below for assistance in identification of Climbing Instructors that may be available to staff your event.

Climbing Gear and Equipment:

Council has and maintains climbing equipment and gear that can be reserved for use on Council structures and property by Units if desired – see Climbing Site Reservation form for details and fees. The Council is unable to check out climbing gear or equipment to any Unit for use off Council property.

A participant's personal climbing gear, defined as helmet, harness, gloves or shoes, may be used at any event on or off Council property if allowed by the Lead Instructor of the event. It is strongly recommended that use of personal gear be limited to Climbing Instructors.

Unit or personal climbing equipment, defined as but not limited to ropes, carabineers, artificial protection, webbing and safety devices, may be used on Council property if approved by the Lead Instructor for the event. If a Unit chooses to bring its own equipment and gear, everything needed for the event must be provided by the Unit as no partial checkout of Council owned equipment or gear will be allowed.

Restrictions - Gear and Equipment:

All climbing equipment and gear shall be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and requirements. The following Council restrictions are identified for your planning purposes:

- Only manufactured seat harnesses should be used in climbing activities – a harness constructed from webbing wrapped about a participant is not approved for use.
- Either manufactured or constructed chest harnesses are allowed for use as needed during activities.
- Only helmets specifically made for climbing – certified to UIAA / CE requirements – are approved for use. No bicycle, motorcycle, football, baseball or any other helmets are approved for use.
- KNOTS – shall always be tied correctly and completely, backed with proper tail lengths and tested prior to being placed into the Life Safety System and checked repeatedly during use.
 - Manufactured (sewn) runners, loops or draws are excellent alternatives to a tied version of the same and are approved for use.
 - Stopper knots should be tied at the ends of all belay and rappel ropes when placed into use – remember, close the Life Safety System.

Universal Access for Climbing and Rappelling Activities:

Indian Nations Council supports universal access for all climbing events and will work to provide the necessary support that a Unit or Council event may require. If a Unit desires additional assistance in planning or staffing an event that has participant(s) needing the specialized training and equipment that may be needed for Universal Access, please contact the parties below for assistance.

Please have a Safe and Enjoyable Climbing experience and call or email with any needs or concerns:

Indian Nations Council
Scout Office – Outdoor Program Manager
(918) 743-6125

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Climbing Committee Chair
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