

Mecklenburg County Council

COPE & Climbing

Lobster Claw Guidelines

Overview

The purpose of this file is to document a set of guidelines for the use of lobster claw tethers.

Lobster claws may be used to tether an instructor or a participant to a life safety cable or system on a tower or on the high COPE course. Anyone may use a set of lobster claws as a simple tether, however only trained instructors may use the lobster claws to move around the tower or course, transferring from one life safety system to another. Furthermore, only a trained instructor may use lobster claws to climb or self-belay above an anchor, such as during a staple or pole climb.

Use of Lobster Claws on the Tower

On the tower at either Belk or MSR the lobster claws should be clipped to a life safety cable. The two arms of the lobster claws should be clipped to the cable, ideally with the quick snap links clipped in opposite directions. One arm of the lobster claws should be slightly longer than the other arm. The lobster claws must then be clipped to the harness on the belay loop. If clipping to an instructor harness, an autolocking carabiner must be used. This carabiner may be aluminum or steel. The preferred carabiner in our program is the CAMP aluminum autolocking triple action carabiner.



The preferred aluminum autolocking carabiner to use with the lobster claws to clip to the belay loop of the harness.

Incorrect Use of Lobster Claws on the Tower

The central connection point of the lobster claws should not be clipped to the life safety cable.



In this picture the set of claws are attached to the life safety cable using an aluminum carabiner. Do not use an aluminum carabiner on the steel cable. There is a potential to significantly wear the softer aluminum carabiner as it travels back and forth across the steel cable.



Although a steel carabiner is now being used to attach the lobster claws to the steel cable, this is still not the correct use of the claws. Note that in this application, the instructor is clipped to one leg of the claws and a participant harness is clipped to the other leg. This dramatically affects the freedom of movement of the instructor and should never be used.



While one arm of the lobster claws is clipped to the overhead cable, the other arm is clipped to a gear loop on the harness. This can cause damage to the arm clipped to the cable. Both arms of the lobster claws should be clipped to the life safety cable.