

Mecklenburg County Council

COPE & Climbing

Natural Rock Climbing – Anchor Policy

Overview

For district and council level events all scouts are top-roped when climbing. While top rope anchors are often set from above after walking to the top of a crag or pitch, this is not always possible. To open additional climbing sites and routes to the scouts, there is a need to set the top rope anchor while on lead. With lead climbing, the rope runs directly from the belayer to the climber. As the climber goes up the cliff, he or she clips the rope into bolts that are fixed to the wall or removable pieces of trad gear.

This document will define instructor qualifications for setting top rope anchors while on lead as part of the MCC natural rock climbing program.

This policy is in addition to the MCC COPE & Climbing Policies and Standards as well as Belay On and the NCAP standards set by the Boy Scouts of America as applied to council and district level natural rock climbing and rappelling events. Furthermore, the Climb On Safely procedures should be referred to for unit level climbing and rappelling events at a natural site.

Lead Instructor

All natural site climbing and rappelling events must be led by a trained instructor as detailed in the NCAP standards or Climb On Safely. (Usually, a Climbing Level II Instructor or Climbing Director.)

The lead instructor must be familiar with:

- the natural site,
- the selected route(s),
- the skills used to climb the route(s) and set/clean the anchor(s),
- the skills used for natural rock incident resolution.

The lead instructor does not have to be the qualified instructor who is climbing the route on lead and setting the anchor.

The lead instructor is ultimately responsible for the safety of all instructors, staff, and participants during an event.

Qualified Lead Climber/Belayer

An instructor who is qualified to set a top rope anchor on lead (the lead climber) must be able to demonstrate to the lead instructor proficiency in the skills taught in the following MCC courses:

- Climbing Level I
- Mock Lead Instructor
- Climbing Level II or Natural Rock Incident Resolution

These skills include the gear and techniques used:

- to climb the route,
- to belay a lead climber,
- to set the anchor,
- to clean the anchor,
- to resolve an incident in a natural rock environment.

The belayer for the lead climber must also be a qualified instructor who meets the above criteria.

The selected route will dictate the gear and techniques required. The lead climber should be competent at the grade before leading the selected route. Preferably the lead climber will have climbed the selected route before and therefore will be confident in his or her ability to climb the route and set and clean the anchor in a timely manner.

At no time should an instructor attempt to climb a route or set an anchor beyond his or her knowledge and skills.