

# **Climbing Section to the RSOP Staff Handbook**

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# RSOP CLIMBING

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## Mission

The RSOP Climbing Program uses climbing and group activities as tools to foster healthy, active lifestyles, to promote personal growth and to help us explore our connections to each other and to the natural world.

The Climbing Program's overall purpose is two fold: to provide high quality experiences and instruction for participants and to provide training and practical teaching experience for staff.

Our courses serve beginners through experienced climbers. Our classrooms include the UMD Inland and North Shore Climbing Walls and outdoor locations such as Whoopie Wall, Ely's Peak, Silver Cliff, Shovel Point, Carlton Peak and the Johnson Lake Set. Programs include: Introduction to Rock Climbing Indoors and Outdoors, PCIA Climbing Instructor Certifications, Working Toward Self-Sufficiency, Introduction to Lead Climbing, Adaptive Climbing Night, Intro to Bouldering, Ice Climbing and rock climbing trips to locations like Minnesota's North Shore, Devil's Tower, Wyoming and Moab, Utah.'

## Values

The RSOP Climbing Program strives to treat each person with kindness, dignity and respect at all times. We recognize, understand and encourage celebration of human differences. We ask you to participate in fostering this spirit. Any expression of bigotry, hatred, prejudice or disrespect is inconsistent with the ideals of preserving human dignity and contradicts the values of healthful living and fair play promoted by the RSOP staff.

## Policies and Procedures

Note: As a climbing instructor you are held to the highest standards of professionalism and service. The safety and well being of each participant is your primary concern. Policies and procedures are meant to help you with this responsibility but are not meant to take the place of instructor judgment and integrity. Be constantly aware of the big picture as well as small details and do what it takes to make each situation a safe one.

### Indoor Climbing Walls

- All participants must have a liability waiver on file for the current year. Participants under 18 years of age must have a liability waiver signed by a parent or legal guardian.
- Climbers must wear shoes while climbing. No open heels or toes.
- We will maintain a student to instructor ratio of not more than 10:1 for roped climbing.
- Participants under 15 years old must have a parent or guardian present unless previously arranged with Instructor or Director.

- An Incident Report must be completed ASAP for all injuries or situations that could have caused injuries or damage to equipment. The completed form is to be turned in to the Climbing Director the same day the accident/near miss occurred.

### **Belay Policy**

- Belay techniques must keep hands primarily in the locked off position and a full brake hand on at all times. Other techniques are NOT acceptable.
- All belayers must have a back-up belayer unless checked off to belay. (Those checked off are issued a belay card to hang from the harness when they are climbing and belaying.)
- In most cases, the back-up belayer should be seated flat on the floor just behind the belayer.
- If climbers outweigh belayers, belayers must be anchored adequately to safely handle the weight of a falling climber. (This includes belaying off of harnesses, belaying off of ground anchors with a belayer's body weight as a back-up or belaying off of the harness with another person's weight or the ground anchor as a back up.)
- Kids must be at least 12 years old to belay.
- Kids between 12 and 18 years of age can belay with a back-up. The climber and belayer should be relatively the same size, this is the instructor's discretion.
- Participants must be at least 18 years of age and consistently demonstrate mastery of the belay competencies in order to be checked off to belay with out a back-up.

### **Helmet Policy**

Helmets must be worn in the following situations/locations:

- Participants under 12 years of age.
- In the chimney & in the cave of the Inland Wall's main climbing area.
- At instructor's discretion (ie: first time climbers in at-risk areas like near the hand crack to the left of the door in the Inland Wall.)

### **Bouldering policy**

- Boulder safely and use good judgment.
- Do not throw shredded rubber.
- Boulderers in the roped area of the Inland Wall must use a crash pad and keep their feet below the three-foot-high level. In the North Shore Wall: 4-foot level.
- Boulders must yield to roped climbers.
- Boulders must not climb directly below a roped climber on route.

### **Outside Climbing Policies**

- Student to instructor ratio will not exceed 5:1. (6:1 for PCIA certified instructors) when working with beginners.
- Safe zones will be determined at all sites. Anyone inside the safe zone on top will be clipped to an anchor and have a helmet on. People inside the bottom safe zone will have a helmet on at all times.
- Helmets will be worn at all times during any 4th or 5th class climb.
- The concept of safety will be the primary objective emphasized on all outings.
- Responsible environmental behavior, including ecological relationships, must be taught and modeled with every course. This needs to be a deliberate effort as opposed to an implied effort.
- Instructors will always function under the most prudent (conservative) practice.
- Ideally, all systems will be double checked, prior to loading, by two different instructors.

- Instructors must consult the appropriate RAMS form prior to any course.
- An appropriate first aid kit, rescue kit and cell phone will be taken on all courses.

### **Staff Skills**

Primary instructors must have the following:

- Basic 1st aid and CPR/ AED certificates or equivalent
- checked-off in the skill competencies required for each course
- climbing and teaching log on file in the climbing office
- demonstrated teaching skills
- ability to be constantly safety conscious
- ability to consistently monitor the big picture as well as important details
- a personal goal of expanding teaching and climbing skills & knowledge
- knowledge of local natural history
- demonstrated good judgment and leadership qualities
- goals and timeline worksheet on file

### **Minimum Skill Competencies:**

#### **Instructor Trainee (Volunteer Instructor)**

- Checked off to belay in the UMD climbing walls
- Can properly tie the basic knots and check them for safety
- Can facilitate proper harness, helmet and shoe fitting
- Can set up and monitor the belay technique used in the Walls
- Can safely lower a climber
- Can intervene when necessary to make situations safer
- Can administer signing of waivers and signing in at the wall

#### **Co-Instructor** *(in addition to the previously-listed skills)*

- Additional Knots
- Belay check-off instructor
- Top-rope set-up basics
- Rappel set-up
- Belay set-up for outdoor sites
- Stranded climber progression of events
- Tie off and pick off procedures

#### **Primary Instructor** *(in addition to the previously-listed skills)*

- Additional Knots
- Protection in opposition
- Assisting a tired climber
- Raising a totally disabled climber
- Ascending ropes

#### **Supervising Instructor** *(in addition to the previously-listed skills)*

- AMGA or equivalent is helpful but not required

- Site management and staff management skills
- Passing knots
- Escaping the belay

## Climbing Wall Emergency Procedures

As a staff person, you are responsible to respond in the case of emergency. Make sure you and the scene are safe. Make sure other members of the group are safe and stay clear of the scene of the injury or accident. Provide first aid and CPR as needed. In the event of an emergency, call 911. Use a campus phone or your own cell phone.

Be prepared with the following information: (See Emergency 3-ring binder for details.)

- Location
- Where emergency personnel can enter the building (send someone to meet the ambulance)
- Estimated injuries- stay on the phone until the operator tells you to hang up.

Remember that there is a 1st aid kit in each site. Know the location of the nearest phone and AED units.

After the incident fill out an Incident Report and put it in Kaija's mailbox. Contact Kaija immediately in the case of a serious incident.

In the case of non-medical emergencies such as power outages, chemical spills or flooding, call the appropriate Facilities Management and/or Emergency numbers on the green sheet taped to the desk.

## Rock Climbing Rescue Procedures

### Low Level Rescue

At any scene, all participants must know the logistics of their climbing environment. This includes knowing whether or not it is possible to be lowered off a climb, where the routes are, and any access problems. Keep in mind the person of interest. A participant can sense your discomfort and lose trust in you.

1. Verbal Encouragement
2. Explaining The Move (or Moves)
3. Try to get the climber to move while you pull from the belay

NOTE: Before going on to 'Tired Climber Assist', give the climber their options and see what they want to do.

### Tired Climber Assist (for top-belayed climbing such as Shovel Point)

- Use only after you have exhausted all forms of encouragement or if the climber is completely freaked out.
- This system can be set and operated by one instructor or including other group members.
- A clear line of communication between climber and instructor is essential.
- The procedure involves lowering a carabiner on an anchored loop of rope ("C" drag 2-1 assist) to the stranded climber and using this line to help pull the climber up. Use and practice of tired climber assists will be covered in staff trainings.

## Higher Level Rescue Procedures

Higher level rescues such as Z-drags should be rare or unnecessary in the types of courses run through our programs and are beyond the level of training for most climbing staff. Don't attempt any procedures that are beyond the scope of your training. If you deem that such measures are necessary, SEND FOR HELP. Use the cell phone or send runners with the pertinent information.

Stabilize the victim and provide initial care while waiting for help to arrive. Remember, there is already one person in trouble. Don't make it worse.

## Teaching in the Wall

- Lesson plans must be submitted to the director two weeks before each program.

### Pre-Activity

- Inspect and count the equipment
- Visual check of climbing wall
- All overhead anchor connections and backup systems
- Visual inspection of the rock
- Check 1st aid kit

### Activity

NOTE: Refer to section on Lesson Plans and Conducting an Activity for more information

- It is the instructor's responsibility to make sure all participants have paid.
- Collect liability waivers
- Instructors must verbalize the contract and state that upon signing the liability waiver, it is understood that there are inherent risks involved with climbing and the participant will help maintain a safe environment.
- Explain expectations of safety and conduct.
- If students are under 18 years old, parent or guardian signature is required.
- If students are under 15 years old, parent or guardian is required to be present.
- Collect passes.
- Fit harness and check equipment.
- Walk through skills and technique.
- Explain belaying commands.
- Assign belay teams and/or belay as needed.
- Double Checks: All critical hook-ups must be double checked by the instructor prior to the start of each climb.
- The instructor should focus roughly 80% of his/her time on the belayers and the big picture safety, and 20% on the climbers. Constantly reinforce proper belaying.
- Hand evaluation forms to group leaders.

### Post-Activity

- Gather the group for a post-session wrap-up and thank-you.
- Verbal Disclaimer: remind the group that climbing is a high-risk activity that should be done at proper sites with proper equipment and in the guidance/company of an experienced climbing instructor.
- Collect evaluation forms.
- Account for all equipment before the group leaves
- Be sure the Wall is clean and tidy

- Fill out instructor checklist and de-brief form, leave any notes, lock up

Appendixes:

- Knots
- Climbing Wall Skills Checklist
- Wall Instructor Minimum Skills Checklist
- Top Rope Instructor Skills Checklist
- Checking People off to Belay in the UMD Wall
- Belay Check Off Information Sheet
- Goals and Timelines Worksheet
- Climbing/teaching log