

Mecklenburg County Council COPE & Climbing Facility & Equipment Inspection Standards

Overview

The council is required to perform regular inspections of the facilities and equipment used to support the COPE & Climbing program. This document defines who should conduct these inspections, the facilities to be inspected, the equipment to be inspected and the recording/reporting methods that shall be used.

These council standards are guided by the standards from ACCT, NCAP, *Belay On* and *Climb On Safely*.

Qualified Person

Defined in the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) standards a qualified person is: *“An individual who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate or professional standing; or who, by possession of extensive knowledge, training and/or experience in the subject field; has successfully demonstrated ability in design, analysis, evaluation, installation, inspection, specification or training in the subject work, project or product, to the extent established by this Standard.”*

According to NCAP standard FA-715 (COPE and Climbing Facilities) this person *“must have extensive knowledge, training, and/or experience in maintenance and inspection of COPE and climbing facilities and equipment.”* Furthermore, in the interpretation of standard SQ-409 (COPE and/or Climbing Staff) the qualified person must meet the minimum training of *“NCS director or Level II training in either COPE or climbing, or equivalent.”*

NCAP standard SQ-409 also *“requires that a ‘qualified person’ is designated by the council to manage the operations of COPE and/or climbing programs, set local policies, provide for maintenance and inspection of facilities, provide program hazard analysis for new activities, approve equipment used, and manage training and assessment of program staff. A person having these responsibilities must have extensive knowledge, training, and/or experience in program operations, policy making, inspection and maintenance of facilities and equipment, program hazard analysis, and staff training for COPE and climbing programs.”*

The BSA’s guide to unit climbing and rappelling, *Climb On Safely*, defines a qualified instructor as an individual who is at least 21 years of age and is current in his/her training, license or accredited status

from one of several professional climbing guide/instructor institutions or associations. (Refer to the Climb On Safely guide for a detailed list.)

Qualified Person for Facility Inspection

The COPE & Climbing facilities at the Mecklenburg Scout Reservation or Belk Scout Camp must be inspected by a COPE Director or COPE Level II Instructor; and be approved by the council's COPE & Climbing committee.

Qualified Person for Equipment Inspection

Recognizing the similarities but also the differences in equipment used by COPE and climbing programs, the inspections of each classification of equipment is further delineated.

Qualified Person for COPE Equipment Inspection

COPE equipment must be inspected by a COPE Director or COPE Level II instructor; and be approved by the council's COPE & Climbing committee.

Qualified Person for Climbing Equipment Inspection

Climbing equipment must be inspected by a Climbing Director, Climbing Level II instructor or meet the definition of a qualified instructor according to Climb On Safely; and be approved by the council's COPE & Climbing committee.

MCC COPE & Climbing Facility Inspections

The COPE & climbing facilities at the Mecklenburg Scout Reservation and Belk Scout Camp undergo two separate, independent annual inspections according to *Belay On* chapter 10 Equipment Control and Inventory, *"The local COPE and climbing committee must conduct an annual inspection of facilities and equipment as well as maintain an inventory of equipment. In addition, equipment and facilities must be inspected annually by a third party (a challenge course builder)."*

ACCT Inspection

The facilities must be inspected annually by a third-party vendor accredited by the ACCT. The vendor defines and supplies the qualified person(s) to complete the inspection. The vendor's post inspection shall be reviewed by the council's COPE & Climbing committee, printed and filed in the NCAP binder at the respective camp.

The details of this inspection are to be determined by the vendor in accordance with the ACCT standards.

An in council qualified person must be present during the ACCT vendor inspection.

The ACCT inspections shall be scheduled by the COPE & Climbing Committee Chair or his/her designee.

In-Council Inspection

The facilities must be inspected at least once a year by an in council qualified person. This is a thorough, hours long inspection of all the COPE & Climbing facilities at each camp. The inspector must be familiar with the program's ongoing list of maintenance tasks as well a review of the most recent third party (ACCT) facility inspection. Each of the issues raised in these reports must be checked by the inspector.

The inspector shall take notes of issues found including the date inspected, element(s) involved, a detailed description of the issue, comments and/or plan of action. Pictures should be included if possible. This report must be submitted by the inspector to the council's COPE & Climbing committee at the inspector's first possible convenience. A copy of the report must be printed and filed with the NCAP standards binder at the respective camp at the next visit to the camp.

Facilities to be inspected are covered in NCAP standard FA-715.

This in-council inspection shall be scheduled by the COPE & Climbing Committee Chair or his/her designee.

Daily Inspections

The facilities go through a daily pre-use inspection by trained instructor(s) under the supervision of the event's lead instructor using a checklist developed and approved by a qualified person. Only the facilities to be used during an event must be inspected as part of the daily pre-use inspection.

This daily inspection is covered as part of the NCAP standard PS-206 and the local council policies and procedures.

COPE & Climbing Equipment Inspections

According to *Belay On* chapter 10 Equipment Control and Inventory, "*The local COPE and climbing committee must conduct an annual inspection of facilities and equipment as well as maintain an inventory of equipment. In addition, equipment and facilities must be inspected annually by a third party (a challenge course builder).*"

Equipment used by the COPE & Climbing program may include but is not limited to:

- Personal Protective Equipment such as:
 - Harnesses
 - Helmets
 - Gloves
 - Climbing shoes
- Hardware such as:
 - Carabiners
 - Belay friction devices
 - Trolleys and pulleys

- Cams, chocks, nuts
- Soft goods such as:
 - Ropes
 - Webbing
 - Lanyards
 - Cordage
 - Sewn slings or runners

New equipment owned by the council should be entered into the respective camp’s inventory log prior to first use. If available, any accompanying documentation or usage guide(s) should also be added to the equipment binder. Introduction of new council owned equipment should be communicated to the group of lead instructors prior to first use. Training on proper usage of the new equipment should be offered to the lead instructors prior to, or at the time of, first use.

COPE Equipment

All equipment used on the COPE course or artificial climbing surfaces (i.e. towers and indoor wall) shall be purchased, stored, tracked and inspected according to:

- NCAP standard PS-206: COPE and/or Climbing Programs
- Chapter 10 of *Belay On* – Equipment Control and Inventory
- The council’s approved equipment inventory and log sheets

ACCT Inspection

The equipment shall be inspected and approved for use annually by the ACCT vendor qualified person as part of the annual facility inspection and an inventory of equipment included in the vendor’s report.

In-Council Inspection

The equipment shall be inspected and approved for use at least once a year by an in-council COPE qualified person and the camp’s equipment inventory report updated accordingly. A copy of this inventory report must be printed and updated in the appropriate Equipment binder at each camp as well as available electronically to the COPE & Climbing committee.

Daily Inspections

The equipment undergoes a daily use inspection by trained instructor(s) under the supervision of the event’s lead instructor. Only the equipment in use for the day’s event must be inspected.

Climbing Equipment

All council owned equipment used for off-site, natural rock or climbing specific activities shall be purchased, stored, tracked and inspected according to:

- NCAP standard PS-206: COPE and/or Climbing Programs
- Chapter 10 of *Belay On* – Equipment Control and Inventory
- Climb On Safely

- The council's approved equipment inventory and log sheets

In-Council Inspection

The council owned equipment shall be inspected and approved for use at least once a year by an in-council Climbing qualified person and an equipment inventory report updated accordingly. A copy of this inventory report must be printed and updated in the appropriated binder at each camp as well as available electronically to the COPE & Climbing committee.

Daily Inspections

The council owned equipment undergoes a daily use inspection by trained instructor(s) under the supervision of the event's lead instructor. Only the equipment in use for the day's event must be inspected.

Instructor Equipment

COPE and/or climbing equipment provided by a trained instructor shall be purchased, stored, tracked and inspected according to:

- NCAP standard PS-206: COPE and/or Climbing Programs
- Chapter 10 of *Belay On* – Equipment Control and Inventory
- Climb On Safely (as appropriate for climbing equipment)
- The council's approved equipment inventory and log sheets

Instructors use and provide their equipment at their own risk. The council will not be responsible for lost or damaged equipment.

New equipment provided by an instructor may be used at the discretion of the lead instructor pending an initial inspection. The new equipment should be recorded in the providing instructor's personal inventory log and any brochures, manuals or instructional guides be made available on request by the lead instructor.

Instructors are encouraged to uniquely mark their equipment for identification in accordance with the manufacture's recommendations (e.g. colored tape).

In-Council Inspection

COPE and/or climbing equipment provided by an instructor shall be inspected and approved for use at least once a year by an in-council qualified person who is not the owner/provider of the equipment. The equipment must be inspected and approved for use by the appropriate classification of qualified person for the type of activity for which the equipment will be used, i.e. COPE or Climbing. If a qualified person who is not the owner/provider of the equipment is not available in-council, then the COPE & Climbing committee shall identify and approve such a qualified person from out of council to inspect and approve the use of the equipment.

A record of the inspection shall be kept electronically by the committee. At a minimum, this record should include an inventory of inspected soft goods and their retirement dates. A full inventory log must be kept by the instructor and made available to the COPE & Climbing committee on request.

Opportunities for instructor provided equipment to be inspected and approved shall be scheduled/coordinated by the COPE & Climbing Committee Chair or his/her designee.

Daily Inspections

Instructor provided equipment is to be used only at the discretion of the event's lead instructor and subject to inspection and approval of the equipment by trained instructor(s) under the supervision of the event's lead instructor.

Participant or Personal Equipment

Participant or personal equipment is to be used only at the discretion of the event's lead instructor and subject to inspection and approval of the equipment by trained instructor(s) under the supervision of the event's lead instructor.

Such equipment is limited to the following category:

- Personal Protective Equipment:
 - Harnesses
 - Helmets
 - Gloves
 - Climbing shoes