GSLC Unit Canyoneering Policy

Great Salt Lake Council Unit Canyoneering Policy Standards in effect March 1, 2011, are mandatory for all units that participate in descending technical canyons rated Class 3 or higher using the ACA (American Canyoneering Association) rating system.

Participants shall be in compliance with the applicable Great Salt Lake Council Policy, National Standards, BSA Climb On Safely, Topping Out Climbing/Rappelling and ACA (American Canyoneering Association) publications.

All participants must complete parts A, B, and C of the Annual Health and Medical Record (680-001, Rev. 11/2010). All participants must complete the Parental Informed Consent Agreement for Climbing/Rappelling Activities form. Both the Annual Health and Medical Record and the Parental Informed Consent Agreement for Climbing/Rappelling Activities forms must be turned into and reviewed by the designated personnel. Persons with serious medical problems should have approval from a physician to participate and provide that information to the Canyon Leader, and an emergency communication plan must be in place for every activity.

The Canyon Leader in charge must comply with the GSLC and ACA Policies and Standards. GSL Canyon Leaders must be trained for that activity in a Great Salt Lake Council, ACA or approved instructor training program. Canyoneering requires supervision by at least two qualified instructors (see items 3,4 and 5 below).

All participants must attend ground school (classroom) and on rock rappelling sessions suitable for the canyon to be descended. If the canyon necessitates swimming, then all participants must pass the BSA swim check and a dual buddy system (person in front and person behind) must be implemented. The instructors must brief everyone as to what is to be accomplished and review proper voice commands before leaving the staging area.

Horseplay should never be encouraged, permitted, or tolerated while the program is being conducted. No speedy or bounding descent that places a strain on the anchors, the rope, and/or the belayer will be used, nor will Australian, or assault face-first rappelling be taught or used. A rappeller will not jump from the top edge in an assault or emergency type of rappel.

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 technical portion of the canyon. Instructors must inspect and approve all personal equipment used in the designated canyon per the BSA National Standards.

BSA Canyon Leaders are encouraged to obtain as much canyon specific training as possible. **There can be no substitute for planning and training.**

The following must be followed by, but not limited to, all unit climbing and rappelling activities.

1. Units must file and obtain an approved Council Tour Plan that states the activity to be participated in.
2. All participants must fill out the Annual Health and Medical and Parental Informed Consent Agreement for Climbing/Rappelling Activities forms.
3. Units must have minimum of two qualified instructors. (One GSLC Canyon Leader **and** one other climbing director, lead climbing instructor or climbing instructor)
4. The ratio of instructors to participants (Scouts, Scoutmasters etc) is 1:6 with a minimum of two instructors (see #3 above).
5. All instructor certifications (BSA or approved training) are valid for 2 years ending on December 31 of the expiring year. If training is obtained outside of BSA, proof of continued education and certification must be obtained at a minimum of every two years.
6. One person on site must have a minimum of CPR and basic first aid certification. If emergency evacuation is more then 30 minutes by ground, it is recommended that a staff member trained to a minimum level of wilderness first aid (16 hours) be present.
7. All participants must wear UIAA, CEN or ASTM approved rock-climbing helmet with chinstrap.
8. All belayers and rappellers must wear gloves.
9. All static ropes used for rappelling must have a tensile strength (breaking strength) of at least 22.2 kiloNewtons (5,000 pounds) when new and must be UIAA or CEN approved.
10. Records must be kept on all equipment (ropes, helmets, webbing and cordage, harnesses and hardware etc.) used according to the guidelines of Topping Out and the BSA National Standards.
11. All equipment (ropes, helmets, webbing and cordage, harnesses and hardware etc.) must be retired according to the guidelines of Topping Out and the BSA National Standards.
12. Where possible, releasable anchors should be used for rappelling (e.g. munter mule or contingency eight).
13. The Canyon Leader or additional director/instructor must have descended the canyon prior to the Unit activity and where possible a recent descent of the canyon should be done.