

Great Salt Lake Council Unit Policy for Climbing, Rappelling, and Specialized Climbing Activities

The policies below apply to unit-level climbing, rappelling, and specialized climbing activities, including canyoneering, ice climbing, mountaineering, and caving conducted at off-council property locations.

A. ACTIVITY ADMINISTRATION. The following must be observed in all climbing, rappelling, and specialized climbing activities:

A1: Each person (instructors, unit leaders, and participants) must comply with these policies, Great Salt Lake Council policies, *Climb On Safely* guidelines, Age Appropriate Guidelines and other guidelines in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, Section PS-206 COPE and/or Climbing Programs in the *BSA National Camp Standards*, *Topping Out* or its replacement when it becomes available and, when applicable, the *ACCT Standards* published by the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT). In the case of a conflict between the listed applicable publications, the more conservative rule shall apply.

A2: Parts A, B, and C of the Annual Health and Medical Record must be properly completed for each person. Persons with serious medical problems should have approval from a physician to participate and provide the information to the supervising instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be made. The Annual Health and Medical Record must be turned in to and reviewed by designated personnel and must be available during the activity.

A3: Units must complete an approved Tour and Activity Plan and submit the plan to the Council for review. Unit leaders must take Climb On Safely training prior to taking their units on climbing activities.

A4: Each instructor must be trained for the activity in a BSA Climbing Instructor training program or an approved non-BSA certification program. BSA Climbing Instructor Level I qualifications are valid for one year. BSA Climbing Instructor Level II qualifications are valid for three years. If training is obtained outside of the BSA, proof of continuing education and certification must be provided and approved every two years.

A5: Each activity must have a minimum of two qualified instructors: one Climbing Director or Climbing Level II Instructor **and** one other Climbing Director, Climbing Level II Instructor or Climbing Level I Instructor. At least one Climbing Director or Climbing Level II Instructor must also have an approved canyoneering, ice climbing, mountaineering, or caving qualification when applicable.

A6: The ratio of instructors to participants is 1:6 with a minimum of two instructors.

A7: The Council Climbing Committee and/or the Committee Chair reserve the right to suspend or revoke the qualifications of any instructor that is determined to lack satisfactory knowledge, skill, understanding, and/or judgment.

A8: An instructor must brief everyone as to what is expected to take place during the activity and review proper safety practices, techniques, signals, and equipment use before entering the activity area.

A9: An emergency plan must be in place for every activity.

A10: A safety C.H.E.C.K. must be done every time someone enters the risk zone.

A11: Only one participant is permitted to climb or rappel at a given station at a time.

A12: Horseplay should never be encouraged, permitted, or tolerated while the activity is being conducted. Speedy or bounding descents that place a shock or unusual strain on the anchors, the rope, and/or the belayer are not allowed. Australian, or assault face-first rappelling will not be taught or used. A rappeller will not jump from the top edge in an assault or emergency type of rappel.

A13: No participant is ever coerced or pressured into attempting an 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.

A14: At least one person present at the activity must have a valid certificate of training in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). If the activity site is more than 30 minutes away from an emergency vehicle-accessible roadway, then a person trained to a minimum level of wilderness and remote first aid (16 hours) must be present.

A15: All instructors and participants must be belayed when rappelling. The following belay methods are approved for rappelling:

- Double-line rappel with an independent belay line.
- Single-line rappel with an independent belay line.
- Double-line rappel with a fireman's belay.

Except as specifically stated in the Canyoneering policy below, the use of a single-line rappel with a fireman's belay is not allowed.

A16: Each person must comply with applicable land manager permit requirements, rules, regulations, and agreements.

B. EQUIPMENT, ANCHORS, AND RIGGING. The following equipment, anchor, and rigging requirements must be observed in all climbing, rappelling, and specialized climbing activities:

B1: All equipment shall be used and retired in compliance with manufacturer instructions, BSA National Camp Standards and, when applicable, ACCT standards. All equipment must be used in the manner intended by the manufacturer.

B2: Rapid links must have a minimum-rated breaking strength of 5,000 lbf (22.2 kN) and must be UIAA or CEN approved.

B3: Dynamic Rope shall meet UIAA or CEN standards or be approved by the manufacturer for belaying a single person.

B4: Low Stretch Rope and Static Rope shall meet one or more of the following standards: UIAA 107, NFPA 1983, EN 1891 (Type A), or CI 1801 or be approved by the manufacturer for belaying a single participant.

B5: When used to belay two people the rope(s) must be rated for a two-person load (e.g., assisted rappel or pick-off).

B6: A written log of each rope must be kept, indicating (1) the date the rope was purchased; (2) the date the rope was placed in service; and (3) any environmental, severe, or unusual stresses that were placed on the rope. All webbing and cordage used in life safety systems by participants must have a known history and must be uniquely marked and permanently identified. Equipment inventory records must be kept that identify retirement criteria based on manufacturer's recommendations.

B7: Every person must wear a UIAA, CEN, or ASTM approved rock-climbing helmet with the chin strap secured when rappelling, climbing, belaying, or when within the risk zone and fall zone.

B8: All belayers and rappellers must wear gloves.

B9: Personal climbing helmets and harnesses may be used if inspected and approved by the on-site supervising instructor.

B10: Anchor systems must be fail-proof or backed up and the load equalized. Pitons may not be used in anchor systems. Trees used as anchor points must be well-rooted, healthy, at least six inches in diameter at the point of attachment, and protected from damage. Belay system rigging must allow rappelling participants to be quickly and safely lowered if the rappel device becomes jammed (e.g., releasable rappel).

B11: Every rappel device must be rigged to provide appropriate friction for the circumstances and characteristics that are specific to the rappel and the participant.

B12: Rescue equipment and medical supplies appropriate for likely incidents must be present in the activity area.

C. CANYONEERING. The following must be observed in all canyoneering activities where the canyon to be descended is rated Class III or higher according to the ACA Canyon Rating System:

C1: All canyoneering activities must be conducted under the supervision of at least two instructors. One instructor must either be a BSA Canyon Leader or certified in an approved non-BSA canyoneering certification program. BSA Canyon Leader qualifications are valid for three years. If canyoneering certification is obtained outside of the BSA, proof of continuing education and certification must be provided and approved every two years.

C2: BSA Canyon Leaders may only supervise the descent of canyons that are approved for the instructor's level of qualification (e.g., a BSA Canyon Leader I may only supervise the descent of an approved Level I canyon).

C3: Group size shall not exceed 12, unless the land manager or applicable permit requires a smaller group size.

C4: A person trained to a minimum level of wilderness and remote first aid (16 hours) must be present during the activity.

C5: The supervising instructor must have descended the canyon prior to the activity and where possible a recent descent of the canyon should be done. In addition, at least one other person must have the knowledge, skill, and experience to safely exit the canyon and summon assistance in an emergency.

C6: Each participant must attend a ground school session and an on-rock session suitable for the canyon to be descended.

C7: If the canyon necessitates swimming, then all instructors and participants must pass the BSA swim check and dual buddy system (person in front and person behind) must be implemented.

C8: The canyon to be descended shall be appropriate according to the mental, physical, emotional, and social maturity of the participants. Boy Scouts may descend approved Level I canyons. Older Boy Scouts (13 years or older), Varsity Scouts, and Venturers may descend approved Level I and II canyons. Cub Scouts and Webelos may not participate in canyoneering activities.

C9: A single-line rappel with a fireman belay may be used in limited circumstances when under the supervision of a Canyon Leader II.

D. ICE CLIMBING AND MOUNTAINEERING. The following must be observed in all ice climbing and mountaineering activities:

D1: All ice climbing and mountaineering activities must be conducted under the supervision of at least two instructors. One instructor must either be a BSA Mountain Leader or certified in an approved non-BSA ice climbing or mountaineering certification program. BSA Mountain Leader qualifications are valid for three years. If ice climbing or mountaineering certification is obtained outside of the BSA, proof of continuing education and certification must be provided and approved every two years.

D2: Each person must wear appropriate eye protection when ice climbing.

D3: Ice screws may not be used as a part of any anchor system.

E. CAVING. The following must be observed in all caving activities:

E1: All activities must be in conformance with the BSA publication, *Caving A policy statement and guidelines on caving prepared by the Youth Groups Liaison Committee of the National Speleological Society and the Boy Scouts of America.*