

Mecklenburg County Council COPE & Climbing Belk Scout Camp Specific Standards

Overview

These standards are specific to the COPE & Climbing facilities at Belk Scout Camp. They are in addition to the MCC COPE & Climbing Program Standards and by extension the Belay On and NCAP standards set by the Boy Scouts of America. In some cases the Mecklenburg County Council (MCC) COPE & Climbing standards may exceed the Belay On and NCAP standards. The program standards apply to all COPE & climbing activities at both of the council's camps (Belk Scout Camp and the Mecklenburg Scout Reservation). Changes to the MCC COPE & Climbing standards must be approved by the MCC COPE & Climbing Committee.

Detailed Standards

1. In case of an emergency DO NOT call 911. Call the ranger or the camp director. The ranger's office number is 704-545-0958.
2. The ranger at Belk requests that only one vehicle is parked at the tower shelter and that it be parked behind the shelter. You should drive up the back side of the field at the far end of the zip lines between the zip lines and the trees approaching the tower shelter between the zip lines and the BMX track.
3. The complete tower must be inspected prior to any element being rigged. This includes the lower parts of the tower, the inside and top of the tower. The zip lines and poles at the end of the zip line course must only be inspected if the zip line will be used. Similarly, the low rappel and bouldering wall only need to be inspected if they will be used that day. Be sure to use the site check list for the inspection.
4. All rigging and setup should be completed before participants arrive at the venue. All equipment and hardware must be inspected prior to use.
5. All COPE & climbing equipment and hardware are stored in the shelter closet. The only items stored in the base of the tower are the climbing blocks, the A frame ladder and the tools for working on the tower and blocks.
6. Safety concerns around the tower. When the tower is open, elements are rigged or being rigged or program of any sort is in operation:

- a. Everyone remains outside the 8 poles around the tower unless invited in by an instructor/staff member
 - b. Everyone inside the 8 poles around the tower must wear a helmet
 - c. Fall zone - Only instructors/staff and participants climbing/rappelling should be on the pea gravel. Parents/adults wishing to take pictures should stay off the gravel.
 - d. Participants waiting to climb should queue behind the pole nearest their desired climbing route.
 - e. Participants waiting to rappel or ride the zip line should queue behind the poles nearest the tower door.
 - f. All instructors, staff and participants must be tethered at the top of the tower. Everyone must wear a helmet when at the top of the tower.
7. Climbing elements:
- a. Climbing lines are rigged using the paracord to pull the climbing rope through the pair of eyelets at the top of the climbing route. The paracord should be stored out of the way (i.e. under the tower) while program is occurring.
 - b. The climbing rope will be tied using a figure 8 follow through tied around the eyelet of a captive eye carabiner.
 - c. Level 1 instructors, Instructors in Training and boy scouts belaying should be anchored to the nearest of the 8 poles surrounding the tower.
 - d. Climbing ropes should be placed on a tarp to keep them dry and clean whenever possible.
 - e. If more than two sides of the tower are in operation, they should be adjacent so that the instructor may oversee operations. If instructors are belaying, then non-adjacent sides of the tower may be in operation.
 - f. An instructor must check a participant's helmet and harness prior to tying in or clipping in to begin a climb.
8. Rappel elements:
- a. When the rappel is being used the rescue bag must be present at the top of the tower.
 - b. When only one rappel is being rigged use the route on the right side of the tower wall as you are facing the tower. This keeps the rappeller clear of the tower's ground level door.
 - c. The releasable rappel, top rope belay and instructor tether should be separated on the cable at the top of the tower by the clamps. This is to ensure that the carabiners, ropes, etc. do not interfere with each other during operations.
 - d. When Webelos scouts, young boy scouts or other inexperienced participants are rappelling a top rope belay should be used for the rappel. For older scouts or more experienced participants a fireman's belay may be used at the discretion of the instructor.
 - e. The instructor must check a participant's helmet and harness prior to the participant clipping in to their tether.

- f. The participant must be tethered to the tower before climbing over the railing above the rappel platform.
 - g. The participant must remain on the tower tether until attached to the top rope belay if in use or if the fireman belay below responds “Belay On.”
 - h. The pea gravel below the rappel must be clear before the rappel may begin.
 - i. If two rappel lines are rigged only one participant may rappel at a time. Once the belay is off, the second rappeller may begin (after the commands).
9. Zip line element:
- a. The trolleys for the zip lines must be backed up as required by the manufacturer.
 - b. The paracord must be completely stored in its case/bag prior to the participant being attached to the lanyard.
 - c. There must be a dedicated tether for each zip line when that zip line is in use. The tether is to remain clear until the zip line participant has stepped off the platform and begun his zip line ride.
 - d. The participant must be clipped to the tether prior to climbing over the railing onto the zip line platform.
 - e. The participant must not be unclipped from the tether until clipped to the zip line lanyard.
 - f. The following must be explained to the participant:
 - i. No jumping – step off or slide off (if sitting on the zip line platform)
 - ii. Face forward. Look down the line as you step off the platform.
 - iii. Unless a full body harness is in use the participant must stay upright – head above waist at all times. No superman, cartwheels, inverted maneuvers, etc.
 - iv. When finished zipping, pull all of the paracord out of its case/bag and let it drop to the ground. The ladder crew will use it to pull you to the ladder and you will use it to bring the trolley back to the tower.
 - v. Yell “zip line clear” and wait for the “all clear” from the ladder crew before stepping off the platform.
 - g. While the zip line is in operation no one should walk under the zip lines. Instruct people to walk around the tower instead of under the zip lines. Only the ladder crew should be walking under the zip line and only to retrieve a participant.
 - h. Ladder operations:
 - i. When not in use the ladder is to remain on its side locked to the bolt/chain embedded in the ground.
 - ii. The ladder must be operated by at least two adults or participants deemed qualified by the director or Level II instructor running the element.
 - iii. The ladder crew must wear helmets at all times.
 - iv. The tall end of the ladder must be toward the lake. The stairs of the ladder should face the BMX course.

- v. The ladder must be moved at least 6 feet to the side of the zip line in use. The ladder is not to be moved until the participant is under control with the paracord. If a member of the ladder climbs up the ladder to assist the participant the ladder must be spotted by the second member of the ladder crew.
- vi. The participant will yell “zip line clear” from the top of the tower prior to zipping. The ladder crew must ensure no one is under the zip line (including themselves!) and that the ladder is clear and secure. Then yell “all clear” to the tower. Optionally raise one arm to signal all clear. Two arms in the air indicates a problem.
- i. When off the ladder the participant returns the trolley to the tower using the paracord attached to the lanyard. Instruct the participant to:
 - i. Hold the **end** of the paracord or the length is not long enough. Also, if the paracord runs through the participant’s hand he/she could get a rope burn.
 - ii. Walk/run outside of the pole under the zip line in use. For example, if you are on the right-side zip line, run outside of the right pole.
 - iii. Walk/run past the tower.
 - iv. Wait for the instructor at the top of the tower to yell “got it!” before letting go of the paracord.