NCAP Standards Applicable to Climbing

National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) describes a wide variety of Standards (PD); Recommended Practices (RP); Program Substantive Standards (PS); Staff Qualification and Training Standards (SQ); Facilities Standards (FA); and Administrative and Operational Management Standards (AO).

Of these nearly 100 standards and recommended practices, only a handful directly apply to climbing. The appropriate standards have been extracted and included here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS-206</td>
<td>COPE and/or Climbing Programs</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ-409</td>
<td>COPE and/or Climbing Staff</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP-463</td>
<td>COPE/Climbing Program Support</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP-753</td>
<td>COPE Facility Inspection</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO-805</td>
<td>Emergency Procedures</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP-256</td>
<td>The CHECK Program</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA-715</td>
<td>COPE and Climbing Facilities</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO-801</td>
<td>Permits and Compliance</td>
<td>Jan 1, 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STANDARD:
If offered, COPE or climbing programs are operated safely and in compliance with the policies of the Boy Scouts of America, Association for Challenge Course Technology Standards (Design, Performance, and Inspection; Operations; and Training), and other governing jurisdiction regulations.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:

A. Program Equipment

1. All specialized equipment needed for conducting a safe COPE and/or climbing program must be available to participants and staff members and approved by a qualified person. Personal climbing helmets and harnesses may be used if inspected and approved by the on-site Level II instructor or director. All equipment and cordage must be used, inspected, and retired according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. In the absence of a manufacturer’s recommendation, all soft goods must be retired no more than 10 years from the date of purchase.

2. Each participant and staff member in the fall zone of a climbing site or COPE high-course site must wear a rock-climbing helmet. Observation areas for onlookers must be outside of the fall zone.

3. A written log of the history of each climbing rope used in the program must be kept, indicating (a) the date the rope was purchased; (b) the date the rope was placed in service; and (c) any environmental, severe, or unusual stresses that were placed on the rope. All cordage must be uniquely marked and permanently identified.

4. Equipment inventory records are kept, including retirement criteria based on manufacturer’s recommendations.

5. Staff members inspect all program equipment before and after each use and are taught how to inspect equipment for defects that render equipment unsafe for use. Disposal of retired equipment is done in such a way that it cannot be used for life safety systems.

6. When not being used, equipment must be kept in locked, protected storage, away from exposure to sunlight, heat, moisture, chemicals, and destruction or contamination by animals.
COPE AND/OR CLIMBING PROGRAMS

(Revised January 1, 2017)

Applies to:

B. Participant Requirements. Participation in COPE and climbing activities shall comply with the Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities available in the Guide to Safe Scouting. Additionally, program staff shall ensure that all participants have adequate maturity to participate in the activities.

C. Program Operation

1. All COPE and climbing staff use written procedures for:
   • Opening and closing the program site
   • Conducting a site and safety orientation before the program activity
   • Safety during program operation
   • Equipment use
   • Disabling or limiting access to program sites

2. No participant is ever coerced or pressured into attempting an activity. A participant may be encouraged to take the next small step, but the final choice of participation and performance is left entirely up to the individual.

3. The technique of spotting is explained, demonstrated, and practiced before any activity requiring that skill.

4. Prior to any activity using life safety systems, participants are trained in:
   • Proper belaying technique
   • Belay transfers
   • Signal use
   • Equipment use

5. The Level II instructor or director determines if a participant’s safety might be compromised by course conditions, staffing, weather or any other factor, and is empowered to open and close the COPE or climbing program. Staff members are trained to monitor environmental conditions and their effect on participants during challenge activities. Alternative weather-appropriate activities should be available.

6. All participants are top-roped when climbing. When transferring from one belay system to another, a consistent process is used to ensure that the new belay attachment is secure before the old system is disconnected. All rappelling participants use an acceptable rappel belay method.
7. Only trained COPE and climbing staff climbs using lobster claws or similar tether systems to self-belay above the anchor, such as during a staple climb. Load-limiting or fall-arresting devices shall be used in these situations.

8. Measures are in place to provide for the safety of everyone at the program site, including observers. Everyone must be belayed or tethered when within 8 feet of an edge where a fall of more than 6 feet could occur. All zip line staff who are working on launch or landing areas where the staff member can come in contact with a moving participant must be tethered.

9. A consistent process is used by all COPE and climbing staff to ensure that clothing, head protection, environment, connections, and knots are double-checked in any belayed events for staff members and participants. This requirement must also be followed by staff at all times, including setup and takedown of life safety systems.

10. Written incident resolution plans identifying likely emergencies, including rescues, and procedures for resolving them are reviewed with COPE and climbing staff members and rehearsed annually. Plans must address emergency access (see Standard AO-805).

11. At least one person at the program site must have a valid certificate of training in first aid and CPR, and be physically present whenever the program is in operation. If the program site is more than 30 minutes away from an emergency vehicle-accessible roadway, then a person trained to a minimum level of wilderness first aid must be present on the program site.

12. Rescue equipment and medical supplies appropriate for likely incidents must be on-site and accessible when the program is in operation, and at least one person must be trained in the use of all supplies.

D. Temporary Anchor Systems

1. All temporary anchor systems must be fail-proof or backed up and the load equalized. Anchors are placed to provide the most effective protection for both the climber and the belayer.

2. Trees used as anchor points in an anchor system must be well-rooted, healthy, at least 6 inches in diameter at the point of attachment, and protected from damage.
INTERPRETATION:

A COPE course is defined as any challenge elements that are part of a challenge course program and artificial climbing structures. Climbing and rappelling programs include natural rock sites and artificial climbing structures. These standards apply to all COPE and climbing activities that are operated by councils and/or their districts at any location and any time of the year. Scouting units wishing to conduct climbing programs should consult the Climb On Safety guidelines and Guide to Safe Scouting. Unit leaders must take Climb On Safety training (available online at scouting.org) prior to taking their units on climbing activities.

Scout camp structures such as monkey bridges, obstacle courses, and pioneering towers are expected to meet safety standards in equipment and supervision comparable to COPE but are not subject to COPE and climbing standards, do not require professional inspection, and do not require an onsite COPE Level II instructor or director. Councils may find their COPE and climbing committee to be a valuable resource for writing operating procedures and providing training for staff who supervise these activities. Age-appropriateness of various COPE and climbing programs is addressed in the Age-Appropriateness Guidelines for Scouting Activities available in the Guide to Safe Scouting and on http://www.scouting.org.

**Soft goods:** Rope, webbing, cordage, helmets, harnesses, slings, etc.

**Life safety systems:** Life safety systems are generally required where a fall of more than 6 feet could occur. Some low COPE course elements such as “The Wall” may have a fall potential of more than 6 feet. Proper spotting techniques or life safety systems may be acceptable practices on these elements.

**Proper belay:** Belayer’s position must be in direct line with a potential fall and allows for no slack between the anchor point, if used, and the belayer. Backup belayers are required whenever possible. For instances where there is not enough space for a backup belayer, an alternate backup safety measure shall be employed including but not limited to: using trained staff to perform the belay operation, requiring consistent demonstration of belay proficiency prior to belaying alone (belay training card), or using an assisted-braking belay device. Horizontal traversing elements require either a movable dynamic belay system with a belay team or a static belay system using an observer.

**Acceptable rappel belay methods:** Rigged using a releasable rappel or other belay system that allows participants to be quickly and safely lowered if the rappel device becomes jammed.
• Recommended: Double-line rappel with an independent belay line
• Recommended: Single-line rappel with an independent belay line
• Acceptable: Double-line rappel with a fireman’s belay
• Acceptable: Single-line rappel with a fireman’s belay

Some activities employ life safety provisions similar to COPE or climbing (e.g., caving, canyoneering, spar pole climbing, etc.), and may involve the use of equipment and/or techniques that are not covered in typical BSA instructor training. Staff members should consult with experts familiar with and trained in the use of this equipment and these techniques prior to implementing the program. Specific training and assessment for instructors operating these programs must be documented prior to operating these programs.

VERIFICATION:
• Observation of procedures in practice
• Evaluation of program documents (may be submitted with declaration):
  – A.3 Rope logs
  – A.4 Equipment record/inventory
    • Including manufacturer’s recommendations for inspection and retirement
  – C.1 Daily orientation and operating procedures
  – C.10 Plans for likely emergencies

REFERENCES:
Many states regulate some or all COPE elements and may require permits. See Standard AO-801. Staffing requirements are set forth in SQ-409. Facilities requirements are set forth in FA-715. Additional information on COPE and Climbing programs may be found in Belay On!, No. 300-530.
STANDARD:
All COPE and/or climbing programs must be supervised and staffed by qualified persons.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:

A. 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 design training and assessment of program staff.

B. A camp offering a COPE or climbing program shall have a written staff training and assessment plan, approved by a qualified person, which includes: competencies identified in BSA National Camping School (NCS) COPE and/or climbing training syllabi; core, technical, and facilitation competencies identified in the current ACCT operations standards; and specific knowledge and skills required for local COPE and/or climbing program operations. In addition, the COPE or climbing program shall be supervised in accordance with either (1) or (2) below:

1. The program is supervised by an NCS–trained COPE or climbing director, as appropriate.

2. The program is supervised by a Level II COPE or climbing instructor, as appropriate. Councils (or multicouncil collaborations) electing to provide local training programs for Level II instructors shall meet the following requirements:
   a. Have at least one trained program manager in place.
   b. Be evaluated by a training program evaluator who is not affiliated with the training program being evaluated.
      i. The local Level II program shall be approved before valid training cards can be issued.
      ii. Reevaluation shall occur at least every five years thereafter or when conditions warrant, including but not limited to the following:
         1. Higher than normal incident rates in COPE and/or climbing programs as identified by the National Council
         2. Council appoints a new program manager
         3. Region COPE/climbing chair, regional camp assessment coordinator, or area camp assessment chair calls for a reevaluation
COPE AND/OR CLIMBING STAFF

(Revised January 1, 2018)

Applies to:

- Camp properties
- Day camp
- Family camp
- Resident camp
- Trek camp
- Specialty-adventure camp
- High-adventure camp
- COPE/Climbing

iii. Evaluation of council-level training programs by training program evaluator, including but not limited to the following:

1. Training syllabus and materials
2. Training activities while in session
3. Written/computer-based and practical testing instruments
4. Documentation of completed training

C. All COPE and climbing staff must have appropriate qualifications and training as shown in the following table. Documentation of training for all council COPE and climbing program staff is available when in operation. Level I and Level II instructors may operate programs only as authorized by their local council or multicouncil collaboration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Staff Member</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Primary Training</th>
<th>Reevaluation</th>
<th>Min. Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>COPE instructor in training</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level I + COPE Level I instructor training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>COPE Level I instructor</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level I + COPE Level I instructor training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>COPE Level II instructor</td>
<td>COPE Level I instructor</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level II + COPE Level II instructor training</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COPE director</td>
<td>Familiarity with local council course</td>
<td>NCS COPE director training</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Low COPE Level I instructor</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level I + low COPE Level I instructor training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Low COPE Level II instructor</td>
<td>Low COPE Level I instructor</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level II + low COPE Level II instructor training</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Low COPE director</td>
<td>Familiarity with local council course</td>
<td>NCS low COPE director training</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Climbing instructor in training</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level I + climbing Level I instructor training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Climbing Level I instructor</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level I + climbing Level I instructor training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Climbing Level II instructor</td>
<td>Climbing Level I instructor</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level II + climbing Level II instructor training</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Climbing director</td>
<td>Familiarity with local council course</td>
<td>NCS climbing director training</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COPE AND/OR CLIMBING STAFF

(Revised January 1, 2018)

**COPE and Climbing Program Staff Member Qualifications and Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Staff Member</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Primary Training</th>
<th>Reevaluation</th>
<th>Min. Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Artificial climbing structure Level I instructor</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level I training</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Artificial climbing structure Level II instructor</td>
<td>Artificial climbing structure Level I instructor</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level II training</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Portable challenge structure facilitator</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>COPE and climbing foundation Level II training + manufacturer authorized training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Bouldering facilitator</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Bouldering facilitator training</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>COPE and climbing program manager</td>
<td>COPE or climbing Level II instructor or director</td>
<td>NCS COPE and climbing program manager training</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>COPE and climbing training program evaluator</td>
<td>Regional appointment</td>
<td>NCS COPE and climbing program manager training or NCS Training Program Evaluator Training</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Applies to:**
- Day camp
- Family camp
- Resident camp
- Trek camp
- Specialty-adventure camp
- High-adventure camp
- COPE/Climbing

D. All COPE and climbing programs are operated according to the guidelines contained in the following table. All staff members may be considered as part of the staff to maintain the required ratio of staff to participants; however, instructors in training must be directly supervised by a Level I or Level II instructor or a director. A Level II instructor or director directly supervises the program and must be present at the program site except for bouldering or portable challenge structure sites.

**COPE and Climbing Program Staffing and Participant Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Minimum Program Supervision Requirements</th>
<th>Qualified Staff</th>
<th>Min. Staff</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Low COPE</td>
<td>Low COPE Level II instructor or COPE Level II instructor or COPE director or low COPE director</td>
<td>Low COPE Level I instructor, low COPE Level II instructor, COPE director, low COPE director, COPE IIT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High COPE</td>
<td>COPE Level II instructor or COPE director</td>
<td>COPE Level I instructor, COPE Level II instructor, COPE director, COPE IIT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# COPE AND/OR CLIMBING STAFF

(Revised January 1, 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applies to:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident camp</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trek camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty-adventure camp</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High-adventure camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE/Climbing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## COPE and Climbing Program Staffing and Participant Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Minimum Program Supervision Requirements</th>
<th>Qualified Staff</th>
<th>Min. Staff</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Artificial vertical climbing structure</td>
<td>COPE Level II instructor or COPE director or climbing Level II instructor or climbing director or artificial vertical climbing structure</td>
<td>Level II instructor, artificial vertical climbing structure instructor, COPE Level I instructor, COPE Level II instructor, COPE director, COPE IIT, climbing Level I instructor, climbing Level II instructor, climbing director, climbing IIT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Natural rock climbing</td>
<td>Level II instructor or climbing director</td>
<td>Climbing Level I instructor, climbing Level II instructor, climbing director, climbing IIT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bouldering</td>
<td>Bouldering facilitator or COPE Level I instructor or climbing Level I instructor</td>
<td>COPE Level I instructor, COPE Level II instructor, COPE director, COPE IIT, climbing Level I instructor, climbing Level II instructor, climbing director, climbing IIT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Determined by council policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Portable challenge structure</td>
<td>Portable challenge structure facilitator</td>
<td>Portable challenge structure facilitator, COPE Level I instructor, COPE Level II instructor, COPE director, COPE IIT, climbing Level I instructor, climbing Level II instructor, climbing director, climbing IIT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>As recommended by manufacturer, but not to exceed 6:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## INTERPRETATION:

The term “qualified person” is defined in the Association for Challenge Course Technology standards as: “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.”

For example, item A in this standard 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 minimum level of training set by this standard is NCS director or Level II training in either COPE or climbing, or equivalent. Relevant documentation of these qualifications shall be available to the assessment team.

Item B in this standard requires that a “qualified person” approves the staff training and assessment plan. A person having this responsibility must have extensive knowledge, training, and/or experience in program operations and staff training for COPE and climbing programs. This may be the same person referenced in item A, or may be another qualified person designated by the council.

Training program evaluators are assigned by and send their reports to the region COPE/climbing chair or designee.

Reevaluation for Level I and Level II instructors by a qualified person of an individual’s skills may be accomplished using many methods, including but not limited to:

- Formal reevaluation using an assessment instrument
- Monitored performance while delivering the program
- Approved retraining workshops
- Retaking of the original training

**Artificial climbing structure:** Tower, wall, or other structure where the participant’s feet can exceed 6 feet above ground surface.

**Program site:** For the purposes of this standard, program site is defined as the general location of COPE and/or climbing activities, which may be separated by a reasonable distance but still able to be supervised by a single director or Level II instructor.

**VERIFICATION:**

- Evaluation of program documents (may be submitted with declaration):
  - A: Staff training and assessment plan
  - B: Training records for ALL COPE and climbing program staff members
    - Qualified person who oversees COPE and climbing program
    - COPE and climbing program manager (for local Level II training)
    - Directors
    - Level II instructors
    - Level I instructors
  - Staffing ratios

History: CSTF 2013; Circ. 9; Circ. 10
RECOMMENDED PRACTICE:
The council operates a COPE and/or climbing committee or task force that is led by a trained COPE and climbing program manager.

VERIFICATION:
Current National Camping School card for COPE and climbing program manager.
**RECOMMENDED PRACTICE:**
The camp uses the BSA recommended documents “Request for Proposal for BSA Challenge Course Inspections” and “Suggested Agreement with Independent Contractors and Consultants” to secure professional inspection services by qualified professional inspectors who are certified and/or accredited by a national accrediting organization.

**VERIFICATION:**
The camp produces the appropriate request and suggested agreement form.

**REFERENCES:**
These documents are located at scouting.org/outdoorprograms in the COPE and Climbing section.
# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## STANDARD:
The camp has completed an assessment of risks to its participants and staff and uses written emergency procedures that address them.

### Specific Requirements of the Standard:
The assessment and procedures include:

A. Lost or missing persons
B. Extreme weather conditions
C. Fire
D. Communicable diseases and infections
E. Hazardous materials exposure
F. Dangerous encounters with wildlife
G. Natural and manmade hazards at the specific sites
H. Equipment that, due to the use and risks presented, is limited to authorized personnel using specified safety procedures, as identified in a written risk assessment
I. Additional items as noted in the written risk assessment

The camp will conduct training and appropriate practice for staff (and other participants when appropriate) on the procedures for items noted above. The camp has communicated its emergency needs to its responder agencies, such as hospital, fire, and law enforcement.

## INTERPRETATION:
The written assessment should address the activities that the camp will offer and the risks to participants and staff from those activities and related environmental and other factors. Where the written assessment identifies a reasonable risk, the council will determine steps to reduce the risk to acceptable levels. These steps should be identified in writing and reduced to policies or procedures. The written assessment should identify which plans require communication to staff, participants, and/or visitors and how such communication will occur.

Plans should be easily accessible in the camp and council.

All incidents, accidents, and injuries that occur should be documented and a written action plan developed with the steps to be taken to reduce the potential for recurrence.
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

(Revised January 1, 2014)

Applies to:

- Camp properties
- Day camp
- Family camp
- Resident camp
- Trek camp
- Specialty-adventure camp
- High-adventure camp
- COPE/Climbing

Material Safety Data Sheets/Safety Data Sheets (MSDS/SDS) for hazardous materials must be immediately accessible. MSDS/SDS sheets should be available at the specific area where the material is used, and a composite set of MSDS/SDS sheets should be maintained at the camp office.

An appropriate emergency drill is held within 24 hours of each group’s arrival at camp.

VERIFICATION:

- Review of written agreements (may be submitted with declaration)
- Director/staff description of procedures in practice
- Observation of procedures in practice
- Incident and near-miss action plan (See also reporting requirements in AO-808.)
RECOMMENDED PRACTICE:
The CHECK (Clothing, Helmet and Harness, Environment, Connection and Knots) checklist program is utilized.

INTERPRETATION:
CHECK materials are available from BSA National Supply as follows:
- COPE/climbing safety CHECK poster, No. 616833
- CHECK helmet sticker, No. 616234
- COPE/climbing safety CHECK hangtag, No. 616832
Prior to using the CHECK stickers on helmets, camps should check to ensure that use of the stickers will not violate any applicable manufacturer warranty.

VERIFICATION:
The CHECK logo is displayed at the COPE and/or climbing area
**STANDARD:**
All constructed facilities for COPE and climbing programs are properly installed and inspected in compliance with the policies of the Boy Scouts of America, Association for Challenge Course Technology Design, Performance, and Inspection Standards, and other governing jurisdiction regulations.

**SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE STANDARD:**

A. Program sites on BSA property are located where access is controlled or monitored and warning signs are posted.

B. The COPE course, climbing area (natural and/or constructed), bouldering walls, and portable climbing structures are properly inspected annually by members of the council.

C. Until January 1, 2018, the COPE course and artificial climbing structures where the climber’s feet can exceed 6 feet above the ground surface must have an annual inspection. Effective January 1, 2018, the COPE course and artificial climbing structures shall be inspected annually by a qualified professional inspector.

D. Portable challenge structures (e.g., portable climbing walls, portable challenge courses) shall be set up, operated, maintained, inspected, and recertified according to manufacturer’s recommendations. Effective January 1, 2018, custom fabricated portable challenge structures shall be inspected by a qualified professional inspector prior to use and annually thereafter.

E. Climbing bolts and hangers installed on BSA property must have written council approval and have been properly installed and inspected twice annually by a qualified person and be specifically designed for climbing purposes. Pitons are never used in BSA climbing.

F. Effective January 1, 2018, all newly constructed COPE and climbing facilities must have an initial acceptance inspection by a qualified third party inspector who has no vested interest in the installation or operation.

**INTERPRETATION:**

**Properly installed:** Installed by a qualified person according to manufacturer’s recommendations for the specified application/situation.

**Properly inspected:** Checked against a written standard or checklist developed by a qualified person, and documented in writing.
**Professional inspection:** Defined by the Association for Challenge Course Technology standards as: “An inspection carried out by a qualified person or competent person under the supervision of a qualified person to assess the condition of the course and identify whether there are any areas failing to meet standard or likely to fail to meet standard in the near term.” In this case, the qualified person directing the activities of the inspection must have extensive knowledge, training, and/or experience in maintenance and inspection of COPE and climbing facilities and equipment.

**Qualified person:** Defined in the Association for Challenge Course Technology standards as: “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.”

For example, in item B, a person who develops the written maintenance checklist must have extensive knowledge, training, and/or experience in maintenance and inspection of COPE and climbing facilities and equipment.

Another example is item E, which specifies that climbing bolts must be installed and inspected by a “qualified person.” In this case, the person who installs or inspects climbing bolts must have training and experience installing and inspecting climbing bolts.

**VERIFICATION:**

- Physical inspection of elements and structures meeting the description of a COPE/climbing course.
- Evaluation of program documents (may be submitted with declaration):
  - B: Inspection documents
    - Council self-inspection checklist and reports
    - Documentation of corrective actions
  - C: Inspection documents
    - Qualified inspector report for constructed facilities
    - Documentation of corrective actions
    - Copy of current edition of ACCT standards
  - D: Manufacturer’s documentation for portable climbing walls
  - E: Bolt and hanger installation and inspection records
PERMITS AND COMPLIANCE

(Revised January 1, 2013)

STANDARD:
The council has all necessary federal, state, and local permits, certificates, licenses, and agreements to lawfully operate a camp property, camp, or COPE/climbing course at this location during this time period and has completed a review of legal requirements for operation within the past three years.

INTERPRETATION:
BSA camps comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Compliance with this standard requires two steps. First, the council must complete a comprehensive review of legal requirements governing the operation of its camp properties and camps within the past three years. Typically, this review should occur as part of the initial application and at the midpoint of the authorization period.

The review should include licensing requirements for youth camps, health and safety regulations, child labor laws, planning and zoning requirements, environmental regulations, and business licensing requirements. The review should be completed by council legal counsel or similarly qualified professionals.

Second, the council must obtain and maintain all required permits, certificates, licenses, or other approvals required by applicable laws and regulations identified in the legal review. All permits, certificates, licenses, and authorizations should be available for review at the council office and at the site of the camp if in a fixed location.

VERIFICATION:
• List of required permits and approvals (with authorization)
• Visual observation of paper or electronic copies of each current permit, certificate, license, or other approval noted in the written authorization