

Staff Training Questions

Q-ST1 Can PMs and TPEs train level IIs?

A-ST1 Yes, Program Managers can conduct training as long as their training program has been approved by a Training Program Evaluator from another council. They have the technical competence based on their requirement to be a Level II instructor or Director prior to becoming PM's, and get additional training information from the PM training. TPE's are intended to review training programs, and are similarly qualified to do training as PM's are; however their role is to evaluate training programs, not to conduct them. The standards are intentional in not specifying who can do training because there are a variety of approaches to training. For example, you may have an Instructor in Training who is a whiz with teaching knots, and while you would not have them run the overall program, we would not want to exclude anyone who is qualified to teach what they are assigned to teach. It is about empowering councils to create the best possible program by not being prescriptive, but focusing on assessments and results.

Q-ST2 My council has used Climbing Lead Instructors to supervise programs for a long time. Since Lead Instructors are no longer an option, how do I train Level II Instructors?

A-ST2 Level II Instructor training is a council activity and falls under NCAP standards. The process is simple but may require some effort and persistence. Following is an example of the steps that might be taken to make this happen:

1. Your council commits to offer the training and to meet the NCAP requirements.
2. The council gets a Program Manager (PM) trained to design and administer the training program (or they may collaborate with other local councils and work together).
3. The PM puts together a training and assessment plan.
4. The PM requests a training program evaluation from their Area COPE & Climbing Advocate.
5. The Area COPE & Climbing Advocate assigns a Training Program Evaluator (TPE) and notifies the PM who requested the evaluation.
6. The PM sends documentation of their training and assessment plan to the TPE for initial review.
7. The PM and TPE agree on an evaluation date/time.
8. The TPE will review the training documents and evaluate the training sessions.
9. The TPE observes the training in process and either approves the training program or offers specific steps for the PM to take to get approval. Approval may be granted for up to a 5-year period.
10. The score sheet from the evaluation will be filled out and submitted to the national office.

11. Once the training program is approved, then your council can train its own Level II instructors. Each time Level II Instructors are trained, the Program Manager sends the roster to the Region COPE & Climbing Chair.

Some areas have well developed COPE & climbing communications networks and several TPE's available to support this program, and some are not there yet. If you have a good plan to meet the requirements, but have run into difficulties either getting Program Manager training or obtaining a TPE, please contact your area COPE & Climbing advocate or Region COPE & Climbing Chair.

Q-ST3 Is there an evaluation criteria document for the BSA training program evaluations?

A-ST3 There is a Training Program Evaluation Form, which includes an evaluation checklist, which can be found at www.scouting.org/outdoorprograms.

Q-ST4 Do councils have to re-train Level I Instructors every year?

A-ST4 The standards (SQ-409) do not require re-training every year (in the case of a Level I Instructor) but do require an annual re-evaluation by the local council COPE & Climbing Committee.

Q-ST5 If councils are training Level I instructors and continue to rely on NCS for Directors then do they need to have their program reviewed by a TPE?

A-ST5 No, councils can continue to use a National Camping School Director for training their program staff.

Q-ST6 Will the TPE be required to sit through the training course to evaluate it or will it be a review of the syllabus, presentations and distributed material? I would assume that the program will need to be seen but haven't seen where that was spelled out.

A-ST6 A review of the training plan and materials can be done ahead of time. A portion of the evaluation will need to be done during a training event. It is not necessary that the TPE observes the entire training; however, a few sessions shall be observed to provide for an assessment of the quality of the training. At the discretion of the TPE, more sessions may need to be observed.

Q-ST7 Will councils be required to submit their syllabus, presentations and distributed material to the TPE in advance for review?

A-ST7 No, however it would greatly simplify the onsite evaluation process if most of the training documents could be reviewed ahead of time.

Q-ST8 Is the TPE review of the material, or of the material and the trainers?

A-ST8 The TPE will review the material and the trainers.

Q-ST9 Will TPE's be grandfathered in if they have served on NCS staff in the past?

A-ST9 TPEs are appointed by the task force, so many of our long time NCS faculty will be appointed without going through much training. This may occur on an as needed basis. The preferred method is for people to attend Program Manager training (which includes TPE training) or a TPE training session so that evaluations will be as similar as possible.

Q-ST10 When will BSA cards for Level I and II Instructors be available?

A-ST10 Cards for any council level training are currently available, item number 33767,SKU #615012.

Q-ST11 What is COPE and climbing foundation training?

A-ST11 It is training for the topics that are similar between COPE and Climbing programs, Many of the necessary skills for both programs are common, for example; belaying, dealing with fear, tower operation, challenge by choice, universal access, spotting etc. Specific topics for a rock climbing program that are not used in a tower program are anchoring, site management, etc. COPE topics are specific to a COPE program, for example; low course operation, tall tales, sequencing and debriefing. A tower program may be operated by Climbing or COPE level II instructors. After the foundation training, instructors can take program specific training to learn additional skills for a rock climbing or COPE program.

Q-ST12 How many hours of instruction must be in our councils training program?

A-ST12 BSA does not specify hours required. Councils should use their good judgment to allow significant time to train their instructors to operate safe and effective programs at the locations covered by their local training. The requirements for hours listed in ACCT chapter 4 do not apply. BSA adopted ACCT Chapters 1,2,3 only, but not chapter 4 per NCAP standard PS-206.

Q-ST13 Can I train people to only operate climbing towers?

A-ST13 Yes. The content included in Level II Foundation training is sufficient to qualify instructors to operate climbing towers.

Q-ST14 My council wants to train Level II Instructors. Where can I get the syllabi for the National Camp School training?

A-ST14 The syllabi for COPE and Climbing training for National Camp School are available at www.scouting.org/outdoorprograms. Just go to that site and click on "COPE & Climbing".

Q-ST15 If I receive a Level II Instructor Card, is that recognized at other Council programs?

A-ST15 Level II Instructor cards that are issued by local councils or a consortium of local councils are recognized only by those councils for which the training program was designed. Even the Director cards issued at National Camping School are only recognized after you have received instruction on the local council program that you will be working in. You should check

with the local council to determine what their policies are with regard to staffing in their COPE and Climbing programs.

Q-ST16 Are written tests required for assessment of participants on local Level II training programs?

A-ST16 The BSA standards do not specify how Level I or Level II instructors must be assessed, only that they must be re-evaluated at the specified interval (1 year for Level I and 3 years for Level II). Both written and practical tests are specified in the ACCT standards in the Practitioner Certification Standards section. Since we are not a certifying body, and are not offering ACCT certification, this section does not apply (see NCAP Standard PS-206). Training Program Evaluators will assess the means by which local organizations determine if participants meet their minimum qualifications. This may include a written test, practical test or perhaps some other tool that none of us have thought of yet.

Q-ST-17 If I take Level II Instructor training in another council, does it qualify me as a Level II Instructor in my council?

A-ST17 No. Level II training is program specific and applies only to the council(s)/ program(s) for which the training program is approved. In some areas, several councils with very similar programs have joined together to form a single training program that covers all aspects of the affected councils/programs. In these cases the training would be applicable to all of the councils listed on the approved Training Program Evaluation form. Level II Instructor cards may only be issued for the programs of councils that are listed on the approved Training Program Evaluation form.

Keep in mind that the NCAP Standards do not require Level II Instructors to re-take the same training every 3 years, but do require re-evaluation at that interval. Councils may recognize prior training from other qualified training providers (e.g. AMGA, PCIA, PCGI, CWA, ACCT Certifying Bodies, neighboring councils, etc), but they will still need to provide any supplemental training for their particular program and evaluate the skills of the prospective Level II instructors prior to issuing a Level II training card.

Q-ST18: Does completion of Level II Foundation training qualify me to run an artificial vertical climbing structure?

A-ST18: Yes, reference the “Staffing and Participant Requirements” chart in NCAP standard SQ-409.

Climb On Safely Questions

Q-CS1 Climb on safely is silent on the required ratio of climbers to qualified instructors. Please provide guidance.

A-CS1 Older versions of Climb On Safely don't have a ratio; however the current edition specifies a 6:1 ratio, with a minimum of 2 qualified instructors. The current version can be found on www.scouting.org/outdoorprograms.

Q-CS2 How do the NCAP Standards affect my unit's climbing program?

A-CS2 The short answer is they don't. NCAP standards apply to council and/or district activities. Units doing climbing activities should use the guidelines contained in Climb on Safely.

Q-CS3 Where can I get qualified instructors for my unit climbing activities?

A-CS3 Climb On Safely has a list of examples of training that qualified instructors may have taken to gain their skills. There may be other legitimate training programs that can meet the requirements for qualified instructors. Your local council COPE & Climbing committee, Area COPE & Climbing Advocates, and Region COPE & Climbing Chairs can help you find qualified instructors.

Q-CS4 I see that Level II Instructors are on the list of qualified instructors in Climb on Safely. Can my local council train someone in my unit to be a Level II Instructor?

A-CS4 See A-ST2

Q-ST5 Climb On Safely is clear that at least one instructor must be at least 21 years old and be qualified as identified in the Climb On Safely online document. It also states that additional instructors must be at least 18 years old. As long as I have at least one Level II instructor supervising the climbing activity, can I use Level I instructors as additional instructors for my unit climbing program?

A-ST5 Level II and Level I Instructors receive basically the same training in most programs. Level II Instructors are qualified persons who are able to effectively supervise the climbing program when unusual or non-routine situations occur, and can provide guidance to the rest of the climbing staff who are working the program activity. Level I Instructors are competent persons who are capable of running the program under routine, familiar conditions, but may require guidance, assistance, or supervision when something unexpected occurs. The other obvious difference is that Level II Instructors must be at least 21 years of age, and Level I instructors must be at least 18. Level I instructors who are current in their training may operate as additional instructors under Climb On Safely, providing the Level II Instructor (or other qualified instructor) who is supervising the climbing program determines that this is adequate for the situation they are operating under. Additional qualified instructors who are at least 21 years of age may be required in some circumstances where a single qualified instructor may not be able to effectively supervise the climbing activity (e.g. multiple locations that are too far apart for one person to effectively manage, etc).

Operations and Technical Questions

Q-OT1 Does BSA have copies of the 8th edition of ACCT standards available to distribute to NCAP assessors?

A-OT1 No. ACCT makes the standards available to be viewed through their website for current members. A paper copy will also be sent to all ACCT members. Copies are available for purchase

from ACCT. Copies are included in the materials kit for COPE Directors, Climbing Directors, and Program Managers when they attend NCS.

Q-OT2 In ACCT section I.3.5: strength for belay systems shall be 5 times the expected load. In section I.3.6: strength of a carabiner shall be 5000#. Which is correct?

A-OT2 Both are correct. Carabiners used in equipment systems have to be rated to 5000#. Carabiners used in belay and rope rigging systems need to meet the 5:1 ratio it is commonly accepted that the expected load is 1000# for a slingshot belay system.

Q-OT3 When are back up belayers required?

A-OT3 On page PS-206-4 in the definition of proper belay, back up belayers are required whenever possible. Examples of when back up belayers are not possible are very few. Back up belayers should be possible at every COPE and tower program. There are a few cases in natural rock programs where space on a ledge does not allow for a back up belayer to safely perform the back-up function. Belayers in those situations could use a self locking belay device or pre-qualified belayers.

Q-OT4 I understand that Instructors in Training (IIT) may count as staff members, but must be directly supervised by a Level I or Level II Instructor. What constitutes direct supervision?

A-OT4 To be directly supervised, the IIT must be in a position where if they make a mistake, it can easily be corrected by the Level I or Level II instructors without increasing the risk to participants.

Q-OT5: What informed consent form do I use for non-scout participants?

A-OT5: Use the "Activity Consent Form" located on www.scouting.org/outdoorprograms in the COPE and Climbing section.

Q-OT6: If my zip line receiving platform is less than 6 feet off the ground, do staff members who are working on it need to be tethered in?

A-OT6: Zip lines have the potential to drag the staff member back up the line while they are attempting to stop a participant. All staff who are attending zip line platforms must be tethered in.

Q-OT7: What is the criteria for qualified inspectors for my COPE and Climbing facilities?

A-OT7: Inspections must be performed by a qualified person. The best way to make sure you get that is to use the Request for Proposal that is located on the COPE and Climbing page of scouting.org/outdoorprograms.