



## COPE Policy

COPE activities present exciting challenges and situations that demand proper training and preparation by all personnel involved to provide the safest and most enjoyable event for all in attendance. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions to improve our program, please contact the Program Manager or COPE Committee Chair identified below.

All Unit-level COPE activities must follow the most current edition of "Climb On Safely" (CoS) and age-appropriate guidelines in Guide to Safe Scouting. COPE Instructors and Qualified Supervisors shall be on hand the entire time while participants are present at the COPE site.

### **Event Management:**

It is recommended that all adult supervisors present at any event be trained in CoS to provide knowledgeable support to the COPE Instructors so that all CoS requirements are properly addressed. CoS training is available online at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) and requires just a few minutes to complete.

The Unit shall ensure that a properly stocked first aid kit is available, that incident resolution plans are established and the nearest medical facilities and emergency responder information is known by supervision at the event. An individual's health and well-being is paramount so any medical response needed shall receive immediate priority and event activities halted as needed. Further, the CoS Coordinator and all Instructors attending the event should be familiar with and adhere to Near Miss and Incident Reporting requirements per BSA's policy.

### **COPE Activities:**

A Lead Instructor (either a Level 2 COPE Instructor or a COPE Director) shall be identified for the event and their responsibility shall NOT change during the event. The Lead Instructor is the final authority for the COPE activity, the safety of all participants and other Instructors, and the proper use of equipment and gear. If staffing, site, or environmental conditions change prior to or during an event, the Lead Instructor is expected to adjust or end an event as needed.

Enough additional Staff Instructors (Level 1, Level 2, or Director) must be always on-site to maintain the proper ratio of participants to staff (12:1 for Low COPE and 6:1 for High COPE) with a minimum of 2 Instructors (Lead plus one Staff Instructor).

*Regardless of their level of training, every COPE Instructor within the site during an event is expected to always maintain safe conditions and work within their personal capabilities and experience. Anyone present (instructors, supervisors, participants, or observers) at the COPE site may halt activities if uncertain about safety, equipment uses, operations or actions. Lead*





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and Staff Instructors shall mutually agree and clarify roles or address any concern raised before continuing with event activities.

Instructors shall properly inspect all COPE equipment, gear, site, and structures prior to and after an event, maintain inspection records, and use/store climbing equipment and gear in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

### **COPE Instructors:**

No assumptions about an individual's qualification or capability are made or implied by this policy or the completion of COPE instructor training. Every COPE Instructor is responsible for knowing and supporting current BSA and Council policies and requirements, managing an event within their personal capabilities and experience, properly maintaining, and using climbing equipment and gear, and adjusting or ending an event if unsafe conditions exist or develop.

All COPE Instructors must be registered with the BSA have current Youth Protection Training and successfully complete training provided by BSA (Indian Nations Council or a National Camp School) or any of the qualified professional organizations identified in Climb on Safely. It is recommended for individuals who have received qualified professional training to report their completion of training to the COPE Committee Chair for record-keeping purposes.

COPE training levels are as follows:

COPE Instructor in Training (CIIT) – annual reevaluation for 16-17 year olds.

Artificial Climbing Structure Level 1 – annual reevaluation for 18+ year olds.

Artificial Climbing Structure Level 2 – reevaluation every 3 years for 21+ year olds.

COPE Instructor Level 1 – annual reevaluation for 18+ year olds.

COPE Instructor Level 2 – reevaluation every 3 years for 21+ year olds.

COPE Director – National Camping School training, 5-year reevaluation for 21+ year olds.

Instructors should remain active after training and document their efforts in scouting activities at Unit, District or Council efforts. Reevaluation of an Instructor at the end of a term does not necessarily require going back through all training sessions. Responsibilities for each training level above is covered in full detail during training. Please see the Council training calendar and COPE and Climbing page for a description of training classes and dates.

Since each element has its own procedures for setup, operation, rescue, and take-down, an Element Endorsement is required for an instructor to lead an event on that element. The process to obtain endorsement is covered during Instructor training.





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### Council Property Use:

The Council maintains several COPE courses. Subject to weather, scheduling and other requirements, these sites are available for use by properly trained COPE Level 2 Instructors (with appropriate endorsements) serving either Council or Unit events:

- Indoor Artificial Climbing Wall at Mabee and Hale (with Artificial Climbing Structure Level 2 training)
- Top Rope Climbing only on Outdoor Artificial Climbing Walls at Mabee, Hale or Graves (with Artificial Climbing Structure Level 2 training)
- COPE elements at Graves
- Ziplines at Mabee or Graves
- Z-Base Adventure Tower - available only for Council events
- Z-Base Zipline - available only for Council events
- Z-Base Ninja Warrior Course - available only for Council events

➤ A Council COPE Site Reservation form, available at the scout office, on Council web site or from parties below, should be submitted 3 weeks prior to the event date; equipment and usage fees and restrictions may apply.

➤ Prior to use of any structure or equipment, state issued identification will be requested by Council staff at location (Ranger typically) to confirm Lead Instructor identity, training status, element endorsements, facility reservation and equipment needs.

➤ Council does not supply COPE Instructors for use by Units. COPE Instructors may agree to assist at a Unit event but their attendance is not guaranteed nor scheduled by the Council. Please contact parties below for assistance in identification of COPE Instructors that may be available to staff your event.

### Climbing Gear and Equipment:

Council has and maintains climbing equipment and gear that can be reserved for use on Council structures and property by Units if desired – see COPE Site Reservation form for details and fees. The Council is unable to check out climbing gear or equipment to any Unit for use off Council property.

A participant's personal *climbing gear*, defined as helmet, harness, gloves or shoes, may be used at any event on or off Council property if allowed by the Lead Instructor of the event. It is strongly recommended that use of personal gear be limited to COPE Instructors.

Unit or personal *climbing equipment*, defined as but not limited to ropes, carabiners, artificial protection, webbing and safety devices, may be used on Council property if approved by the Lead Instructor for the event.





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### Restrictions - Gear and Equipment:

All climbing equipment and gear shall be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and requirements. The following Council restrictions are identified for your planning purposes:

- GriGri, Trango Cinch, ascenders and similar devices are NOT allowed for use in rappelling or belay activities by any scout, regardless of age. COPE Instructors may use these items as needed for their specific use as an Instructor
- Only manufactured seat harnesses should be used in COPE activities – a harness constructed from webbing wrapped about a participant is not approved for use
- Either manufactured or constructed chest harnesses are allowed for use as needed during activities
- Only helmets specifically made for climbing – certified to UIAA / CE requirements – are approved for use. No bicycle, motorcycle, football, baseball or any other helmets are approved for use
- KNOTS – shall always be tied correctly and completely, backed with proper tail lengths and tested prior to being placed into the Life Safety System and checked repeatedly during use.
- Manufactured (sewn) runners, loops or draws are acceptable alternatives to a tied version of the same.
- Stopper knots should be tied at the standing end (free end) of all belay and rappel ropes when placed into use – remember, close the Life Safety System

### Universal Access for COPE Activities:

Indian Nations Council supports universal access for all COPE events and will work to provide the necessary support that a Unit or Council event may require. If a Unit desires additional assistance in planning or staffing an event that has participant(s) needing the specialized training and equipment that may be associated with Universal Access, please contact the parties below for assistance.

Please have a Safe and Enjoyable COPE experience and call or email with any needs or concerns:

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