



**Twin Valley Council, BSA
Portable Climbing Wall
Usage & Operation Policy**

Revised April 4, 2009

Description

The portable climbing wall owned by the Twin Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America is a 20 foot tall simulated-rock climbing wall mounted on a portable trailer. The wall was built in 2005 by Mike Kunkel in Mapleton, MN. This climbing wall can be transported as a self contained trailer mounted unit and set up (utilizing hydraulics) to provide a climbing experience for Council defined uses.

Defined Climbing Wall Uses

In general, the climbing wall owned by Twin Valley Council will be used in support of the scouting program of the council. As such, the Climbing Committee (an authorized body of the council, hereby referred as "the committee") shall be delegated the authority, following national and council guidelines, to schedule and provide for operation and use of the climbing wall in support of the council scouting program.

Authorized Uses - Council Guidelines

The approved uses for which the council portable climbing wall (also referred to as "the wall") shall be:

1. In support of district and council recruitment opportunities.
2. In support of unit recruitment opportunities as available and with required conditions met as defined below.
3. In support of the council climbing program.
4. In support of climbing programs in and for the scout units of the Twin Valley Council.
5. In support of the summer camp program of the council.

Council Climbing Program

It is the mission of the Twin Valley Council Climbing Program to provide *quality outdoor activities* that aid in the *retention and recruitment of youth* in the Scouting program, aids in *youth advancement*, and supports the mission of the Boy Scouts of America.

It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make *ethical choices* over their lifetimes by instilling in them the *values of the Scout Oath and Law*.

Council & District Recruitment Opportunities

The primary reason for investing in the portable climbing wall is to provide a tool to assist with the recruitment activities within Twin Valley Council and its districts. The wall will only be used for Council and District Recruitment under the direct supervision and control of a minimum of **two properly certified BSA Climbing Instructors**. The Climbing Instructors must be present at all times at the climbing site when climbing is in progress and for set-up and take-down.

Members of the general public **and** members of the scouting community must fill out and sign individual permission forms for each climb. Climbers under 18 years of age must have their parent's signature before climbing. No charges or fees may be levied on persons climbing by the Council or District. The wall is NOT to be used for fund raising purposes. No costs associated with the wall availability or use will be charged to any organization associated with the recruitment opportunity.

Unit Recruitment Opportunities

The wall is available for specific recruitment purposes by individual scout units, Districts or Council sponsored activities. It is available to the scouting community under the direct supervision and control of a minimum of **two properly certified BSA Climbing Instructors**. The Climbing Instructors must be present at all times at the climbing site when climbing is in progress and for set-up and take-down. If the recruitment is being done under the auspices of an outside group, a hold harmless agreement and the appropriate insurance requirements must be met in accordance with national BSA Policy.

Members of the general public **and** members of the scouting community must fill out and sign individual permission forms for each climb. Climbers under 18 years of age must have their parent's signature before climbing. No charges or fees may be levied on persons climbing either individually or by the recruiting organization or its chartering organization or any other associated organization. The wall is NOT to be used for fund raising purposes. No costs associated with the wall availability or use will be charged to any organization associated with the recruitment opportunity.

Unit Climbing Programs

The Twin Valley Council portable climbing wall is available for use by individual scouting units as long as the use of the wall is consistent with the goals and ideals of Scouting.

Units will be required to provide transportation of the wall from its storage location to their usage site, provide assistance with the set-up and tear-down of the wall, and provide adult assistance to the climbing instructors with youth belaying, harnessing, etc. The wall will be under the direct supervision and control of a minimum of **two properly certified BSA climbing instructors**. It may be necessary to compensate the climbing instructors for their time and/or mileage.

All Scouts and Scouters must fill out and sign individual permission forms for each climb. Climbers under 18 years of age must have their parent's signature before climbing. No charges or fees may be levied on persons climbing. The wall is NOT to be used for fund raising purposes.

Summer Camp Program

The council Boy Scout summer camp program takes place at the council camp, Cuyuna Scout Camp, located in Crosslake, Minnesota. The council also operates numerous Cub Scout camping experiences throughout the summer. Since Cuyuna has its own permanent climbing facility, the wall will not have its primary use in support of the Boy Scout climbing program at Cuyuna.

The usage of the climbing wall, when staffed by qualified climbing instructors under the oversight of a BSA nationally certified Climbing Director, will provide climbing opportunities for scouts, leaders, and staff during Cub Scout summer camp programs if the program directors of such programs requests its use. In addition, the wall provides a facility which can be used in the Climbing Merit Badge program when not in use for the summer camp period.

Prohibited Usage - Council Guidelines

1. Usage not in accord with the aims and policies of scouting and/or the Twin Valley Council.
2. As a rental item to non-scouting organizations.
3. Usage in recruiting activities where the activity charges a fee for persons climbing. No fund raising by use of the wall may be accomplished by any organization, scouting or non-scouting, where the recruiting event is taking place. This means no one can be charged to climb in any way, shape, or manner.
4. Usage for any climbing activity where a fee for persons climbing is charged either to scouting registered or non-scouting persons in any way. No use in direct fund raising is allowed. This creates a fee-for-service contractual obligation as well as financial and operational liability. (All parties may then be liable to be successfully sued for real or perceived damages!)
5. Any manner deemed unsuitable by the Council Climbing Committee and not specifically determined prior to the publishing of these guidelines.

Request for Use

To obtain the use of the council portable climbing wall, for authorized purposes as defined above, the procedure to follow is listed below:

1. Activities and units desiring to request use of the wall must obtain a "Request for Council Climbing Wall" application.
2. All required items of the request form must be filled in, noting conditions/requirements for use.
3. The form shall be forwarded to the council Center for Scouting at least six (6) weeks in advance of the requested use date.
4. The form will be forwarded from the council Center for Scouting to the current Climbing Committee member designated to be the facilitator of the wall use approvals.
5. The designated committee member will arrange for required staffing, following BSA National Standards and local council requirements.
6. The appropriate transportation arrangements will be made for the delivery of the climbing wall to the location requested and return of the climbing wall to its permanent storage.
7. Arrangements will then be coordinated with use applicant assuring they will meet the terms of use for their application.
8. A report will be filed with the council and the calendar of use will be finalized.
9. After all the preceding requirements have been met the applicant will be notified in writing of results of their application for the use date and service requested.
10. Approximately one week prior to the approved wall use the facilitator will verify committed staffing and verify with the requesting organization their planning and staffing in support of the wall use.

11. On the day of use, all inspections and record keeping will be initiated and the wall will be set up only after the arrival of the two climbing instructors. Use of the wall will commence and be implemented in accordance with all requirements and policies governing its use until such time as the requested duration of use is over or environmental conditions require a cessation of use. The wall will then be taken down under the direction of the two climbing instructors and made ready for return transportation. At the end of wall use all inspections and record keeping will be done as required and the wall returned to its permanent storage. Any reporting required to council will be forwarded to complete the activity.

Physical Space - Minimum Requirements

1. Area of operation

A rectangular level area with a minimum width of 40 feet and length of 80 feet is required. A clear aerial spacing for a distance of 30 feet above the complete rectangular area is also required. No power lines or other overhead obstructions are allowed in this 40' x 80' area.

3. Physical Access for Towing vehicle and Trailer Combination

Physical access with navigable entry and exit for the wall / trailer / towing vehicle combination shall be provided. Ground space provided in accordance with the areas defined above shall be of a hardness to permit a road registered and council approved towing vehicle to be used to move the wall/trailer combination in an entry, exit mode as well as allowing sufficient mechanical stability of the wall/trailer combination and its supporting structures to be utilized in its intended application in a safe and prudent manner.

Supporting Requirements

Ballasting

The wall/trailer combination must be safely ballasted at all times when being used outdoors where wind loading may be a factor. Ballasting shall be provided as follows:

- A) Water ballast - The water ballast tank shall be utilized by being completely filled (approximately 250 US gallons or 2,000 lbs) with clean usable water. This water is required to be supplied by 3/4 inch diameter or larger flexible hose of sufficient flexibility to be placed into the ballast tank opening safely and positioned there (using whatever means can be safely provided) during the duration of the filling procedure. The water shall be delivered using the previously described hose under sufficient pressure to be filled safely within a 30-minute period from start of filling. There shall be sufficient capability to allow removal of the water either by pumping from the fill opening or utilizing the existing tank drain plug allowing environmentally conscious disposal of the ballast water following the end of use of the wall at that location.
- B) Vehicle ballast – The climbing wall trailer hitch can be connected to the tow vehicle or similar vehicle. Both the ball hitch and safety chains must be connected at all times while the wall is in use. The keys for the attached vehicle must be in the possession of the lead climbing instructor to prevent accidental movement of the attached vehicle while the wall is in use.

Tow vehicle

The tow vehicle shall be equipped with a class IV hitch with hitch ball size 2 inches. The tow vehicle must be rated to tow a 5,000 lb trailer and must be equipped with a 5- prong round trailer lighting connection (preferred) or a 4-prong flat connector (adaptor required.) Once connected to the tow vehicle, all lights must be checked and verified before the trailer is moved.

Operational Requirements - Minimum

Staffing

Staffing will be dependant on the type of climbing activity that's being conducted. **At a minimum, staffing will always consist of two certified BSA climbing instructors.** When used within a Boy Scout unit-level climbing activity, two climbing instructors will be sufficient to oversee climbing and belaying activities for the boys that are working on their climbing merit badge.

For recruiting events, the climbing instructors may also be required to act as the belayers. In this scenario, additional certified instructors may be required to provide site security, harness assistance, belaying relief, etc.

National Standards

All National BSA Climbing / Rappelling standards (20-102) will be followed at all times. In addition, all Twin Valley Council policies and procedures must be followed at all times. Failure to comply with these standards will result in immediate shut-down of the climbing event and a review by the Council Climbing Committee.

Environmental Considerations

Climbing is a "fair weather" activity. Climbing is not to be attempted during rain, sleet, or snow. The portable climbing wall must not be erected or used if winds exceed 30 mph. An anemometer (wind speed gauge) is provided with the trailer to check and document the wind speed.

Since the climbing structure is in essence a giant lightning rod, thunder and / or lightning will immediately cause all climbing activities to cease, even if no rain is present. The climbing structure will remain off-limits for a full 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder is heard or the last lightning strike is seen. The climbing structure will not be raised or lowered, assembled or disassembled during this lightning lock-out period. A minimum distance of 20 feet must be kept away from the climbing structure during a lightning lock-out.