



CLIMBING WALLS AND COMPLIANCE WITH CLIMB ON SAFELY



More and more of our units are starting to take our youth to area climbing walls, which is a great activity. Unfortunately, while our leaders have taken the required Climb on Safely training (referred to as COS); everyone seems to think that all climbing activities are covered. This just isn't true, even if you have an approved Tour Permit. All a Tour Permit does is say that you have met BSA minimums (i.e. training and youth to adult ratio). A Tour Permit does NOT approve the wall. During COS training, you are told what criteria is needed to ensure BSA insurance coverage, and a Tour Permit assumes you've checked on this. I know that this can be a little confusing. In an effort to help everyone, I've contacted every climbing wall in the area I know of and have determined if they can be used as an approved climbing center per BSA standards (COS and Topping Out).

Here are the walls/towers that I've contacted;

Wall 1: Cornell Climbing Wall
Wall 3: YMCA Southside

Wall 2: Corning Fun Park
Wall 4: Watson Homestead

Point 2 of COS states that "a qualified rock climbing instructor who is at least 21 years of age must supervise all BSA climbing/rappelling activities." COS lists what an instructor is and the ratio's needed. Wall 1 does not provide anybody but general safety monitors unless you hire private instructors and we need a ratio of 1 to every 6 people climbing/rappelling. Wall 2 does not have anybody trained by a recognized training organization.

Point 5 of COS talks about equipment requirements. Wall 3 keeps no logs on their equipment and does not discard rope/webbing that is more than 4 years old.

The only wall that I've found that meets ALL points of COS and Topping Out is Wall 4. All of this information was checked in May of 2003 with the Director of each of the before mentioned walls. These are only the walls that I know of, so please feel free to contact me to find out if any other wall can be used. If you do this please provide a contact name and number for the climbing/rappelling wall/instructor that you plan on using.

Yours in Scouting,
Marc McGrain
COPE Director, BSA