Mecklenburg County Council
COPE & Climbing
Emergency Procedures

Overview

These procedures are specific to the COPE & Climbing facilities at Belk Scout Camp and the Mecklenburg Scout Reservation. Where necessary the procedures are modified to allow for the physical differences between the two facilities. The emergency procedures follow the philosophy of Aquatics: Reach, Throw, Row, Go. The order of preference will be:

1. Self-Rescue
2. Self-Rescue with Gear Assist
3. Self-Rescue with Staff Assist
4. Rescue and Removal by Staff

This philosophy limits the risk to both participant(s) and staff to a minimum. The preferred resolution allows the participant to continue / complete the event.

It is realized that each incident is unique unto itself. This document outlines likely scenarios which may or may not be valid for any rescue attempt. All actions during any rescue must be thought out prior to executing.

Responsibilities

There needs to be a clear understanding of who is in charge during resolution of any incident. The course/tower lead instructor (Director or Level II Instructor) shall be the one to decide what procedure(s) shall be performed, and when (assuming the lead instructor is not incapacitated). If any instructor witnesses an event where they feel that they should enact any rescue, they should bring it to the attention of the lead instructor prior to attempting a rescue.

The lead instructor must oversee and direct the actions of the other staff on site and may call upon by-standers to assist. Such actions and assistance may include but are not limited to:

- Removing other staff, participants and by-standers from the area
- Calling for medical help
    - Do not call 911
    - Radio the event medical team
    - Call the camp ranger or camp master
    - Call the camp director

    - Send runners to the camp compound or headquarters/admin station
- Retrieve the first aid kit from the COPE & Climbing storage and equipment closet or COPE course shelter at MSR
- Assist in the rescue at the direction of the lead instructor

Due to training limitations Level 1 instructors will assist in a rescue at the direction of the lead instructor. At no time should anyone attempt a rescue beyond their training.

Rescue Bag

A clearly marked rescue bag is available whenever program is running. When the top of the tower is in use (for rappelling or zip line) the rescue bag must be stationed at the top of tower. It should be placed off to one corner where it is easily seen and available but does not present a tripping hazard. When the high COPE course at MSR is in use, the rescue bag should be stationed near the COPE course but out of the way of the belayers to avoid a tripping hazard.

The contents of the rescue bag include:

- Static rope
- 8 steel oval screw gate locking carabiners
- 1 rescue 8
- 2 double sheave pulleys
- 1 high speed pulley (zip line trolley)
- 3 prusik loops of varying lengths
- Sewn Sling
- 1 pair of gloves
- Shears

Climbing Rescue Procedures

The following procedures are recommendations for the Climbing Tower (Climbing) at both camps and the indoor climbing wall at MSR.

1) Self-Rescue

a. The participant regains the climbing face with no staff intervention.
b. Staff may talk with the participant to coach him/her back onto the climbing surface.

2) Self-Rescue with Gear Assist

a. Due to the nature of the program element and common experience level of participants, self-rescue with gear assist is not an option.

3) Self-Rescue with Staff Assist

a. The participant may be lowered by the belayer to a point where they can regain the climbing face.
b. The belayer may assist the participant to a higher spot by:
    i. Power lift
    ii. Vector lift
c. The participant is lowered to the ground by the belayer.
d. Staff rigs a 3:1 Z Drag mechanical advantage system on the belay line to raise the participant to a point where the participant can regain the climbing face or be lowered to the ground by the belayer.
e. Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system from the rescue bag anchoring on the life safety line above the participant. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. The bottom of the 2:1 system is lowered to the participant and the participant is instructed to attach the carabiner to their belay loop. The participant is then either:
    i. Lifted far enough up using the 2:1 system to then allow the participant to be lowered to the ground by the belayer or haul team
    ii. Hauled to the top of the tower using the 2:1 system

    Note that it is possible but not recommended to access the top of the indoor wall at MSR. Therefore, most scenarios must be resolved from the ground only.

4) Rescue and Removal by Staff

a. Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system from the rescue bag anchoring on the life safety line above the participant. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. Upper Tower Staffer clips into the bottom of the 2:1. The haul team puts the staffer on belay. Staffer removes tower tether and is lowered to the participant. Staffer reaches the participant, clips to the belay loop of the participant using a sling. If necessary, staffer removes participant from the top rope belay line although the climber should be kept on the belay if possible. Staffer and participant are lowered to the ground.

    Note that it is possible but not recommended to access the top of the indoor wall at MSR. Therefore, most scenarios must be resolved from the ground only.

Rappelling Rescue Procedures

The following procedures are recommendations for the Climbing Tower (Rappelling).

1) Self-Rescue

a. The participant regains control with no staff intervention.

b. Staff may talk with the participant to coach him/her back into proper technique to complete the rappel.

2) Self-Rescue with Gear Assist

a. Due to the nature of the program element and common experience level of participants, self-rescue with gear assist is not an option.

3) Self-Rescue with Staff Assist

a. Staff/belayer lowers the participant to the ground using the top rope belay or bottom (fireman's) belay.
b. Staff lowers the participant to the ground after releasing the rappel anchor and belaying the participant to the ground using the top rope belay.
c. Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system from the rescue bag anchoring on the life safety line above the participant. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. The bottom of the 2:1 system is lowered to the participant and the participant is instructed to attach the carabiner to their belay loop. The participant is then either:
    i. Lifted far enough up using the 2:1 system to then allow the participant to be lowered to the ground by the belayer or haul team
    ii. Hauled to the top of the tower using the 2:1 system

4) Rescue and Removal by Staff

a. Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system from the rescue bag anchoring on the life safety line above the participant. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. Upper Tower Staffer clips into the bottom of the 2:1. The haul team puts the staffer on belay. Staffer removes tower tether and is lowered to the participant. Staffer reaches the participant, clips to the belay loop of the participant using a sling. Staffer removes participant from rappel device and/or the top rope rappel belay line if necessary although the rappeller should be kept on belay if possible. Staffer and participant are lowered to the ground.

Zip Line Rescue Procedures

The following procedures are recommendations for the Zip Line(s).

1) Self-Rescue

a. The participant regains control or the zip line platform with no staff intervention.
b. Staff may talk with the participant to coach him/her:
    i. Back onto the zip line platform to allow the participant to complete the element
    ii. Onto the zip line dismount ladder to walk off the element safely

2) Self-Rescue with Gear Assist

a. Due to the nature of the program element and common experience level of participants, self-rescue with gear assist is not an option.

3) Self-Rescue with Staff Assist

a. Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system from the rescue bag anchoring on the life safety line between the zip lines. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. The bottom of the 2:1 system is clipped to the high-speed pulley from the rescue bag and sent to the participant along the zip line. The participant is instructed to attach the carabiner to their zip line trolley or belay loop. The haul team raises the participant back to the zip line platform or dismount ladder.

b. Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system to the high-speed pulley from the rescue bag. The haul line is dropped to the haul team on the ground. The haul team pulls the high-speed pulley to the participant. The participant clips in to the bottom of the 2:1 system. The haul team lifts the participant high enough that the participant can unclip from the zip line tether. The haul team lowers the participant to the ground.

4) Rescue and Removal by Staff

a. If the participant is near the tower but out of arm reach - Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system to the high-speed pulley from the rescue bag. If the rappel is rigged, move the top rope belay from the rappel station and clip to the life safety line above the zip line element. Clip the bottom end of the rappel belay line to the high-speed pulley. Staffer clips into the bottom of the 2:1 system. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. The haul team puts the staffer on belay. Staffer unclips from tower tether. 2nd tower top staffer then belays the 1st staffer along the zip line using the rappel belay to reach the participant. Staffer reaches the participant and clips the participant to the 2:1 system using a sling. Haul team lifts staffer and participant. Staffer removes participant from zip line tether. Staffer and participant are lowered to the ground.

b. If the participant is far from the tower - Upper Tower Staff rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system to the high-speed pulley from the rescue bag. The bottom of the 2:1 system is extended several feet down. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. The haul team pulls the high-speed pulley to the participant. Ground staffer clips into the bottom of the 2:1. Haul team lifts the staffer to the participant. Staffer reaches the participant and clips the participant to the 2:1 system using a sling. Haul team lifts staffer and participant. Staffer removes participant from zip line tether. Staffer and participant are lowered to the ground.

High COPE Course Rescue Procedures

The following procedures are recommendations for the high COPE course elements at MSR.

1) Self-Rescue

a. The participant regains control or the high element pole platform with no staff intervention.
b. Staff may talk with the participant to coach him/her back onto the high element pole platform to allow the participant to complete the element.

2) Self-Rescue with Gear Assist

a. Due to the nature of the program element and common experience level of participants, self-rescue with gear assist is not an option.

3) Self-Rescue with Staff Assist

a. The participant is lowered to the ground by the belayer.
b. The belayer may assist the participant to regain the high element by:
    i. Power lift
    ii. Vector lift
c. Staff rigs a 3:1 Z Drag mechanical advantage system on the belay line to raise the participant to regain the high element or be lowered to the ground by the belayer.

4) Rescue and Removal by Staff

a. This scenario may be necessary if the participant has “fallen” from the high COPE element or has become jammed/stuck and cannot be lowered to the ground using the top belay.

    Staffer ascends the nearest pole with the rescue bag. Staffer must be on belay from a neighboring high COPE element or must ascend the pole using lobster claws. Once on the pole platform the staffer rigs the 2:1 mechanical advantage system on the high-speed pulley from the rescue bag and connects the high-speed pulley to the life safety line of the high COPE course. Staffer clips into the bottom of the 2:1 system. The haul line is dropped to a haul team on the ground. The haul team puts the staffer on belay. Staffer unclips from the independent belay or removes the lobster claws from the pole. The haul team pulls the high-speed pulley (staffer) to the participant. Staffer reaches the participant and clips the participant to the 2:1 system using a sling. Haul team lifts staffer and participant to clear the participant’s jam. Staffer and participant are lowered to the ground by the haul team.