

Portable Climbing Wall Standards Response

I. Program Site / Facility

M1 A climbing/rappelling facility on BSA property must be monitored or secured to prevent unauthorized use (disabled to a height of at least 12 feet or otherwise disabled). Warning signs must be posted at designated climbing/rappelling sites.

When not in use, the portable wall will be lowered and secured to prevent unauthorized use. All climbing will be done with the required climbing instructors.

M2 Climbing or rappelling at natural sites must be done on stable rock that is suitable for climbing and rappelling. The climbing area has a designated place for onlookers that is outside the fall zone.

The portable wall is to be cordoned off to prevent onlookers from interfering with the climbers or belayers. The portable wall will be lowered and secured when not in use.

M3 If mobile climbing walls are used, the following items have been documented: compliance with state and local regulations, replacement frequency for auto-belay cables and equipment, and proper anchoring for wind resistance. The manufacturer's recommendations and applicable climbing standards are followed, and the facility is inspected before and after each period of use.

There are no state regulations at this time that the council is aware of and auto-belay devices are not being used. The wall must be anchored via specified water or vehicle ballasts. Portable wall is only to be used with the outriggers fully extended and said ballast in place (see "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures".) The portable wall is to be inspected and said inspection documented before and after each use using the "Structure Inspection Form".

M4 Constructed facilities must meet Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) or Climbing Wall Association (CWA) installation standards for belay cables and terminations, ground anchors, guy cables, beams, and poles as well as applicable state and local laws. Facilities must be inspected every **two years** by a professional challenge course builder or structural engineer to verify compliance with design standards. Written documentation of inspections are on file. Bouldering walls may be inspected by the local council.

*Portable wall was inspected and certified by I & S Engineers and Architects in **April 2006**. Copy of certification letter is available. **We need to get the wall re-inspected and recertified. The 2007 standards required inspections only every four years.***

M5 Constructed bouldering walls and horizontal walls must meet ACCT or CWA installation standards for poles, beams, wood, fasteners, and holds, as well as applicable state and local laws. Bouldering facilities must be inspected every two years by members of the local council COPE/climbing committee to verify compliance with design standards and that written documentation of inspections are on file.

Not applicable. This response only applies to the portable climbing wall.

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M6 Activity sites are free of distractions from other program areas and from potential hazards such as power lines, vehicular traffic, and exposed ridges. These sites are also free of other identifiable hazards that could endanger participants, staff members, or onlookers.

See "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures" and "Portable Climbing Wall Usage & Operation Policy" for site requirements.

M7 The climbing/rappelling site or facility has climbing routes that vary in difficulty to accommodate participants with different skill levels.

Holds are installed to allow for climbers of all skill levels.

M8 A written policy is followed to protect the climbing/rappelling site from environmental degradation. A well planned, constructed, and maintained trail system is used. Staff members are knowledgeable in the principles of Leave No Trace where they are applicable to climbing and rappelling.

The portable climbing wall is to be used only on flat, level surfaces with vehicle access. Care is to be taken on where the vehicle and wall are driven and parked.

II. Program Administration

M9 If private or public property is used for council climbing/ rappelling programs, written permission from the landowner/ manager for BSA climbing/rappelling activities must be available for review.

*Written permission is to be obtained when the portable climbing wall is used on property other than Twin Valley Council property. **This is a new standard in 2009. Need to add something to the policy on this.***

M10 A minimum of two climbing staff members (director, lead instructor, or instructor) must supervise any climbing activity within the scope of their training. Each staff member supervises no more than six participants, including adult leaders, in climbing or rappelling.

Two climbing instructors are to be present each time the portable wall is used for council or district activities. Only two climbers will be active on the wall at a time.

M11 Close calls (incidents that do not result in injury but reveal a potential safety problem), accidents, or injuries that occur during climbing/rappelling activities must be documented by the staff. They are periodically reviewed by the climbing director, program director, camp director, climbing committee, and council health and safety and/or risk management committee. A written action plan is developed listing the steps taken to reduce the potential of recurrence.

Close calls, accidents, and injuries will be documented on the "Event Log & Use Report". Accidents and injuries will be documented in the first aid log. All logs will be reviewed at least annually.

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M12 A site-specific written maintenance checklist of facilities and equipment is used for the climbing committee inspection and is available to the regional BSA climbing visitation team. A record of these inspections should be kept with the climbing records, the ranger's records, and the council's records.

The climbing area (natural or constructed) is inspected before and after peak season usage by a trained climbing director and members of the council climbing committee that submits written recommendations to the council, and once by a BSA regional visitation team. The council schedules, completes, and documents facility additions, repairs, and maintenance based on these recommendations.

Council inspection dates:

1.
2.

All equipment is to be inspected prior to and after each use and documented. Documents are reviewed annually by the council climbing committee and council advisor.

M13 If climbing is conducted for groups with special needs, adult leaders familiar with the conditions and abilities of the group are included in an appropriate ratio for the group size..

The portable wall is equally available to disabled youth.

M14 Other organizations or groups are permitted to use the camp climbing/rappelling site or facility only with a hold harmless agreement, facility use agreement, and certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million. When the council operates the program, camp climbing equipment or approved personal equipment must be used. When an outside organization operates the program, it must provide its own equipment and instructors.

The portable climbing wall is not to be used by outside organizations per the "Portable Climbing Wall Usage & Operation Policy."

M15 A currently trained Project COPE director or climbing director chairs the council COPE/climbing committee. A National Camping School-trained counterpart also serves on the committee if both programs are offered. At least one member of the council COPE/climbing committee is a member of the ACCT.

COPE/Climbing committee chair: Keith Fitzpatrick

COPE director Climbing director

Date of training:

Conditionally Compliant. See above information. Need to get dates from Keith.

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III. Staff Qualifications and Training

M16 The climbing/rappelling site operates under the supervision of a climbing director who is at least 21 years of age, is a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America, and has successfully completed the Climbing section of a BSA National Camping School within the last five camping seasons or is a BSA-trained climbing lead instructor.

Documentation of instruction in climbing/rappelling/bouldering at least once in the past six months or within the last camping season is available to the regional visitation specialist..

Director: Keith Fitzpatrick .

Date of certificate of training:

Lead Instructor: Greg Hasse .

Date of certificate of training:

Conditionally Compliant. See above information. Need to get dates from Keith.

M17 A written climbing/rappelling/bouldering staff training plan has been implemented for the council's climbing program.

A written instructor training plan is available. See the "Portable Climbing Wall Training Syllabus" document within the Climbing Wall training manual that contains this document. At this time training is only available for Scouters with previous climbing experience and who pass a proficiency exam in inspection and belaying techniques.

M18 All climbing lead instructors (age 21 and above), instructors (age 18 and above), and instructors-in-training (at least age 16) are currently registered members of the Boy Scouts of America and have current certificates of training for their position as described in Topping Out, No. 32007.

All instructors are required to be registered members as stated. Certificates of training are issued following successful completion of climbing wall training and the proficiency exam.

M19 A bouldering wall or horizontal wall may be supervised and run by a climbing director, lead instructor, or adult bouldering facilitator. An adult bouldering facilitator is at least 18 years of age and has been trained by a climbing director. The type and length of training and the number of supervising staff will be determined by the climbing director.

Participants' feet must never be higher above ground than their shoulder height, and participants must not be allowed to climb over the top of the bouldering facility.

Not applicable.

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M20 At least one climbing staff member or one or more persons at the climbing/rappelling site must be currently trained in American Red Cross Standard First Aid (a 6½-hour course that includes CPR), or Level I National Safety Council First Aid, or the equivalent from another nationally or regionally recognized organization, and must be physically present in the immediate area whenever climbing or rappelling is done.

In addition, if climbing/rappelling is done at a remote site, Wilderness First Aid (a 16-hour course) or The American Red Cross Emergency Response (a 43½-hour course) is recommended.

At least one climbing instructor will be CPR & First Aid trained when the wall is in use. The certified CPR and First Aid trained instructor will be documented on the event log.

IV. Anchors

M21 All anchors must be fail-proof or backed up and the load distributed.

Portable wall uses 5,000 lb load tested fixed steel rings as top anchor points.

M22 Bolts and hangers must be manufactured specifically for climbing purposes. The length of bolts is appropriate for the type of rock; 2½ inches is the minimum. Pitons are never used in BSA climbing.

Compliant. No rock bolts are used in the portable climbing wall. All anchor bolts are 3/8" diameter or larger.

M23 Well-rooted, healthy trees may be used as anchor points in an anchor system. Trees must be at least 6 inches in diameter at the point of attachment and protected from damage.

N/A. No living anchors will be used on the portable climbing wall.

M24 Tower and wall anchor systems must follow ACCT installation standards and have a strength of at least 22.2 kiloNewtons (5,000 pounds). Natural site anchors are placed to provide the most effective protection for both the climber and the belayer.

For all locations, the belayer's position allows for no slack between the belayer and the anchor point and is kept in direct line with a potential fall.

Portable wall uses 5,000 lb load tested fixed steel rings as top anchor points. A fixed belay anchor bar to be used with the tow vehicle and receiver hitch is available for use outdoors. See setup instructions for details.

Indoor use will require a 50% belayer weight advantage over the climber to ensure safe belaying OR a backup "stump" will be attached to the belayer using a piece of webbing or PAS webbing tied or clipped via carabiner between the belayer and stump harnesses.

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M25 Installation of climbing bolts on BSA property must have council approval. A written record is available indicating that anchor bolts and hangers on council property have been installed by a qualified individual who has training and/or experience in installing climbing bolts, and have been checked at least twice annually by the climbing director.

N/A. No anchor bolts or hangers for top-roping anchoring will be used.

V. Program Equipment

M26 Each person in the climbing/rappelling fall zone (as determined by the director or lead instructor) must wear a UIAA- or CE-approved climbing helmet. All helmets must be retired according to the manufacturer's recommendations or sooner if conditions warrant.

All equipment meets all current industry standards. Usage is documented with each use.

M27 All cordage used for climbing (climbing ropes, accessory cord, and webbing) must be designed for climbing and used according to the manufacturer's recommendations. All dynamic ropes must be UIAA- or CE-approved. All static ropes must have a tensile strength (breaking strength) rating of at least 22.2 kiloNewtons (5,000 pounds) when new. A diameter of 7/16 inch or 11 millimeters is recommended for static rappelling ropes; every climbing rope must have a minimum diameter of 10.5 millimeters. All ropes and nylon webbing must be new when procured. Use of three-strand rope (gold line) for climbing or rappelling is prohibited. Three-strand (multiline) rope ½ inch or larger in diameter may be used for lobster claws and hand lines. Webbing must be designed for climbing and must have a minimum breaking strength of 15.6 kiloNewtons (3,500 pounds) when new.

All equipment meets all current industry standards. Usage is documented with each use.

M28 A written log of the history of each rope used in the program must be kept, indicating: (1) the date the rope was purchased, (2) the number and type of participant uses and any unusual impacts, and (3) any environmental or severe stresses that were placed on the rope. Each rope must be uniquely marked and permanently identified. All webbing must be marked with the date of purchase. All cordage (climbing ropes, accessory cord, and webbing) must be retired according to the manufacturer's recommendations, but no more than five years from the date of being placed into service or 10 years from the date of purchase or sooner if conditions warrant.

All equipment meets all current industry standards. Usage is documented with each use.

M29 All specialized equipment (carabiners, helmets, belay and rappel devices, webbing, ropes, etc.) needed for conducting a safe climbing program must be available to participants and staff members. Personal climbing helmets, harnesses, and shoes may be used if inspected and approved by the on-site director/instructor and if they meet BSA equipment standards. Personal climbing/rappelling ropes, hardware, and webbing are not allowed.

All equipment meets all current industry standards. Usage is documented with each use. Personal equipment is not to be used unless inspected as stated above. Personal ropes, hardware, and webbing are not to be used.

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M30 A properly sized commercial climbing harness or a tied-seat harness made from at least 1-inch-wide webbing is required on all belayed activities. In addition, a chest harness or full-body harness must be used for participants whose body shape could allow them to slip out of a seat harness if inverted. Harnesses must be carefully inspected before each use and retired when damaged or excessively worn.

All climbing harnesses must be used and retired according to the manufacturer's recommendations or no more than seven years from the date of purchase, or sooner if conditions warrant it.

All equipment meets all current industry standards. Usage is documented with each use. Only commercial climbing harnesses will be used with the portable climbing wall. Full body harnesses are available for small statured kids.

M31 An appropriate, commercially produced belay device attached with a locking carabiner is used for belaying. An appropriate commercially produced rappel device attached with a locking carabiner is used for rappelling. Brake bars on carabiners are prohibited. If a rappel or brake rack or a Münter hitch is used, the director and instructors must have the knowledge and experience to use them in a safe manner.

Both a Black Diamond ATC belay plate and a Petzl Gri-Gri are available for use. All equipment meets all current industry standards. Usage is documented with each use.

M32 When not being used, equipment must be kept in locked, protected storage, away from exposure to sunlight, heat, excessive moisture, chemicals, or destruction or contamination by animals.

All equipment is to be stored in duffle bags, and securely stored in the lock box mounted on the trailer or stored off the trailer during climbing activities.

M33 Climbing directors and instructors regularly inspect climbing/rappelling equipment and are taught how to inspect equipment for defects that render equipment unsafe for usage. Retired equipment is disposed of in such a way that it cannot be retrieved.

All climbing equipment will be inspected and documented before and after each use.

M34 Written equipment records are kept that include a complete and current inventory and a record of date of purchase, issue, and date placed in service..

All climbing equipment is fully documented.

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VI. Participant Prerequisites

M35 Climbing/rappelling equipment, instruction, and activities must be age-appropriate and geared to the skill level of the participants. See Age-Appropriate Guidelines, No. 18-260.

Climbing routes are available for all age and skill levels. Climbing harnesses are available for all ages.

M36 Personal objects that could lead to injuries are removed before participants or staff members engage in climbing/ rappelling activities. Long hair must be tied up and/or tucked.

Included as part of the participant safety instruction as documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

M37 No one is ever coerced or pressured into attempting any activity. A participant may be encouraged to take the next small step, but the final choice of participation and performance is left entirely up to the individual.

Included as part of the participant safety instruction as documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

M38 Several warm-up activities are conducted at the beginning of each program session.

Included as part of the participant safety instruction as documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

M39 A site and safety orientation is conducted for participants by an instructor or director before the climbing/rappelling activity. A written checklist is used to ensure that all points are covered during the orientation.

Included as part of the participant safety instruction as documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

M40 The technique of safe spotting is explained, demonstrated, and practiced before participants are permitted to engage in any activity requiring that skill.

N/A. All climbing activities on the portable wall are to be conducted top-roped.

M41 The techniques of proper belaying and use of signals and equipment are explained, demonstrated, and practiced under safe conditions before participants are permitted to engage in climbing or rappelling.

Included as part of the participant safety instruction as documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

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M42 Participants are thoroughly trained in the proper use of specialized equipment such as a commercial or tied-seat harness, carabiners, belay and rappel devices, and climbing ropes before using them.

Included as part of the participant safety instruction as documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

VII. Program Safety Procedures

M43 The on-site climbing director or lead instructor determines if the safety of a participant might be compromised by course conditions, staffing, weather, or any other factor, and is empowered to open or close the climbing program. Staff members are trained to monitor environmental conditions and their effect on participants.

Documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

M44 Written, site-specific rules and safety procedures are known and used by the climbing staff.

Documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures."

M45 All climbing participants are top-roped. All rappelling participants are belayed. All participants rappelling on a single rope are belayed with an independent line. Releasable rappel lines are recommended.

All climbing activities on the portable wall are to be conducted top-roped.

M46 Climbing staff must use a load-limiting device when in a leading edge environment. Webbing or lanyards used for self-protection must have a breaking strength of at least 22.2 kiloNewtons (5,000 pounds) when new.

Not applicable for the portable climbing wall.

M47 Participants must be belayed or anchored when climbing higher than shoulder height above the ground or in an elevated area where a fall could occur. Any time a belay is changed, procedures are in effect to ensure that a new belay or safety line is secured to the participant before a previous one is removed.

All climbing activities on the portable wall are to be conducted top-roped. Belayers are only to be changed with the climber on the ground.

M48 Participant and staff knots, carabiners, and harnesses are double-checked before each use.

Documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures." The second instructor must always inspect the knots and setup of the first instructor, and vice-versa.

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M49 Each participant is spotted with extreme care by a minimum of two spotters when bouldering or when necessary at the climbing site. A boulderer's feet must go no higher than his or her shoulder height. Staff members determine helmet use at bouldering site.

N/A. All climbing activities on the portable wall are to be conducted top-roped.

M49 For each off-season (non-summer camp) activity, a medical health history/informed consent form signed by a parent or legal guardian is required for all participants. Non-Scout groups must also complete the hold harmless section of the form. For summer camp programs, participants will follow the camps established medical screening procedure.

Participants should be asked to relate any recent injuries or illnesses to the director/instructor before participating. The director/instructor will make appropriate adjustment.

All supervision, discipline and protections should be adjusted to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. For significant health concerns, an examination by a physician and consultation with parent/guardian is appropriate.

Documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures." Health history forms to be completed by all participants.

M50 The climbing director and/or instructor, using a written checklist, must make a daily visual check of the facilities and equipment, including hardware, rope, and anchor points. Hazards identified during this inspection must be corrected before the activity is undertaken.

Documented in the "Portable Climbing Wall Set-Up & Tear-Down Procedures." An event log and inspection form is to be completed in full before each use.

VIII. First Aid and Emergency Procedures

M51 Written, site-specific plans identifying possible emergencies, including rescues, and procedures for resolving them are reviewed with climbing staff members. Written, site-specific plans for emergency evacuations from climbing/rappelling sites are developed, and procedures are rehearsed annually by climbing staff members.

All climbing activities are conducted in urban areas where medical response is readily available. Extreme rescues are to be conducted by simply lowering the wall to a horizontal position and removing the climber from ground level.

M52 A reliable means of electronic emergency communications is available during climbing/rappelling activities. In addition, a reliable backup emergency communications system is in place. This could be a runner if the distance to help or other more reliable method of communication is reasonable.

Climbing instructors are to have cellular phones at their disposal.

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M53 Medical supplies appropriate for likely climbing injuries must be available at the climbing site. Medical supplies must be accessible to staff members when climbing/rappelling takes place.

A first aid bag is stored in the trailer lock box.

M54 Designated equipment appropriate for rescue is available at the climbing/rappelling site when an activity is being conducted. When used to belay two persons, a rescue rope must be rated for a two-person load..

N/A. Extreme rescues are to be conducted by simply lowering the wall to a horizontal position and removing the climber from ground level.