

West Central Florida Council

Jeff Sharlow High Adventure Center

Climbing and Rappelling Facility

General Policies and Guidelines FAQ

The West Central Florida Council (WCFC) Climbing and Rappelling Facility located at the Sand Hill Scout Reservation features a 35' rappelling structure, a 50' artificial climbing wall, and a 1000' training center. The rappelling structure offers three different floors for all levels of experience. The artificial climbing wall offers 2340 ft of climbing surface with challenges from beginner to expert. The facility is available to all Scout units both within and outside West Central Florida Council.

❑ Who can use the Climbing and Rappelling Facility?

- All Cub Scouts can climb but not rappel or belay.
- All Webelos can climb and rappel but not belay.
- All Boy Scouts can climb, rappel, and belay.
- All adults can climb, rappel, and belay.

❑ What is required to use the Climbing and Rappelling Facility?

- At least one adult from the unit using the facility must be Climb On Safely certified which is a 40 minute review of climbing policies and procedures (see details below).
- At least one person must be currently certified in First Aid and CPR.
- A usage permit requesting the facility must be submitted at least three weeks in advance to the WCFC Council Service Center.
- Only WCFC Certified Climbing Instructors approved by the Climbing Sports Committee Chairman may open the facilities.
- Units outside of WCFC must contact the WCFC Climbing Sports Chairman through the council office to obtain access to the facilities. Outside units must use at least one WCFC Director or Lead Instructor in the operation of the facilities even if they have their own instructors.
- At least two WCFC Certified Climbing Instructors must be present to open and operate the climbing wall or rappelling tower; one instructor must be either a Director or a Lead Instructor. Climbing staff must supervise the activity within the scope of their training.
- **Each Climbing Instructor supervises no more than six participants including adults in climbing or rappelling. Participants are under staff supervision at all times.**
- All participants within the boundaries of the high adventure center must have completed a health history and consent form. This form must remain on site. It is the unit leaders' responsibility to obtain and supply the completed forms to the Director or Lead Instructor.
- A Director or Lead Instructor must supervise all Climbing/Rappelling activities.
- Multiple units may sign up for the Climbing and Rappelling Facility on the same weekend.

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☐ How do we reserve the Facilities at Sand Hill?

- Contact Council to inquire if the facilities are available. Once the date has been confirmed as being open you or Council must then contact the Climbing Sports Committee Chairman to determine if staffing is available. Your unit will be required to provide the appropriate leadership, adult supervision and an adult that is ‘Climb On Safely’ trained. Once your unit has met these requirements and the instructors have been scheduled, your unit can reserve the facilities. The details are in the General Policies and Guidelines. **These requirements are National BSA Standards and may not be waived.**

☐ What do we need to bring?

- Everyone should wear a sturdy pair of tennis shoes or boots that lace up tightly. No open toe or loose fitting shoes are permitted
- Shorts or loose fitting pants and a shirt that tucks in are required.
- A fee of \$10 per person for in council units will be collected at the facility.
- A fee of \$15 per person for out of council units will be collected at the facility.
- Units must bring sufficient water for the group since we do not have water at the Climbing and Rappelling Facility.

☐ How many participants or units can use the Climbing & Rappelling Facilities?

- The maximum of 18 participants for the Climbing Tower.
- The maximum of 18 participants for the Rappelling Tower.
- The ratio of 6 participants to one instructor applies to the Climbing & Rappelling facility. One Director or one Lead Instructor is also required to oversee the operation of the Climbing & Rappelling facility.

Example: Participants Instructors Director or Lead Instructor

6	1	1
12	2	1
18	3	1
24	4	1
30	5	1
36	6	1

- Multiple units can share the facility at any one time with the approval of a Director.
- Equipment availability will also determine the number of participants that can utilize the facilities.

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Can we bring our own climbing equipment?

- You are permitted to bring your personal harness, helmet, or climbing shoes.
- **All personal equipment must have a CE or UIAA or ASTM certification marking and be no more than seven years old, or to manufacturer's specs, whichever is less.**
- The on-site Director or Lead Instructor has the final say if the personal equipment may be used.
- No other personal or group equipment is permitted.
- Units are financially responsible for any missing gear or any damaged gear outside the normal use.

How many unit leaders should we have?

- Two-deep adult leadership must be present at all times.
- One adult 21 years of age who is Climb On Safely certified.
- One additional adult who is at least 18 years of age must also accompany the unit.
- Units with more than 10 youths must have an additional adult leader at least 18 years of age for each 10 additional youth participants.
- In other words, a group of 11 to 20 youths requires at least three adult leaders; a group of 21 to 30 youths would require four adult leaders, and so on.

How much time do we need?

- Plan for 4 hours to let everyone in an 18 person group to get a chance to both climb and rappel a few times.
- All equipment must be properly inspected, logged and stowed within your allocated time.
- Plan for more time if the group is larger or if you want to work on the merit badge.

Can we earn the Climbing Merit Badge?

- Yes, all of the Climbing Merit Badge requirements can be fulfilled at the Climbing and Rappelling Facility.
- A unit would need most of a Saturday to complete the major requirements.
- Minor requirements could be completed at a unit meeting or on a Friday night if camping at the Sand Hill Scout Reservation.

What does it take to become a Certified Climbing Instructor?

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must be a current registered member of BSA.
- You must complete a three day instructor training (24 hour course) administered by a Director for the W.C.F.C. Climbing Sports Committee.
- You must operate the facility on two separate occasions under the supervision of a Climbing Director.
- You must be currently certified in CPR and First Aid.

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- Your Climbing/Rappelling certification will last for two years maximum.
- You must actively use and operate the facility within the last 12 months to maintain your Climbing/Rappelling certification.
- You must agree to operate the facilities for units other than your own, at least once within a 12 month period to maintain your certification.
- All Lead and Climbing Instructors maintain their certification at the discretion of the Climbing Sports Committee Chairman.

❑ What does it take to become a Certified Lead Climbing Instructor?

- You must be at least 21 years old.
- You must be a current registered member of BSA.
- You must complete a three day instructor training (24 hour Course) administered by a Director for the W.C.F.C. Climbing Sports Committee.
- You must operate the facility on two separate occasions under the supervision of a Committee Climbing Director.
- You must be currently certified in CPR and First Aid.
- Your Climbing/Rappelling certification will last for two years maximum.
- You must actively use and operate the facility within the last 12 months to maintain your Climbing/Rappelling certification.
- You must agree to operate the facilities for units other than your own, at least once within a 12 month period to maintain your certification.
- All Lead Climbing Instructors positions are appointed by the Climbing Sports Committee Chairman. A Lead Climbing Instructor is a person with prior climbing and/or rappelling experience and can demonstrate the ability to oversee the operation of a Climbing/Rappelling activities.
- All Lead and Climbing Instructors maintain their certification at the discretion of the Climbing Sports Committee Chairman.

❑ What if I got my Climbing Instructor Certification outside of the WCFC?

- You must show proof of your certification to the WCFC Climbing Sports Committee Chairman.
- You must attend orientation training in reviewing the facilities anchor systems, emergency plan, and documentation process with a WCFC Climbing Director before being granted rights to the towers.
- You must agree to the same requirements as a WCFC Climbing Instructor.

❑ What is Climb On Safely?

- Climb On Safely is designed to help adult leaders organize a climbing and rappelling program for their unit, similar to Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat.
- **It is not designed to teach leaders how to instruct BSA youth in skills of climbing and/or rappelling. Leaders should be aware that Climb on Safely is an orientation only and does not constitute training on how to climb or rappel.**

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❑ What does it take to get Climb On Safely Certified?

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must complete a 40 minute training course offered at a roundtable meeting or at other council events.
- One adult accompanying the unit must be Climb On Safely trained.

Once you have acquired adequate climbing staff, and it has been approved by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Climbing Sports Committee, you may contact the West Central Florida Council service center to reserve the Climbing and Rappelling Facility.

If you have any questions, please contact the following Climbing Sports Committee members:

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