

# Mecklenburg County Council COPE & Climbing Program Standards

---

## Overview

These program standards are in addition to 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). Each camp may have additional standards that apply specifically to those facilities. Changes to the MCC COPE & Climbing standards must be approved by the MCC COPE & Climbing Committee.

## Detailed Standards

1. All participants and instructors are required to present Parts A & B of the BSA Annual Health and Medical Record. These medical records should be managed according to the procedures in *Climb On Safely*.
2. Horseplay is not allowed at any time in the Climbing, Rappelling, or COPE venues. Participants may be warned once and asked to leave the venue upon the second offense or may be asked to leave upon the first offense at the discretion of the instructor/director.
3. Closed toe, closed heel shoes are required at all times.
4. Participants and trained instructors may use personal equipment such as harnesses, helmets and climbing shoes subject to inspection and at the discretion of the lead qualified instructor (level II instructor or director). Participants may not use personal equipment such as webbing, ropes or carabiners.
5. MCC Qualified instructors with current Level II or NCS Director certificate of training may elect to use their personal equipment and gear that has been procured and maintained in accordance with BSA National Camp School Standards, the Belay On Manual and manufacturers recommendations. This includes all types of gear. The equipment or gear is subject to inspection and approval by the lead qualified instructor (level II instructor or director). The lead may require proof of purchase and service dates as well as relevant logs for the gear.
6. Instructors not trained by MCC must supply documentation from the BSA council where training was completed and must demonstrate instructional skills to a MCC COPE or Climbing director.

7. Belayers must brake participants that have paused for resting or to calculate their next move.
8. Spotting will be in effect for all participants to a height of 6 feet minimum. Participants will be spotted while on ladders (the wall, zip line, etc.)
9. All instructors and participants on exposed tower platforms must be tethered when the tower is in use at any time. (Tower platform in use is defined as a platform/floor where instructors are present and operating program.)
10. A figure eight follow through knot with a stopper (safety) knot tied to the eye bolt of a locking carabiner will be used to secure a participant's harness to the belay rope for all climbing, rappelling and COPE activities.
11. A figure eight follow through knot with a stopper (safety) knot will be used to secure a participant's harness to the belay rope for natural rock climbing activities.
12. Rigging a figure eight in "Sport Mode" (routing the rope through the carabiner) is not allowed. This includes figure eights used for top rope belay. All rappelling / belay devices will be rigged per the manufacturer's specifications.
13. Rappellers must wear appropriate (leather) gloves. Use of synthetic gloves is not allowed.
14. "Slack Line" rappelling is not allowed. All rappelling participants will begin descent with tension on rappelling rope.
15. "Aussie Style" (face first) rappelling is not allowed.
16. A chest harness or full body harness must be used on all participants with questionable fitting harnesses, especially larger or very small participants. This applies to all events /venues.
17. Participants on COPE Zip Lines will be instructed to remain in an upright position. Participants that choose to invert after being instructed to remain upright will be asked to leave the venue.
18. Zip Lines are COPE activities and must be supervised following the current BSA Belay On Standards.
19. Only members of the COPE & Climbing committee may remove any COPE or climbing equipment from camp for any reason with email notification to the full committee. Notification prior to taking gear from camp is preferred to allow members of the committee to plan for events.