



# NCAP Circular No. 2

*NCAP elevates camps to new levels of excellence...*

National Council, Boy Scouts of America

Issued November 8, 2013

## Revised National Camp Standards for 2014 Released

The National Camp Accreditation committee met in Salt Lake City in late October to consider possible revisions to the National Camp Standards for 2014 based upon feedback from local councils, area assessment teams, and regional authorization teams. NCAP also considered the results of the first year's Assessment process and requests for waivers and variances that might indicate the need for a Standards revision. In general, feedback on the new Standards was favorable. A few typographic and clarifying changes are needed, however, mostly to facilitate application of the Standards to Day and Family camps, which are typically shorter in duration than a resident camp with corresponding differences in staff needs and structure.

### Where Can I Get the Camp Standards?

The revised Camp Standards will be published and made available by December \_\_, 2013 to all councils on the NCAP website, [www.scouting.org/NCAP](http://www.scouting.org/NCAP). The Standards will be published in three ways to assist councils and

camps in preparing for 2014:

1. The entire NCAP Standards booklet will be provided in .PDF format on the website with the revised Standards included.
2. The revised Standards only will be included in a "Revisions Packet" on the website. The revised Standards can be printed and substituted for the old Standards in the booklet.
3. Each Standard and Recommended Practice will be listed in a Table of Contents on the website showing current effective date and can be downloaded individually as needed.

In addition, each change and its rationale are presented in this NCAP Circular No. 2 to assist councils and assessment and authorization personnel in understanding the revised Standards.

### What Are the Major Revisions?

The major revisions to the National Camp Standards include the following:

- Integrating the COPE and Climbing Standards, currently

found in the Appendix, into Standards PS-206, COPE and/or Climbing Programs, SQ-409, COPE and/or Climbing Staff, and new FA-715, COPE and Climbing Facilities. Two new Recommended Practices, RP-256, CHECK Program, and RP-463, COPE and Climbing Program Manager were added. COPE and Climbing Courses applicability was added to PD-107 and HS-510 and references to the former Appendix were removed from PS-212 and SQ-411 and "Climbing Level II Instructor" replaced "lead climbing instructor" in SQ-411. Incident and near miss action planning was added to AO-805. Finally, the COPE and Climbing Appendix is removed in its entirety.

- Definitions of "camp staff" and "camp personnel" were clarified in SQ-401 and SQ-402.
- Training requirements for day and family camp staff were revised.
- References were corrected and updated.

All changes are discussed inside.

## Preliminary Results of the 2013 Camp Assessment

The preliminary 2013 Assessment results are in. The Standards with the greatest number of noncompliant findings were PS-403, Camp Management (primarily age related), HS-505, Medical Care Policies (Council and Camp), HS-506, On-Site Treatment Procedures, and FA-704, Conservation Plan. Standards with significant

deviations included FA-703, Fire Prevention and Detection, FA-709, Refrigeration Unit Maintenance,

AO-810, Continuous Improvement and FS-606, Dishwashing. Watch for more in a future Circular!

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## Revisions to Introductory Materials, Variances and Waivers

**All changes are effective January 1, 2014.**

The "Introduction to the National Camp Accreditation Program" is revised to place greater emphasis on the importance and role of the Continuous Camp Improvement Program by adding it as an explicit third element of NCAP. The revised language is shown below with new material underlined and deleted material ~~struck through~~. These revisions will replace pages 1 and 2 of the National Camp Standards booklet.

### The National Camp Accreditation Program

The purpose of the BSA's National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) is to help councils elevate camps to new levels of excellence in delivering Scouting's promise to youth. Councils will engage in rigorous review of camps and properties, continuous improvement, and correction or elimination of substandard practices.

In addition to the national camp standards, the NCAP involves ~~three~~ two separate but interrelated cycles that both support the standards and ensure that camps

meet continuous improvement goals: (1) the multiyear Authorization Cycle; (2) the annual continuous camp improvement program; and (3) the annual Assessment and Accreditation Cycle. The annual cycles started in 2013 and the multiyear cycle will be phased in from 2013 through 2016.

...

[What follows is all new]

### The Annual Continuous Camp Improvement Program

The continuous camp improvement program is an annual process during which the local council and camp staff develop goals to maintain and to improve the quality of the camp experience for participants, consistent with Scouting's commitment to continuously improving the camp experience. The council and camp staff identify areas of strength that should be maintained and then identify areas of improvement. The council and camp staff should consider improvements across all facets of camp operation, including:

- Program/Communications
- Facilities
- Finances
- Staff
- Attendees and Participation

The council and camp staff identify the goals and measurable criteria to measure success in maintaining or improving them. These measurable criteria are then tracked during the camping season to evaluate whether the desired strengths are maintained or hoped for improvements obtained. This information is then reported to measure progress.

For more information on the continuous camp improvement program, see Standard AO-810 and the Guide to the Continuous Camp Improvement Program, No. 430-075. Additional questions should be directed to the National outdoor programs staff.

...

[Existing language as revised]

Each year, the area camp assessment team (for resident, trek, specialty-adventure and high-adventure camps, COPE and/or climbing courses and associated camp properties) or the council self-assessment team (for day camps, family camps, and any camp properties not hosting a resident, trek, specialty adventure, or high-adventure camp) will visit the camp to ensure that the safety and quality of the camp qualifies for accreditation. If the camp assessment team finds that the camp continues to comply with the standards and Authorization to Operate (if issued) and is implementing the continuous camp improvement program, it will confirm the camp's accredited status. If there are issues, the team will work with the council to address them. A camp that promptly corrects items that are not serious will maintain its accredited status. A camp that cannot correct promptly is placed into conditional accreditation or, in serious cases, the camp assessment team may recommend to the regional camp accreditation committee the possible reopening or revocation of its Authorization to Operate. In cases of possible threat to life or health, the camp assessment team may direct that the program causing such threat be closed until the threat is removed. The area direc-

### NCAP CIRCULAR NO. 2

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## Revisions to Introductory Materials, Variances and Waivers

tor will be notified immediately and will provide leadership in this situation.

### Revisions to Variances and Waivers

*The provisions for variances and waivers are being revised to reflect experience in implementing NCAP in 2013. The following revisions replace page 10 in the NCAP Standards booklet.*

#### Procedure for Variance

A variance is granted by application to the National Camp Accreditation Committee upon recommendation of the National Camp Standards ~~Chair Task Force~~ after review and recommendation by appropriate BSA committees and task forces by the region/area. A variance establishes an alternative to a national standard that

achieves an equivalent or higher level of protection or program quality. The applicant must demonstrate that the variance addresses each aspect of the standard for which variance is sought. Once granted, the applicant complies with the variance rather than the standard. Variances are permanent, although subject to review for continued applicability during the authorization renewal process. Variance application forms are available at the NCAP website, [www.scouting.org/NCAP](http://www.scouting.org/NCAP), and should be submitted to [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org). Contact the National NCAP Staff Advisor if there are questions on applying for a variance.

#### Procedure for Waiver

A waiver is granted by application to the National Standards Chair ~~region-outdoor program coordina-~~

~~tor~~. A waiver may be granted for a standard due to emergency or other good cause shown. A waiver may be conditional and require the requesting council or camp to meet an alternative or equivalent control. All waivers will be in writing and will specify whether the waiver requires the camp to be conditionally accredited or whether the camp may retain full accreditation if it otherwise satisfies accreditation criteria. Waivers generally may be renewed only once (e.g., a waiver may be in effect for a maximum period of two years). Waiver application forms are available at the NCAP website, [www.scouting.org/NCAP](http://www.scouting.org/NCAP), and should be submitted to [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org). Contact the National NCAP Staff Advisor if there are questions on applying for a waiver.

## Standards Revisions Other than COPE and Climbing

*This section of the NCAP Circular discusses changes to the Standards other than the COPE and Climbing Standards, which are discussed as a group later.*

### PD-110. PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS [Revised]

#### Specific Requirements of the Standard

A. To the extent practical and safe, Scouts with special needs are included in camp programs. An individual familiar with the conditions and abilities of participants is available to assist.

....

#### INTERPRETATION:

[New paragraph]

Specific Requirement A means that the program of the camp is made available to Scouts with special needs whenever possible. If access is difficult, the camp should evaluate whether the program can be offered to the Scout in a different location or way. The camp should ensure that an individual familiar with the conditions and abilities of a participant with special needs is available to assist when needed. This individual can be a professional care giver, a family member or an individual designated by the participant's parents and/or legal guardian who is familiar with the condition of the participant.

#### Rationale for Revision:

*This provision is found in the current COPE and Climbing Stan-*

*dards and is being added for all programs consistent with Scouting's emphasis on making its programs accessible to those with special needs.*

### ~~RP-164. CONSERVATION-PLAN PROGRAM INTEGRATION [REMOVED]~~

#### Rationale for Revision:

*This standard is a duplicate of PS-251.*

### PS-212. SCOUTCRAFT, WOODCRAFT, AND OUTDOOR SKILLS PROGRAM [Revised]

#### Specific Requirements of the Standard:

...

C. Pioneering projects where participants are elevated over six feet above the ground ~~shoulder~~

## Standards Revisions Other than COPE and Climbing *cont'd*

height of the participants are permitted only after review by the council enterprise risk management committee.

...

### VERIFICATION:

- If a project has participants elevated six feet over ground over shoulder height of the participants, evidence of council enterprise risk management approval. This approval may be part of the general program design review in Standard PD-112.

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

The “over shoulder height” proviso is difficult to administer. The over six feet requirement has been standardized by the COPE/Climbing task force and Health and Safety.

### PS-215. TOT LOTS [Revised]

#### **Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- C. The tot lot supervisor and the assistant tot lot supervisor are qualified to oversee dependent youth and have taken Youth Protection training (see Camp Leadership—Youth Protection Begins with You™, No. 623-127); Camp Staff Youth Protection Training, No. 430-149 ~~Seasonal Camp Staff Youth Protection and Personal Safety Training, No. 20-138~~; and the staff training described in SQ-402 General Camp Staff Training).

#### **INTERPRETATION:**

[Add paragraph] Training resources are available online. No. 623-127 is available at <http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx> under “Key Resources”; No. 430-149 is available at

[www.scouting.org/NCAP](http://www.scouting.org/NCAP).

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*Seasonal Camp Staff Youth Protection and Personal Safety Training, No. 20-138, has been discontinued and replaced by Camp Staff Youth Protection Training, No. 430-149.*

### **SQ-401. STAFF QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS [Revised]**

*There are a number of changes needed to Standard SQ-401 based upon the first year’s experience. Each specific Standard part is discussed together with the proposed changes.*

#### **Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- A. All camp ~~staff~~ personnel, paid and volunteer, are registered members of the Boy Scouts of America. All other camp personnel are either registered members of the Boy Scouts of America or meet alternative criteria pursuant to PD-109.

...

#### **INTERPRETATION:**

[All new] Camp staff includes all personnel, paid or volunteer, retained by the council or camp management, who interact with camp participants. Camp staff includes employees, CITs, and continuing volunteers (e.g., camp commissioners, volunteers asked by the camp management to assist program on an ongoing basis).

[All new] Camp personnel includes all other personnel, retained by the council or camp management or by contractors working at the camp, who do not typically interact with camp par-

ticipants as part of their assigned duties. Examples might include kitchen staff, commissary or warehouse staff, or ranger staff without program responsibilities.

Camp staff and camp personnel do not include (1) third parties who come on-site to offer a program to camp participants, are accompanied by camp staff while present, and do not remain on-site over night; and (2) in day camps and family camps, parents and volunteers who assist in program while staff are present and provide supervision. In any camp, an unsupervised volunteer must meet the requirements for camp staff.

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*The revision clarifies who is on camp staff and addresses outside contractors that meet the alternative criteria established under PD-109, which requires functionally equivalent protections to those provided by BSA registration. The revision also addresses whether parents or volunteers at day and family camps need to meet all staff requirements. Many day camps rely heavily on such volunteers. The proposed revisions provide flexibility while retaining sufficient safeguards to assure youth protection and program quality.*

#### **Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- B. Resident camp employees must be 15 years of age or older, except lifeguards for swimming activities other than in swimming pools in natural bodies of water must be 16 years of age. Trek, specialty-adventure and high adventure employees must be 16 years of age or older. Resident camp counselors-in-training (CITs)

## Standards Revisions Other than COPE and Climbing *cont'd*

and day camp staff must be 14 years of age or older.

### **Rationale for Revision:**

*The change conforms to the language used in Standard SQ-406.*

### **SQ-402. GENERAL CAMP STAFF TRAINING**

#### **STANDARD:**

**The ~~e~~camp staff and camp personnel have~~s~~ received training commensurate with their responsibilities in accordance with a written training plan approved by the appropriate council committees.**

#### **Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

...

- B. For all camps, the training plan includes the required presentation Camp Leadership-Youth Protection Begins with You, No. 623-127, and Camp Staff Youth Protection Training, No. 430-149, and Seasonal Camp Staff Youth Protection and Personal Safety Training, No. 20-138. A roster of participants and those completing Youth Protection training is forwarded to the council office at the completion of training.

#### **INTERPRETATION:**

*[Add paragraph]* Training resources are available online. No. 623-127 is available at <http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx> under "Key Resources"; No. 430-149 is available at [www.scouting.org/NCAP](http://www.scouting.org/NCAP).

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*The Standard has been broadened to explicitly include all camp staff and camp personnel in the required training plant. The use of*

*camp staff and camp personnel is as defined in Standard SQ-401.*

*No. 20-138 has been discontinued and replaced by No. 623-127.*

#### **Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- C. For day camps and family camps, the training plan provides, and the camp director and program director (day and family camps) and area leads (day camps) staff received, eight hours of training prior to the start of the camp's program. Other staff received appropriate training as set forth in the training plan approved by the appropriate council committee.

1. *[Unchanged]*
2. *[Unchanged]*

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*The eight hour training program exceeds the total length of some family camps and day-long day camps and has proven a barrier to staff and volunteer recruitment. The revised standard requires camp leadership (defined as the camp director and program director for family camps and the camp director, program director and area leads for day camps) obtain the eight hours of training, with other staff to be trained in accordance with the council's approved training plan. This is a minimum requirement and councils are free to require additional training.*

#### **Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- D. Staff first-aid training. At least 50 percent of the staff must be currently certified in American Red Cross CPR/AED or approved equivalent. At least 50 percent of staff must be

currently certified in American Red Cross Standard First Aid or approved equivalent. The total ratio of trained staff (or volunteers) to campers must not be less than 1:40 effective 2014 and 1:25 effective 2017.

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*With the changes to the definition of "camp staff," the training requirements, particularly for day camps and family camps, are reduced. This may result in inadequate number of CPR/AED or First Aid trained staff available given the number of campers. The added sentence requires that there be at least 1 trained staff member or volunteer for each 40 participants effective January 1, 2014, and 1 trained staff member of volunteer for each 25 participants effective January 1, 2017.*

### **SQ-403. CAMP MANAGEMENT**

#### **INTERPRETATION:**

~~Individuals with extensive prior staff experience who are age 19 or over may be considered for program director by application for a waiver.~~

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*After further discussion, the NCAP committee determined that it cannot generally support a camp operating without two adult deep leadership in the senior positions. The sentence is being deleted to avoid misleading local councils about the availability of such a waiver.*

Standards Revisions Other than COPE and Climbing *cont'd*

**SQ-405. CAMP HEALTH OFFICER**

**Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- B.
- g. Emergency medical responder (i.e., current state license from the state in which the camp is located or current Nationally Certified First Responder registered on the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (www.nremt.org) or, until 2017, eligible for certification on the National Registry certification in American Red Cross Emergency Medical Response)

**INTERPRETATION:**

*[New second paragraph]* An emergency medical responder is an individual who either has a current license as an emergency medical responder from the state in which the camp is located or currently is a Nationally Certified First Responder listed on the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians at www.nremt.org or, until January 1, 2017, an individual who is eligible for listing in the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians by having (1) completed a state-approved Emergency Medical Responder course or equivalent current work experience as set forth by NREMT; (2) current CPR for health care providers with demonstrated competence; and (3) successful completion of a state-approved psychomotor exam.

*[New third paragraph]* For day camps, the requirement that the camp health officer “lives on-site, is on property and on call at all

times” is met if the camp health officer is on property and on call at all times that any staff or participants are present on property.

**Rationale for Revision:**

*[new Specific Requirement B.g]* *The Emergency Medical Responder does not presently require more than the course. The original intent was to require a Nationally Certified EMR. The proposed language allows a state licensed EMR, a Nationally Certified EMR (by NREMT) or, until 2017, an individual eligible for listing as a Nationally Certified EMR. The purpose of the clarification is to reduce the confusion as to who qualifies given the number of alternative EMR credentials currently available by using the industry standard definition. The Nationally Certified status of an individual and current requirements for national certification are available at www.nremt.org under “Check status of a nationally certified EMS professional” button (for current status) and “National EMS Certification” (for requirements – select emergency medical responder).*

*Day camp health officers have queried the requirement that they must live on site. This is an oversight from the initial camp standards. The intent of the standard is that the camp health officer must be “on property and on call” during all times that staff or participants are present.*

**SQ-408. ARCHERY RANGE STAFF**

**STANDARD:**

**The archery range must be supervised by trained and qualified persons at least 18**

**years of age. A National Camping School-trained shooting sports director or USA Archery/ National Field Archery Association National Archery Association instructor must train the archery range master and issue a training course pocket certificate. The certificate must be renewed every two years.**

**Rationale for Revision:**

*Corrects name to the proper entity and eliminates apparent conflict with BSA National Shooting Sports Manual.*

**SQ-410. TREK LEADERSHIP AND STAFF**

**Specific Requirements of the Standard:**

- D. The trek staff member accompanying crews must hold a current American Red Cross Wilderness and Remote First Aid with CPR/AED, or equivalent and CPR/AED or equivalents.

**Rationale for Revision:**

*Corrects name of the course to current American Red Cross practice.*

**SQ-411. SPECIALTY-ADVENTURE AND HIGH-ADVENTURE STAFF**

**INTERPRETATION:**

**Rationale for Revision:**

*Corrects names of the organizations involved.*

## Standards Revisions Other than COPE and Climbing *cont'd*

### RP-455. CHAPLAINCY

#### RECOMMENDED PRACTICE:

A full- or part-time chaplaincy service is provided by a person who is recognized as a qualified clergyman or seminarian by his or her own religious body church and who is 21 years of age or older.

Chaplains either participated in the Chaplain section of National Camping School or have prior camp chaplain experience.

#### **Rationale for Revision:**

*Religious body was the intended term consistent with historic Scouting practice.*



## COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions

*This section of the NCAP Circular presents the changes to the COPE and Climbing Standards, which are being moved from the Appendix into the Standards proper. All are new or replaced.*

### PS-206 COPE AND/OR CLIMBING PROGRAMS [Replaces prior Standard]

Effective: January 1, 2014

#### 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 manu-

facturer'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.

- B. Participant Requirements. Participation in COPE and Climbing activities shall comply with the Age Appropriate Guidelines 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

## COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions *continued*

- 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 anchored when within eight feet of an edge where a fall of more than 6 feet could occur.
  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 set-up and take-down 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 cardiopulmonary resuscitation (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 six 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 Safely guidelines and Guide to Safe Scouting. Unit leaders must take Climb On Safely training (available on-line at [scouting.org](http://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 on site COPE Level II instructor or Director. Councils may find their COPE and Climbing committee to be a valuable resource for writing operating procedures and provid-



## COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions *continued*

ing training for staff who supervise these activities. Age-appropriateness of various COPE and climbing programs is addressed in the Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities available in the Guide to Safe Scouting and on [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org).

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

**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.

- Double-line rappel with an independent belay line
- Single-line rappel with an independent belay line
- Double-line rappel with a fireman's belay
- 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 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):
  - o A.3 Rope logs
  - o A.4 Equipment record /inventory including manufacturer's recommendations for inspection and retirement
  - o C.1 Daily orientation and operating procedures
  - o C.10 Plans for likely emergencies

### SQ-409. COPE AND/OR CLIMBING STAFF

Effective January 1, 2014

#### 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 plan 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 multi-council 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.

COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions *continued*

ii. Re-evaluation shall occur at least every 5 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 re-evaluation

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. Send training rosters to region COPE/Climbing chair

C. All COPE and climbing staff must have appropriate qualifications and training as shown on the table below. 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 multi-council collaboration.

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

No.	Staff Member	Prerequisite	Primary Training	Re-Evaluation	Minimum Age
1.	COPE Instructor in Training	None	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level I + COPE Level I Instructor Training	Yearly	16
2.	COPE Level I Instructor	None	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level I + COPE Level I Instructor Training	Yearly	18
3.	COPE Level II Instructor	COPE Level I Instructor	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level II + COPE Level II Instructor Training	3 Years	21
4.	COPE Director	Familiarity with local council course	NCS COPE Director Training	5 Years	21
5.	Low COPE Level I Instructor	None	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level I + Low COPE Level I Instructor Training	Yearly	18
6.	Low COPE Level II Instructor	Low COPE Level I Instructor	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level II + Low COPE Level II Instructor Training	3 Years	21
7.	Low COPE Director	Familiarity with local council course	NCS Low COPE Director Training	5 Years	21
8.	Climbing Instructor in Training	None	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level I + Climbing Level I Instructor Training	Yearly	16
9.	Climbing Level I Instructor	None	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level I + Climbing Instructor Level I Instructor Training	Yearly	18
10.	Climbing Level II Instructor	Climbing Level I Instructor	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level II + Climbing Level II Instructor Training	3 Years	21
11.	Climbing Director	Familiarity with local council course	NCS Climbing Director Training	5 Years	21
12.	Artificial Climbing Structure Instructor Level I	None	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level I Training	Yearly	18
13.	Artificial Climbing Structure Instructor Level II	Artificial Climbing Structure Instructor Level I	COPE & Climbing Foundation Level II Training	3 Years	21
14.	Portable Climbing Wall Facilitator	None	Portable Climbing Wall Facilitator Training	Yearly	21
15.	Bouldering Facilitator	None	Bouldering Facilitator Training	Yearly	16
16.	COPE & Climbing Program Manager	COPE or Climbing Level II Instructor or Director	NCS COPE & Climbing Program Manager Training	5 Years	21

## COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions *continued*

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 Director. A Level

II instructor or Director directly supervises the program and must be present at the program site except for bouldering or portable climbing walls.

### COPE and Climbing Program Staffing and Participant Requirements

No.	Program	Minimum Program Supervision Requirements	Qualified Staff	Minimum Staff	Ratio
1.	Low COPE	Low COPE Level II Instructor or COPE Level II Instructor or COPE Director or Low COPE Director	Low COPE Level I Instructor, Low COPE Level II Instructor, COPE Director, Low COPE Director, COPE IIT	2	12:1
2.	High COPE	COPE Level II Instructor or COPE Director	COPE Level I Instructor, COPE Level II Instructor, COPE Director, COPE IIT	2	6:1
3.	Artificial Vertical Climbing Structure	COPE Level II Instructor or COPE Director or Climbing Level II Instructor or Climbing Director or Artificial Vertical Climbing Structure 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, L	2	6:1
4.	Natural Rock	Climbing Level II Instructor or Climbing Director	Climbing Level I Instructor, Climbing Level II Instructor, Climbing Director, Climbing IIT	2	6:1
5.	Bouldering	Bouldering Facilitator or COPE Level I Instructor or Climbing Level I 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	1	Determined by council policy
6.	Portable Climbing Wall	Portable Climbing Wall Facilitator or COPE Level II Instructor or Climbing Level II 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	2	Determined by council policy

## COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions *continued*

### 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 & 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 their designee.

Re-evaluation 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 re-evaluation using an assessment instrument
- Monitored performance while delivering the program
- Approved re-training workshops
- Re-taking of the original training

### Artificial Climbing Structure:

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

### VERIFICATION:

- Evaluation of program documents (may be submitted with declaration):
  - o A: Staff training and assessment plan
  - o B: Training records for ALL COPE & Climbing program staff members
    - Qualified Person who oversees COPE & Climbing program
    - COPE & Climbing Program Manager (for local Level II training)
    - Directors<sub>1,2</sub>

- Level II instructors
- Level I instructors

- o C: Staffing ratios

### FA-715. COPE AND CLIMBING FACILITIES

Effective January 1, 2014

### 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. The COPE course and artificial climbing structures where the climber’s feet can exceed 6 feet above ground surface must have an annual professional inspection.
- D. Portable climbing walls are set up, operated, maintained, and inspected according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
- 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

## COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions *continued*

and be specifically designed for climbing purposes. Pitons are never used in BSA climbing.

### INTERPRETATION:

**Properly installed:** Installed by a qualified person according to manufacturers 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."

An example is item C 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 F 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):
  - o B Inspection documents
    - Council self-inspection checklist and reports
    - Documentation of corrective actions
  - o C
    - Qualified inspector report for constructed facilities
    - Documentation of corrective actions
    - Copy of current edition of ACCT standards
  - o D Manufacturers documentation for Portable Climbing Walls
  - o E Bolt and Hanger installation and inspection records

### RP-256. CHECK PROGRAM RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

The CHECK program is utilized.

### INTERPRETATION:

CHECK materials are available from BSA National Supply as follows:

- 616833 - Poster COPE Safety Check
- 616234 - Stik Helmet CHECK
- 616832 - Tag Hang COPE CHECK

### RP-463. COPE AND CLIMBING PROGRAM MANAGER

#### RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

The council operates a COPE and/or Climbing committee or task force which is led by a trained COPE and Climbing Program Manager.

## MISCELLANEOUS CONFORMING CHANGES

### PD-107. OUTDOOR ETHICS

Add COPE and Climbing "Applies to" button

### PS-212. SCOUTCRAFT, WOODCRAFT AND OUTDOOR SKILLS

Remove reference to COPE/ Climbing appendix in Interpretation

### SQ-411. SPECIALTY-ADVENTURE AND HIGH ADVENTURE STAFF

- Substitute "Climbing Level II Instructor" for "lead climbing instructor" in table on page 411-2.
- Remove reference to COPE and Climbing Appendix in Verification section

### HS-510. FIRST AID KITS

Add COPE and Climbing "Applies to" button

**NCAP National Leadership** COPE and Climbing Standards Revisions

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**FA-701. CAMP FACILITY EVALUATION AND POSTCAMP/PRE-CAMP INSPECTION**

Remove reference to COPE/  
 Climbing Appendix in Interpretation

**AO-805. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Add to Verification section of AO-805

- Incident & near miss action plan (See also reporting requirements in AO-808)

**NCAP Advisory Group Forming**

NCAP is forming a field advisory group to assist in developing and vetting proposed Standards revisions and criteria for Accreditation with Gold and Silver Recognition.

We are looking for individuals with a wide range of experience, including volunteers serving in the Vice President of Program, Camping Chair, or camp property chair; professionals serving in the Director of Camping, Camping Director or Program Director roles, and camp staff serving in the role of reservation or camp director, program director or family camp

administrator.

The group will meet informally by telephone and email. Computer skills and the ability to meet in the evenings, likely a Monday night, are a must. Terms will be staggered. We are seeking a mix of large and small camp and council experience.

If you are interested or know someone who would be good for this role, please email the name, email, phone and a brief paragraph describing experience to [NCAP@scouting.org](mailto:NCAP@scouting.org). We appreciate everyone's assistance as we continue to develop NCAP!

**NCAP Regional and Area Leadership Team**

NCAP Position	Northeast	Central	Southern	Western
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