

Ropes Course Staff Training and Qualifications



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FACILITATOR GENERAL NOTES

**Our goal is to help people challenge themselves,
to go one step more than they thought they could.**

The goal of our ropes course programs is personal growth. For us, success is defined as a person stretching their own comfort zones. Because of that, care should be taken to NOT stress being the best, fastest, etc. If someone can reach the top of the tower easily, we have actually failed! (That's why we reserve the right to suggest the use of blindfolds, tie people together, etc.)

We want participants to find new ways to challenge themselves, to push themselves. Let individuals set their own goals – we don't force them – and then encourage them to see it through. If they reach their goal, encourage them to go one step farther.

The basis for all of our programs can be summed up in two key concepts:

“Safety First”

In other words, safety is not only important, but should be the primary concern in all of our Teambuilding / Adventure programming.

“Challenge By Choice”

We will NEVER force our clients to participate in something that they are unable or unwilling to do. We acknowledge that everyone is different and our goal is to respect everyone's differences.

As a Facilitator, your job will be to enforce both of these. With that, these are the standards we require for all of our Facilitators.



ROPES COURSE ROLES AND TITLES

To ensure that we provide a safe, quality experience, we recognize the following roles:

ROPES COURSE ADMINISTRATOR

The Ropes Course Administrator will be responsible for assessing and implementing all of the Ropes Course and Teambuilding programs offered through Northern Lakes Partners.

Minimum Requirements:

To qualify as the Ropes Course Administrator, this person will:

1. Be at least 21 years of age.
2. Meet or exceed the qualifications for the ACCT Level 2 In-House Inspector. (Current certification is not required at this time.) This includes:
 - A. 275 days in the Challenge Course industry.
 - B. 32 hours of challenge course inspection relevant training by a qualified person.
 - C. 24 documented inspections in compliance with current ANSI/ACCT Standards.
 - D. Pass In-House Level 1 and/or Level 2 certification exams (if required).
3. Possess current AED, CPR, First Aid certification, if actively leading programs.
4. Have experience working with diverse populations, especially adaptive programming.
5. Successfully complete all required employment paperwork.
6. Successfully pass a background check.

Job Duties:

The Ropes Course Administrator will:

1. Be directly responsible for the safe implementation of all ropes course programs offered through Northern Lakes Partners.
2. Oversee all construction, inspection, and repairs to all courses on the premises.
3. Conduct a biannual inspection of the Ropes Courses: Spring and Fall. The Spring Inspection will be a comprehensive, visual-and-tactile review of all courses, equipment, gear, etc. (A copy of the Spring Inspection, including any updates for repairs done after the report was finalized, will be included in the Camp Inspection Book.) The Fall Inspection will emphasize future repairs, upgrades, and the condition of the gear.
4. Draft, review, and approve all policies related to all ropes course programs.
5. Oversee the training and designation of Ropes Course Trainers and Facilitators.
6. As needed, the Ropes Course Administrator will directly train – or retrain – Facilitators of any level or experience who are not abiding by the established policies of Northern Lakes Partners. The Ropes Course Administrator has the right to remove any staff member who is facilitating a ropes course in an unsafe or unapproved manner.
7. Interact with the insurance companies in questions related to the ropes course programs.
8. Interact with any third-party vendors brought in to inspect the courses.
9. Be responsible for ensuring that Ropes Course Trainers both abide by and transmit the Ropes Course standards to their Facilitators.
10. Report directly to the Executive Director with needs, questions, or concerns.
11. Facilitate groups, as needed.
12. Other duties, as assigned.

Compensation:

The Ropes Course Administrator can be either a paid staff or a volunteer.

ROPES COURSE TRAINER

The Ropes Course Trainer(s) will be responsible for ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the day-to-day operation of the ropes course programs.

Minimum Requirements:

To qualify as the Ropes Course Trainer, this person will:

1. Be at least 21 years of age.
2. Possess at least three (3) years of teambuilding experience as a “Primary” (or equivalent).
3. Possess a minimum of two (2) years of in-person training. (This will establish that the prospective Trainer has experience with training techniques.)
4. Demonstrate effective training practices for their respective programs. (This will be assessed by either the Executive Director or Ropes Course Administrator.)
5. Possess current AED, CPR, First Aid certification.
6. Have experience working with diverse populations (preferred).
7. Successfully complete all required employment paperwork.
8. Successfully pass a background check.

Job Duties

The Ropes Course Trainer(s) will:

1. Be responsible to keep up-to-date on the most current policies and procedures for the safe implementation of the Ropes Course programs at Northern Lakes Partners.
2. Be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the ropes courses in their respective programs. This includes assignment and supervision of seasonal staff during these programs.
3. Under the guidance of the Ropes Course Administrator, teach in-house certification programs for both seasonal and full-time staff.
4. Hold in-service/refresher programs for staff, as needed.
5. Ensure basic inspections of ropes courses and gear are accomplished prior to and after use, as required.
6. Make sure that the Ropes Course Administrator, other Ropes Course Trainer(s), and Facilitators are aware of any maintenance issues which may affect the safety or performance of the courses. (This may include closing a course until the Ropes Course Administrator can certify it for use.)
7. Provide and promote adaptive activities for different populations, as needed.
8. Present new programs and variations in facilitation styles to the Ropes Course Administrator prior to use. All new programs, variations, and adaptations need to be approved prior to implementation.
9. Conduct construction and/or maintenance projects under the supervision of the Ropes Course Administrator.
10. Report directly to the Ropes Course Administrator with needs, questions, or concerns.
11. Other duties, as assigned.

Compensation:

The Ropes Course Trainer(s) can be either a paid staff or a volunteer.

ROPES COURSE FACILITATOR (HIGH ROPES / TOWER)

The Ropes Course Facilitator(s) will be responsible for directly leading teambuilding programs for groups attending the Northern Lakes Partners.

Minimum Requirements (Secondary):

Secondary Facilitators will need a Primary present to open and/or facilitate a course. To qualify as a Secondary Facilitator for High Ropes / Tower, this person will:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Have successfully completed the on-site training provided by NLP Trainers. (Note: Staff specializing in Tower Facilitator ONLY need not train for High Ropes facilitation.)
3. They must complete a tour of the Course(s) they will be working with.
4. Possess current AED, CPR, First Aid certification.
5. Successfully complete all required employment paperwork.
6. Successfully pass a background check.

Minimum Requirements (Primary):

Primary Facilitators may set up, open, and facilitate a course on their own, provided they do not violate any safety protocols and there is an approved means of communication in the event of an emergency (e.g. cell phone, radio, etc.) To qualify as a Primary Facilitator for High Ropes / Tower, this person will meet all of the requirements to be a Secondary Facilitator and:

1. Be able to check courses and gear for safety prior to use.
2. Demonstrate successful facilitation skills.
3. Demonstrate deescalation techniques.
4. Demonstrate rescue techniques on the high ropes course and/or climbing tower.

Variation: A skilled 16+-year-old can serve as a Primary provided they meet all of the criteria required to be a Primary Facilitator and are accompanied by an 18-year-old Secondary Facilitator. The Ropes Course Administrator or Executive Director must approve this variation.

Job Duties

The Ropes Course Facilitator will:

1. Safely implement the High Ropes Course and Climbing Tower programs.
2. Perform competently to the level in which they have been trained.
3. Endeavor to maintain the mental, emotional, and physical safety of participants.
4. Respond to emergencies in an appropriate fashion.
5. Conduct basic inspections of ropes courses and gear prior to and after use, as required.
6. Contribute to routine maintenance, as needed. Facilitators will refer any maintenance issues that cannot be remedied immediately to The Ropes Course Administrator.
7. Refer issues to the Ropes Course Trainer overseeing the program.

Compensation:

High Ropes Course / Climbing Tower Facilitator(s) can be either paid staff or a volunteer.

ROPES COURSE FACILITATOR (LOW ROPES / INITIATIVES)

The Ropes Course Facilitator(s) will be responsible for directly leading teambuilding programs for groups attending the Northern Lakes Partners.

Minimum Requirements (Secondary):

Secondary Facilitators will need a Primary present to open and/or facilitate a course. To qualify as a Secondary Facilitator for Low Ropes / Initiatives, this person will:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Have successfully completed a minimum of four (hours) of on-site training.
3. They must complete a tour of the Course(s) they will be working with.
4. Possess current AED, CPR, First Aid certification.
5. Successfully complete all required employment paperwork.
6. Successfully pass a background check.

Minimum Requirements (Primary):

Primary Facilitators may set up, open, and facilitate a course on their own, provided they do not violate any safety protocols and there is an approved means of communication in the event of an emergency (e.g. cell phone, radio, etc.) To qualify as a Primary Facilitator for Low Ropes / Initiatives, this person will meet all of the requirements to be a Secondary Facilitator and:

1. Be able to check courses and gear for safety prior to use.
2. Demonstrate successful facilitation skills.
3. Demonstrate deescalation techniques.

Variation: A skilled 16+ year old can serve as a Primary provided they meet all of the criteria required to be a Primary Facilitator and are accompanied by an 18-year-old Secondary Facilitator. The Ropes Course Administrator or Executive Director must approve this variation.

Job Duties

The Ropes Course Facilitator will:

1. Safely implement the Low Ropes Course and Initiative programs.
2. Lead Low Ropes activities ONLY within the guidelines, as written. Any variations or additions need to be approved by the Ropes Course Administrator prior to being implemented.
3. Perform competently to the level in which they have been trained.
4. Endeavor to maintain the mental, emotional, and physical safety of participants.
5. Respond to emergencies in an appropriate fashion.
6. Contribute to routine maintenance, as needed. Facilitators will refer any maintenance issues that cannot be remedied immediately to The Ropes Course Administrator.
7. Refer issues to the Ropes Course Trainer overseeing the program.

Compensation:

Low Ropes Course Facilitator(s) can be either paid staff or a volunteer.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The following are general guidelines for course operations:

Climbing Tower

- A radio or cell phone **MUST** be present for the Tower to be operational.
- The Tower Rescue Bag must be present.
- A Primary Facilitator does not have to facilitate, but must be present if Tower is opened.

High Ropes Course

- A radio or cell phone **MUST** be present for the High Ropes Course to be operational.
- The High Ropes Course elements can only be facilitated with a Primary present, in the trees, and with the High Ropes Rescue Bag secured beside them.
- A Primary Facilitator must set up all elements in the trees, including the Zipline. (A Secondary may do so if they are under the direct supervision of a Primary.) **The Zipline MUST be tested by the Primary prior to use by participants!**
- A Primary cannot be a participant in a Ropes Course program without a second Primary present and facilitating.

Low Ropes / Initiatives

- A Secondary Facilitator can only lead activities that are preapproved by the Ropes Course Trainer. Secondary Facilitators need to be specifically trained to lead additional activities prior to their use.

Facilitator Certification

To maintain certification, we will:

- Require all seasonal staff to re-certify in-house every year. Depending on their comfort level and familiarity with the techniques, a challenge certification will be offered, allowing those with more experience to demonstrate the required skills.
- Require all Full-Time Staff / Interns who are working with the Courses year-round to re-certify in-house every two years. Depending on their comfort level and familiarity with the techniques, a challenge certification will be offered, allowing those with more experience to demonstrate the required skills.



ROPES COURSE TRAINING SHEET (INSTRUCTIONS)

This sheet will be filled out on an annual basis and will record the training and in-house certification of both the full-time and seasonal Staff of Northern Lakes Partners. (Please make additional copies, if needed.)

AED/CPR/First Aid

To pass, the Facilitator must possess CURRENT certification in each of these areas from an approved vendor (e.g. Red Cross).

Initiatives ONLY

To pass, the Facilitator must prove that they can successfully lead activities from the Initiatives and Group Games manual. This includes demonstrating knowledge of the rules, props needed, safe areas to play in, and safety concerns. Facilitators who are certified as Initiatives ONLY must be provided with a list of approved activities that they are allowed to lead. (They can add to this list as they progress in their training.)



Low Ropes (Secondary)

To pass, the Facilitator must display basic knowledge for how to lead the simpler (Green/Yellow) activities. This includes how to inspect the ground for potential threats to participants, how to inspect the surrounding environment, and how to inspect the obstacle itself. Facilitators will also learn sequencing, how to present the problems, safety considerations, proper spotting techniques, and processing. As with Initiatives ONLY, they will be given a list of approved activities that they are allowed to lead. (They can add to this list as they progress in their training.)

Low Ropes (Primary)

To pass, the Facilitator must display advanced knowledge for how to lead all Low Rope activities. This includes everything listed in Low Ropes (Secondary), as well as proper lifting techniques, deescalation, and supervision. While a Primary may use any obstacle in the course, they should ALWAYS have an experienced Facilitator present when attempting a new Red-level obstacle. Low Rope Primary Facilitators may inspect and correct a Low Rope Secondary Facilitator. This ensures the safety and continuity of our programming.

Tower (Bouldering)

To pass, the Facilitator must meet all the requirements for a Low Ropes (Primary). In addition, they must have knowledge in removal of the tarp, group safety and organization, and proper selection and use of climbing helmets.

Harnesses / Helmets

This is a special category that we have at Camp. There are Staff who do not wish to facilitate, but who wish to be involved. These Staff are allowed, and are encouraged, to learn to help participants put on and take off the climbing gear they will need. This will speed up the process for Facilitators leading the activity and provide another set of eyes to check gear and to ensure that it's on participants in a safe and effective manner.

Tower (Secondary)

To pass, the Facilitator must display knowledge of harnessing, putting on helmets, basic knots, basic inspection of gear, and proper belay techniques.

Tower (Primary)

To, pass, the Facilitator must display advanced knowledge for how to lead the Climbing Tower. This includes everything listed in Tower (Secondary), as well as setup, thorough inspection of gear, proper logging techniques for paperwork, and basic rescue techniques. Advanced training in rescue and inspection are available, for those who are interested.

Tower (Specialties)

To pass, the Facilitator must display advanced knowledge in a specialized area of Tower leadership. This includes everything listed in Tower (Primary), plus:

Club Rock:	CWI Instructor
Self-Rappel:	Hands-on training in rappel setup.
Skills Class:	Tower (Primary) plus training in any area they will instruct.
Tower Ascension:	Hands-on training in Tower ascension.

High Ropes (Zipline)

This is a special category we have at Camp. To pass, the Staff member must learn how to run the ladder portion of the Zipline. This includes basic safety techniques, the Zipline verbal contract, and how to safely remove a participant from the Zipline. (High Ropes Secondaries and Primaries will automatically meet this criteria.)

High Ropes (Secondary)

To pass, the High Ropes (Secondary) must pass the Tower (Primary) training. In addition, they must receive a tour of the High Ropes Course, be familiar with the roles of both participants and Staff, and understand the process of transferring participants.

High Ropes (Primary)

To pass, the Facilitator must display advanced knowledge for how to lead all High Rope activities. This includes everything listed in High Ropes (Secondary), as well as inspection, setup, deescalation, and rescue. Advanced training in rescue and inspection are available, for those who are interested.

Ropes Course Trainer

Display a thorough knowledge of ALL policies and procedures documented in these manuals and be able to teach these policies and procedures in the areas that they are certified to facilitate.

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

All seasonal staff are required to recertify annually. All year-round staff who are actively involved in leading programs need to recertify every two years. To recertify for a particular area, a former Facilitator may ask for a “challenge”. To successfully complete the challenge, they must demonstrate the following competencies:

Low Ropes Course (Secondary)

Lead one Green/Yellow activity on the Low Ropes Course while under the supervision of a Ropes Course Trainer and/or Ropes Course Administrator. This will include pre-use inspection, framing the activity, spotting and safety concerns, and debriefing afterward. This can be done with or without a group present.

Low Ropes Course (Primary)

Lead one Red activity on the Low Ropes Course while under the supervision of a Ropes Course Trainer and/or Ropes Course Administrator. This will include pre-use inspection, framing the activity, spotting and safety concerns, and debriefing afterward. This can be done with or without a group present.

Climbing Tower (Secondary)

Display knowledge of the correct use of harness and helmets, proper knot-tying techniques, and effective belay practices, including: climber contracts, toe-to-toe checks, and deescalation techniques.

Climbing Tower (Primary)

All of the preceding paragraph, plus proper setup and take-down techniques, basic inspection of gear, and may include rescues on the Tower, if trained to do so. (Please note that there are no “timed” rescues on the Tower, as medical emergencies will likely dislodge the climber from the Tower, enabling the Facilitator to simply lower them to the ground.)

High Ropes (Zipline)

Demonstrate the knowledge required for the verbal contract, safe operation (e.g. placement of the ladder), and the correct method for safely removing a participant from the Zipline element.

High Ropes (Secondary)

Complete the skills required for Climbing Tower (Primary), as well as review transfers, belay setups, and discuss rescue-prevention techniques related to the High Ropes Course.

High Ropes (Primary)

Complete the skills required for High Ropes (Secondary), as well as proper setup and take-down of the course and rescues. The rescues may be done to either of the following standards:

Conscious Victim: 20 minutes or less from scenario start to safely on the ground.

Medical Emergency: 10 minutes or less from scenario start to safely on the ground.

Failure to successfully accomplish a challenge will require the Facilitator to redo their complete training for that area.

ROPES COURSE TRAINING SHEET

Trainer Name(s):

Training Date:

															Staff Name:
															AED/CPR/First Aid
															Initiatives ONLY
															Low Ropes (Secondary)
															Low Ropes (Primary)
															Tower (Bouldering)
															Harnesses/Helmets
															Tower (Secondary)
															Tower (Primary)
															Tower (Specialties)
															High Ropes (Zipline)
															High Ropes (Secondary)
															High Ropes (Primary)
															Ropes Course Trainer

ROPES COURSE ROLES SHEET

To ensure that all standards, policies, and procedures are adhered to, Northern Lakes Partners (d.b.a. Crescent Lake Bible Camp, d.b.a. Northern Lakes Impact Center) has designated the following Staff/Volunteers to fulfill the following roles.

Executive Director: _____

Ropes Course Administrator: _____

Ropes Course Trainer(s): _____

Notes:

I, the Executive Director, approve these roles for my Camp and its programs.

Signature of the Executive Director

Date

I, the Ropes Course Administrator, approve the roles of Ropes Course Trainer(s) for the Camp and its programs.

Signature of the Ropes Course Administrator

Date

This document to be reviewed and updated annually.