

# Ropes Policy and Procedures

## Description

The Ropes Course is a series of problem-solving events that must be negotiated in order to physically move from one spot to the next. The events are largely constructed of telephone poles, cables, ladders and ropes and vary in height from one foot to forty feet off the ground.

## Purpose of Manual

Much has been written about the clinical application of ropes and initiative programs. The purpose of this manual is to provide a reference for the technical, mechanical, and task aspects of the Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center Ropes Course. For hints on leadership, soft skills and debriefing refer to our Low Ropes Course Handbook.

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Our instructors must speak a common language in respect to set-up, take-down, spotting, belay, safety practices, and methodology so that these processes remain consistent in approach.

Only through this common language will safe use of the course result, so that full attention can be devoted to the educational application. This is the purpose of our Ropes Course Policy and Procedures Manual.

While variations of tasks are possible, and language used to frame the tasks may change, success is always measured by individual and group experience. The technical and mechanical aspects described here represent Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center policy and may only be altered by the Ropes Course Director. As changes in these policies occur, they will be officially endorsed and the existing manuals will be corrected to reflect them.

## History

Outward Bound, Inc. pioneered the use of the Ropes Course as an educational therapeutic tool in the United States. Outward Bound originated in 1962 and has since gained worldwide recognition for its well-developed philosophy of education. This philosophy articulates four assumptions that become the basis for challenge education.

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1. Persons have more resources and are more capable than they think they are.
  2. A small heterogeneous group has the resources within it to successfully cope with significant physical and mental challenges.
  3. One learns more when presented with problems rather than solutions.
  4. Significant, long-lasting learning can be achieved through an intensive short-term experience.
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(Source: North Carolina Outward Bound School Instructor's Handbook, Copyright, 1973)

## Rationale, Experience, and Philosophy

The idea of using adventure as a means toward human growth and development has become an accepted methodology in education, counseling, leadership training, corrections, and many other human service fields. The philosophy behind Ropes Course usage contends that: An environment conducive to the “learning experience” must incorporate both practice and theory. The development of this environment is the basis behind all individual and group work done on the course.

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The purpose of the course has nothing to do with stunts or a dare-devilish mentality. Rather, the Ropes Course is a tool which impels its participants into challenging, high-stress situations in order that they may confront aspects of themselves that they may not have cared to deal with or possibly known before (i.e., fear, trust, confusion, anger, etc.). Consequently, there is great potential for feelings of accomplishment and improved confidence in one’s God-given abilities. The method is cooperation rather than competition. Success comes from the simple act of trying rather than beating an opponent. Our course benefits may include: higher confidence, improved group cohesion, better communication skills, higher levels of interpersonal trust and trust in God, and a greater willingness to take calculated risks.

## Construction

The construction of the Ropes and Challenge Course meets and/or exceeds all minimum standards in the industry as set by the Association of Experiential Education, Safety Practices in Adventure Programming, published 1990, Chapter 10; and the International Association of Challenge Course Technology.

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All equipment used in the construction of the course bears a safe working load and tensile strength sufficient for operating procedures.

All belay line cable systems have an independent back-up system equal to the strength of the primary system.

Unauthorized access to the course is controlled by course design, education, scheduling, dismantling of belay equipment, locked storage, and posted regulations. (Ladder required to access).

## Goals

We will work to tailor our activities and debriefings to the specific goals of each group within the guidelines of our camp philosophy. Some of our goals are listed below:

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1. To increase mutual support within a group;

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    1. By offering respect for effort, not “success”.
    2. By enhancing group communication skills.
    3. By developing trusting relationships and attitudes among group members.
  2. To increase confidence in each individual’s God-given abilities;

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    1. By encouraging risk-taking and reducing the fear of failure.
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2. By enhancing leadership skills.
  3. By basing acceptance on empathy and love, not on competence.
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3. To increase problem-solving abilities;
    1. By encouraging creative thinking and decision-making.
    2. By developing decision-making abilities that take into account the needs and goals of the group rather than just the individual.
    3. By debriefing and offering life applications to the activities.
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4. To develop an increased joy in cooperative group activities;
    1. By emphasizing learning through active, playful participation.
    2. By adding adventure and excitement to participation.
    3. By utilizing teamwork and cooperation rather than competition.
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The high ropes course exists primarily to reach these specific goals:

5. To provide a safe, adventurous program area.
  6. To teach participants Christian encouragement skills.
  7. To increase each group members confidence in their own God-given abilities.
  8. To increase each group members trust in God and each other.
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## Use

### 1. Resources

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#### 1. Financial

A yearly budget will be provided for replacement of equipment when needed, general maintenance, training, and yearly professional inspection.

Any equipment purchased for the Ropes Course will be done via the Ropes Course Director.

Any community group using the Ropes Course will be charged per person as cited by fee.

Ropes Course Programs are included in attendance of Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center.

Professionally recognized Ropes Course Builders will construct all course additions. A request will be submitted at a time of the yearly budget for course additions.

#### 2. Equipment Inventory

All standard and necessary equipment used in operation of the Ropes Course is closely monitored. An inventory will be taken, updated, and filed every six months. The following is 7/2/03 inventory:

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- Seat Harnesses
  - 1 L
  - 10 M
  - 1 S
- Chest Harnesses
  - 1 L
  - 2 M

- Hardware/Equipment
  - 50 steel locking D carabiners
  - 1 steel twisted carabiner
  - 5 H.B. Sheriffs
  - 3 cable pulleys
  - 1 Zip pulley
  - 3 adjustable lobster claws with Zorbers
  - 1 adjustable lobster claw without Zorber
  - 1 shear reduction device
  - 1 blue Zip line static belay tether rope
  - 1 blue Zip line return rope
  - 2 blue ropes for tying ladders
  - 7 green ropes in current use (2 ropes for Pamper Pole; 1 rope for catwalk log; 1 rope for Multi-vine; 1 rope for Ship's crossing; 2 ropes for tower)
  - 10 helmets
  - 10 extra padding for helmets
  - 3 ladders (2 extension, 1 step)
- Low ropes equipment
  - 2 thick ropes for Nitro crossing and Triangle traverse
  - 1 cargo net
  - 1 spider's web
  - 3 platforms
  - 1 set trolleys
  - 2 2×6 boards

## 2. Target Populations

Since Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center provides relaxation in creation and renewal in and education of Christ to youth, adults, families, churches, and schools throughout the year, the target populations are:

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1. Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center guests
  2. School and church groups
  3. College programs
  4. Community organizations
  5. Professional/Corporate teams
  6. Anyone with interest and motivation
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## Safety and Course Management

A ropes course is designed to be challenging and risk provoking in a safe and well-monitored environment. The safety systems and procedures we use have been developed in accordance with industry standards. In respect to these numerous safety precautions and procedures, which are necessary in running a ropes course, the management issue needs to be clearly channeled and defined.

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In regards to policy and procedure, all course management is done by the Ropes Course Director to insure consistency in provision and subsequent safety to participants. (The Ropes Course Director, who is supervised by the Director of the camp, is also responsible for budgeting, hiring Ropes Course Instructors and overseeing the camp's Instructor Training Course.)

The Ropes Course follows ACA guidelines D-12 – D-27.

### 1. Requirements of the Participant

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#### 1. Eligibility requirements

Only people 6th grade level and above may participate on High Ropes Course. Expectant mothers or people with a history of heart disease will not be allowed on the High Ropes Course. Anyone with a history of suicidal tendencies will only be allowed on the High Ropes Course with a physician's written permission. Participants weighing over 325 lbs will not be allowed on the high ropes course and there is a 270 lb weight limit on the Pamper Pole. People with other conditions or disabilities will be able to partake in certain adventure experiences depending on the condition of the disability, the experience and training of the staff, and the nature of the adventure experience.

#### 2. Completion of proper forms (See XX. Forms)

This must be done prior to participation in the course (a guardian will sign for an applicant under 18 years old).

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A Registration form must be signed for every participant on the Ropes Course. The form declares intent, agreement to follow rules and regulations, assumption of risk, medical emergency release and the general health history of the participant. This registration form will be kept on file at the camp office.

### 2. Administrative Policy and Safety Standards

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\*All references to qualified staff or personnel mean that staff training has been accomplished according to the Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center Ropes Course Instructor Training Program. Ropes Course Aids, Assistant Instructors and Instructors are qualified to lead the Low Ropes Course.

1. Safety standards will be maintained regarding safety of guests and staff.
  2. On an annual basis, inspection of the entire course will be performed by a third party professional ropes and initiative course builder. The Ropes Course Director will retain a report of this inspection.
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3. Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center staff will maintain documentation of involvement in Ropes Course activities as per the Documentation/records (XIX) section of the Manual.
  4. All outside groups will have individuals sign registration/health forms prior to participation. (See XX. Forms)
  5. A combination of environmental factors can affect the safety and risk factors of the course. Instructor's judgment will determine if the course should or should not be conducted. No Ropes Course activities will be conducted during extremely inclement weather, including, but not limited to, electrical storms, severe storms, ice storms, extreme cold or heat.
  6. Any broken or critically damaged equipment must be replaced immediately, before use of element can occur. DO NOT PROCEED with damaged equipment even if you think your back-up system is adequate. Ropes with frayed ends must be properly cut, taped and burned before use.
  7. Participants by any party in any event on the Ropes Course will occur under the direction and supervision of qualified staff. The number of participants simultaneously on the Low Ropes course must be at least 7, not to exceed 12 per qualified staff. The number of participants simultaneously on the High Ropes Course must be at least 5, not to exceed 12 per Instructor.
  8. A Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center Ropes Course Instructor will visually inspect all equipment and systems on the course on a weekly basis when in use. The Ropes Course Director will retain reports of changes or concerns.
  9. All ropes will be retired after a maximum of 750 uses, except the primary belay rope for the Pamper Pole, which will be retired after 350 uses. The rope ends should be flipped after half of this limit is reached (375/175).
  10. An emergency kit containing first aid supplies will be present on the course site.
  11. A rescue kit will contain 4 steel carabiners, an extra H.B. Sheriff, hand pliers and rope knife; an extra rope will be on hand. The rescue kit must be present and available at the High Ropes Course should an emergency occur warranting its use.
  12. All carabiners used will have locking gates.
  13. When not in use, all equipment will be stored and inaccessible to campers
  14. Before use of any element, the permanent and removable equipment included in the system will be visually inspected by qualified\* staff for evidence of wear, breakage, or damage. Damaged or broken equipment will be repaired or replaced. Record of Possible Concern Form (XX. Forms) available if necessary.
  15. Set up and take down of all removable equipment will be accomplished by a qualified person.
  16. When setting up or taking down any high element, the qualified staff will be belayed by static system.
  17. Sufficient support staff to monitor the participants on the grounds will be provided.
  18. Before presenting the task, areas surrounding all elements will be inspected for obstructions or dangerous objects. These objects will be removed.
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19. A Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center staff member will carefully review the registration and health forms of each Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center Ropes Course participant. During this process, each participant will be screened for physical appropriateness to participate in the medium, and such appropriateness will be documented by the registration and health forms, which remain on file at Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center.
  20. Proper safety briefing/orientation will precede each ropes course session.
  21. Facilitators will conduct warm-up and stretching exercises before participation. Spotting techniques will be reviewed.
  22. Before participating, qualified staff will visually inspect each participant for appropriateness of attire for safety concerns or potential risk factors.
  23. Participants in all high elements will utilize an appropriate climbing harness system—a commercially manufactured harness for belay or rappel. In addition to the appropriate seat harness, an additional chest harness will be applied to climbers on the Pamper Pole.
  24. All climbers on all high elements will wear properly positioned helmets.
  25. Facilitators will secure all participants to the belay systems according to the specifics in the manual.
  26. Before climbing a high element, facilitators will check all seat harnesses, helmets, knots, and carabiners.
  27. In addition to primary belay, a minimum of one person will assume a back-up belay position.
  28. All participants will be on belay and spotted when climbing a ladder to access high elements.
  29. All participants will have at least one spotter in place when lowered to the ground to make sure climbers can regain standing control.
  30. All participants must be spotted on the low elements. Teach spotting according to the specifics in this manual under XII.A. Low Ropes Course-spotting.
  31. To begin and end spotting and belaying procedures, a pre-defined communication will be used.
  32. All participants will be encouraged to participate in all activities, but never forced.
  33. Smoking is not allowed on high or low ropes activities or when participants are in the presence of or wearing program equipment.
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## ROPES COURSE PLANNING CHECKLIST

### 1. Planning checklist #– Before meeting the group

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1. Contact the leader of the group to discuss expectations and necessary preparation:

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  1. Group size and age
  2. Proper clothing (loose and comfortable, appropriate for the weather, long pants are recommended.)
  3. Alternate plan for questionable weather.
  4. Determine meeting place and time.
  5. Get a clear idea of group's goals.

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2. Familiarize yourself with health forms of participants.

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3. Structure activities.

4. Prepare personal gear (such as):

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1. Extra clothing
  2. Pen, Pencil, notebook and walkie-talkie
  3. Rope log, P&P Manual, and Low Ropes Course Handbook
  4. Water, food (if appropriate)
  5. Special “props” and equipment (i.e. blindfolds, etc)
  6. First Aid kit and rescue kit
  7. Evaluation forms and envelopes (when appropriate)
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5. Set up any activities which need to be set up.

6. Immediately prior to use, visually inspect the following parts of the elements and/or group initiative equipment you will be using:

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1. Cables and cable clamps:
    - Make sure that all cables are intact with no breaks, cuts, frays or kinks present.
    - Be sure that all of the clamps are present and in the proper place.
    - Make sure that the bolts that hold the cables to the trees are intact with bolts screwed properly in place.
  2. Ropes:
    - Check all ropes for cuts and/or frays.
    - Make sure that all knots are in place, tied properly and intact.
  3. Wooden structures:
    - Be sure that there is no broken or damaged wood and that all boards are in place.
    - Be sure that all bolts are in place and screwed in all the way.
  4. Ladders: Be sure that all rungs are intact and anchor points secure and set up properly.
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7. Make needed repairs of equipment or drop activity from the day’s schedule.

8. Record repair or needed repair. Use Possible Concern Form if necessary. Fill out Element Inspection Sheet. (See XX. Forms)

9. Visually inspect the ground for garbage or objects people could trip over, and inspect the trees about the course for deadfalls. Report any deadfalls or large dead branches to the Program Director immediately.

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2. Planning checklist #– Upon meeting the group

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1. Introduce yourself to the group and meet them.
2. Distribute name tags (if needed).
3. Review goals with leaders. If they are adults with a group of children, say something to the adults like, “If you can figure out the solution to a problem or know how you would do an activity, please do not share that solution or suggestion with the children. Solving the problems is not as important as learning from them.”
4. Collect any necessary forms.
5. Check the clothing of participants. All participants are encouraged to wear long pants. They must not be wearing sandals (Teva sandals, etc.) or have bare feet. If unable to correct inappropriate attire, eliminate those participants. Are there



enough participants to run the course? If not STOP, reevaluate the activities planned and, if possible, do alternate activities.

6. Check the number of participants. Make sure that there is enough staff to meet participant ratios. Participation by any party in any event on the Ropes Course will occur under the direction and supervision of qualified staff.

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### 3. Planning checklist #3 – Introduction and safety briefing

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1. Introduce all leaders.
  2. Explain plan for the day. Talk about the philosophy and goals of the Ropes Course.
  3. Talk about environmental care. Mention litter.
  4. Mention restroom locations and appropriate break times.
  5. Explain safety procedures and regulations.

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    1. Explain the inherent risk and any potential dangers of the ropes course. Bruises, scrapes, scratches and turned ankles occur. Be sure that they understand and consent to accepting those risks. Be sure they understand that they can say “No” at any time. Tell them why.
    2. Ask if there are any medical conditions or limiting injuries the group should be aware of. Tell them to speak with you privately if they don’t feel comfortable telling the group. Ask them if there is a way they can tell when their condition is going to act up (strange feeling, etc.)
    3. Explain “Stop play!” rule, “If at any time you become injured or feel unsafe call STOP PLAY and we will all immediately stop what we are doing and offer you assistance.”
    4. Explain that no one is to climb on or attempt one of the challenges without a qualified Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center staff member and the appropriate spotters. Mention event capacities.
    5. Have the group store valuables, dangling earrings, necklaces and jewelry, knives, keys, pens, pencils, combs, etc., or other potentially dangerous items in a safe place away from the activity. No smoking or gum chewing allowed.
    6. Explain roles of leader and participants.
    7. Explain that during these activities you will retain the right to change the rules of the game at any time for safety reasons and to ensure there is adequate challenge or success for the group.

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  6. Talk briefly about rope care and equipment care. Explain proper wear, usage and adjustment of harness and helmets. Explain terminology and use of equipment.
  7. Tell participants at the end of our activity “It is important to be able to say that you challenged yourself in at least one way.”
  8. Explain “challenge by choice” – Although we will encourage participants to attempt each activity, they will have the final say as to whether they are ready to try it. Our job is to remind them they can do more than they think they can and outline their choices and the consequences for their choices. No camper will be forced to do any activity.
  9. Do warm-ups and stretch out.
  10. Teach or review spotting.
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11. Explain verbal contracts and communication signals.
  12. State goals of the group as you understand them. Explain individual and group responsibilities. Re-set and clarify goals if necessary.
  13. Once goals are clear, form a Participation Covenant:
    - a. I agree to work together as a group and work toward individual and group goals.
    - b. I agree to follow safety and group behavior guidelines.
    - c. I agree to give and receive feedback, both positive and negative and to work toward changing inappropriate behaviors.
  14. Double-check all elements prior to use to make sure that they are in safe working order.
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#### 4. Planning checklist #4 – As you begin

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1. Make all safety considerations clear to participants before beginning any activity. Then follow them.
  2. Take appropriate breaks for water.
  3. Under no circumstances are you to leave an activity while the participants are still engaged in it. Lead activities appropriately.
  4. Do a safety check on each element before use.
  5. Debrief or process when necessary.
  6. When appropriate, hand out evaluation forms and have participants complete and return them or hand out stamped/addressed envelopes.
  7. End session. Thank participants and staff.
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#### 5. Planning checklist #5 – After the group leaves

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1. Disassemble appropriate equipment and store properly.
  2. Check course to be sure everything is in order.
    1. Ropes are coiled,
    2. Litter is disposed of,
    3. Props and gear are properly stored,
    4. Appropriate elements are secured,
    5. Any needed repairs are noted,
    6. Lost and found items are gathered.
  3. List activities/problems encountered/potential safety concerns/other comments. Properly record all rope and equipment use as required.
  4. Complete Incident Report/Near Miss Forms (if needed and turn in to office.)
  5. Debrief activity with other leaders if necessary.
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#### ATTENDING STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

1. While on the Ropes Course site, attending staff (i.e. non-qualified Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center staff and group chaperones or leaders) are expected to:
    1. Monitor the behavior and activity of the participants, intervening when necessary.
    2. Aid in the orchestration of participants to meet course Instructor's specifications.
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3. Follow course instructor's requests to the best of his/her ability.
    - d. Use common sense and sound judgment.
    - e. Encourage and recognize the efforts of all involved.

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  2. At no time is an attending staff permitted to:
    1. Generate an activity on Ropes Course.
    2. Assume an Instructor's role.
    3. Publicly question an Instructor's purpose or method (isolated consultation is, however, welcome).

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  3. Rover
    1. Whenever possible (number of attending staff permitting), one staff member will be designated as a "Rover" for the duration of the group function.
    2. The Rover function is to observe, double check, and assist the course Instructor. The Rover will be on the ground wandering between events and clusters, and will focus his/her attention on consultation, critique, and observation of the Instructor in order to assist the Instructor in conducting the event. The Rover is not expected to participate in the supervision of participants.
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## Elements

"Element" is the term used in reference to some of the specific events that make up the Ropes Course. These elements require trained spotting of some sort, whether that is "spotting" or "belaying". Each element represents a unique problem for the participant to solve on an individual or group basis. The height of each element varies greatly with a subsequent variance in technical and mechanical set-up due to increased risk factor. On one element a participant may be inches off the ground while another, 40 feet off the ground. Consequently, a categorization process, based on safety procedures and approaches, has been established qualifying the elements as either a "Low Element" or a "High Element".

"Initiative" is the term used in reference to the specific events that together with the Low and High Elements complete the Ropes Course. Each initiative is a challenge requiring group ownership, cooperation, and high-level problem solving skills.

### 1. Low Elements – spotting

The commonality of Low Elements is that the participants are relatively close to the ground with safety controls monitored and provided by other participants who use a technique called "spotting".

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1. Maintain an active position, ready to move at any time.
  2. Anticipate the possibility of a fall.
  3. Stay close to the participant, but do not interfere or assist in their movement.
  4. Small or weak people should not spot larger participants unless they are part of a larger group of spotters.
  5. Do not allow your attention to be diverted by anything while spotting. Always keep your eyes on the participant.
  6. Know the initiatives or Low Elements you are spotting and the possibilities for accidents.
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7. Keep hands up and fingers together while spotting.
  8. Keep eyes on participants at ALL times.
  9. Upper body support is first priority to protect head, neck and back injuries.
  10. Pre-defined communication will be used between participant and spotter(s).
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A series of explanations, discussions, and exercises will be used to teach and test spotting. All spotting activities will be done in a progressive fashion whereas step 1 needs to be passed before proceeding to step 2, etc. When all spotting exercises have been passed, Low Elements begin.

Spotting activities should start out with participants pairing up and practicing falling back into their partner's hands. The spotter should maintain an active stance, with fingers up and together and eyes on the participant at all times. The participant falling should initiate a verbal contract with the spotter both to begin and end the fall. Partners should switch positions after the first participant has "fallen" a few times.

After this activity has been successfully completed, participants can move on to the partner pass. Participants should be in groups of three with a front spotter, a back spotter, and a faller. This activity is done the same way as the first fall, except there is a front spotter to allow participants to fall forward.

Another spotting activity is the "willow in the wind". Participants stand in a circle with someone in the middle acting as the willow tree. The person in the middle protects chest area by crossing arms in front of chest and initiates a verbal contract, and begins the fall. As the participant falls in any direction, spotters should be ready to catch the participant and bring him/her back to a standing position. Once done, the participant in the middle ends the verbal contract.

The scoop spot is another technique used for spotting when a participant is on a low element. Two spotters stand on either side of a participant. As the participant begins to fall, spotters hook their arm farthest from the participant under his/her arms, while using the other arm to support the head, neck and back. Participants should then be lowered slowly to the ground so that he/she is in a sitting position.

"The gauntlet" is an activity that can be used to practice both the standard spot and the scoop spot. Spotters line up in two lines facing inward. A participant walks through the line as if he/she were to be walking on a cable. The participant will fall in either direction and spotters must make sure they are ready for the participant.

The zipper spot is the final spotting technique that is used on the course. **There must be a minimum of 8 spotters to a participant.** Spotters line up facing inward, arms extended and palms facing upward. Spotters will alternate arms with the people across from them so that their palms meet the opposite spotters biceps. It is important that spotters form a gradual slope upward from where the participant is at, so that the head, neck and back hit first and aren't at a downward angle.

The zipper spot can be used with a trust fall or a superman dive. With the trust fall, participants line up at the end of a picnic table or a platform, in the zipper spot formation, with a participant standing at the edge of the table/platform. The participant will stand with his/her back to the group, arms crossed at the chest. As the participant falls, he/she should remain rigid, so not to bend in the middle, forcing more weight on the spotters in the middle. On a superman dive, spotters line up in the same formation. A participant will run and leap into the arms of the spotters. **For each of these events, there should be a spotter on the end to catch the participant's head, if necessary.**

The final activity that can be done with the zipper spot is the trust wave. Spotters again line up in the same zipper spot formation. A participant will run/walk through the line. Just before the participant reaches the spotters arms, the spotters should raise their arms and let the participant past without hitting them in the face (like doing the wave).

## 2. High Elements – belaying

The commonality of all High Elements is that the participant is too high off the ground for safety control measures to be provided through the spotting technique. Rather, safety control is ensured through a system called “Belay”.

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### 1. Belay

All participants engaged in climbing activities on the High Elements of the Ropes Course will have their safety ensured through the process of belay. Similarly, any participants on elements will be “on belay”.

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For set-up and take down of High Elements and Zip Line—a static belay device will be in use. This will appear as a double rope device, anchored by carabiners to the seat harness of the climber on one end and to a belay cable, telephone pole or secure peg on the other.

Dynamic belay systems will be used by participants on all other high climbing events, and when climbing onto the Zip Line platform. A dynamic system uses a long belay rope, with one end secured to the seat harness of the climber and the other end secured to the belayer with a friction device.

### 2. Belay communication/calls

The belay process consists of communication between climber and belayer, which indicates that the belayer is ready to assume responsibility for the safety of the climber. It is imperative that belayer also communicate with climber before releasing belay. All participants must be taught and use communication procedures.

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The following are examples of belay/climber communication:

1. Pre-climbing communication
    - On belay? (Called by climber)
    - Belay on (Called by belayer)
    - Climbing (Called by climber)
    - Climb on! (Called by belayer)
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-My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am ready to climb!

-Ready! (Called by belayer)

-Climbing (Called by climber)

-Climb on! (Called by belayer)

## 2. Post-climbing communication\*

-Are you on your own? (Called by belayer)

-Yes (Called by climber)

-Off belay (Called by climber)

-Belay off (Called by belayer)

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\*The words spoken in post-climbing communication are not as important as the fact that it needs to take place.

## 3. Communication during climbing called by climber

-Tension (or up rope)

-Slack

-(Etc.)

## 4. Zip Line clearance

-Zip clear! (Called by climber or in some cases by belayer)

-Clear! (called by ground crew)

## 5. e. Instructor taking down element

-Rope! (Called by instructor)

-Clear! (Called by ground crew)

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When working on a series of two or more High Elements, it will be necessary for the climber to switch from one belay system to another before proceeding. This may be accomplished by an additional Instructor who receives the climber at change points, secures him into a second belay system before releasing him from the first, or be careful step-by-step instructions to the climber from the belayer on the ground which safely guides him through the change process. In this instance, demonstrations of the technique while still on the ground are indicated. Regardless of method, ongoing use of the commitment signals between climber and belayer must occur.

## 3. High element hardware specifications

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1. When setting up the challenge course, the Instructor shall always be belayed through use of the lobster claw method.
  2. When setting up belay systems, use one cable pulley on the belay cable connected with steel carabiners. In the Pamper Pole event, a shear reduction block is used along with two locking carabiners attached to a twisted carabiner.
  3. If frayed on the end, each rope shall be re-taped and re-burned before being used again.
  4. All carabiners shall be of the locking type; the functioning of the gates and any wear shall be checked as they are put into use.
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5. All participants with long hair shall tie back and tuck their hair into the back of their shirt while on the High Ropes Course so as not to catch in belay system.
6. All participants shall wear helmets and seat harnesses while on the High Elements, each of which shall be inspected by the belayer prior to the participant starting each element. An additional chest harness should be worn while on the Pamper Jump.
7. All participants shall be “on belay” while on each and every High Element of the Ropes Course.
8. For High Elements, two carabiners MUST be clipped into the front belay loop of the climber’s/participant’s seat harness in opposite and opposed fashion. The exceptions to this are when a participant is on the Zip Line and Pamper Pole. On the Zip Line the participant is clipped into both the rear and front belay loops on the seat harness. On the Pamper Pole two carabiners (one from each primary and secondary belay ropes) are clipped to the participant’s rear belay loop (seat harness) and one carabiner clipped to the rear of the chest harness.

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3. List and general description of Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center Ropes Course Elements.

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1. Ice breakers

Human knot- all participants hold a piece of rope in their left hand. The instructor will give a topic to use as an introduction (i.e. favorite sport, birthday, etc.) and each participant will introduce himself or herself by saying their name and their answer to topic given (i.e. “My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I \_\_\_\_\_.”). If there is someone in the group that has the same answer as the participant before, they take the open end of the rope with their free hand and then repeat the same sequence. Once all of the participants have two different rope ends, the group must try to untangle the “human knot” without taking their hands off of the ropes.

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Group juggle- the game begins with participants standing in a circle. Each participant will throw the ball to only one person, so that each person is receiving the ball from the same person each time. To increase the difficulty of this game, instructors may want to change the rules, saying that the ball must make it around the entire circle without anyone dropping it, or the group must increase the speed at which they are throwing the ball. If a group successfully completes this, the instructor may want to add a second and third ball.

Warp speed- this game is almost identical to the group juggle. The same rules apply as in the group juggle, only in this game, participants must see how fast they can get the ball to complete the full pattern in the shortest amount of time.

Blind line up- the instructor will tie a rope between two trees. Participants will line up facing the rope with their hands on the rope. The instructor will give the participants a topic (i.e. birthday, height, first letter of mother’s maiden name, etc.) and the participants will have to line up in that order with their eyes closed and without talking.

Blind forms or blind polygons- this activity can be done many different ways. The objective is for participants to form a “perfect square” using rope. (The instructor can choose any way to do this activity, from all participants having their eyes closed and being able to talk, to only one participant being able to talk and have his/her eyes open, while the rest of the participants must have their eyes closed and can’t talk.) Participants may either be given time in the beginning to strategize, or the instructor can have them attempt the square and then give them time to strategize and continue with the square.

Aggravations- all participants tie a knot in a rope to represent a stressful situation in their life. Participants must try to untie all of the knots in the rope while keeping one hand on the rope at all times.

Partner circuit- Participants partner up and sit back to back. They must lock arms and try to stand up at the same time. If this is successfully completed, have participants sit facing each other. They must try to stand at the same time while holding hands and having their feet touching at all times. If this is successfully completed, have participants form groups of four and do the same thing.

Team circuit- Participants must all try to get from a sitting position to a standing position at the same time. All participants’ feet must remain in contact with the people next to them and all hands must remain in contact, so that an electrical current would be able to complete a full circuit.

Jump rope- Participants must try to perform various stunts while jumping rope (i.e. all participants must jump only one time without letting the rope make a full turn in between each participant, etc.). The entire group must perform the stunt, or the activity will be started over from the beginning.

Yurt circle- Participants form a circle and count off by 2’s. On the instructor’s count, all of the 1’s will lean in and all of the 2’s will lean out. This can also be done with a rope tied in a circle. All of the participants should hold on to a section of the rope and on the instructor’s count, everyone should lean out, still holding on to the rope.

Partner tag- the instructor will tie a rope into a circle and lay it flat on the ground. Participants will pair off and stand inside of the circle. One of the partners is to be “it” and the other will try to stay away from their partner. As soon as the instructor says, “go” the partner that is it will spin around three times and then try to catch his/her partner. All participants must walk heel to toe. If one partner is to step outside of the circle, he/she must spin around three times before continuing on in the game.



Traffic jam- Participants line up, each person standing on one board, facing the same direction. The objective is for each group to switch lanes, ending up in the same order, facing the opposite direction. There is one open board placed in front of the two lanes to be used as a turning point. Participants can move directly forward to an open board or can move forward by skipping one participant that is going the opposite direction.

## 2. Low Elements

Criss Cross- Two-foot cables are suspended approximately one foot off the ground between trees, crisscrossing in the middle, producing an X shape. The objective is to walk the cables from one end to the other.

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Triangle Traverse- Two cables are suspended approximately one foot off the ground between three trees in the shape of a V. A rope may be suspended from one of the trees to form a support. Participants must traverse all three wires using only the support rope.

Commitment Bridge- Two cables are suspended approximately one foot from the ground between three trees in the shape of a V. Two participants of comparable height and weight negotiate the element. The two participants are instructed to climb onto the cables at the narrow end of the V and clasp each other's palms (interlocking fingers are not allowed). Balancing against each other, the participants sidestep toward the wide end of the V as far as they can go.

Tension Traverse- a cable is suspended approximately one foot from the ground between two trees. Hand ropes may be set up for balancing purposes. The objective is to walk the cable from one end to the other.

## 3. Initiatives

Trolleys- Participants are situated in a single line fashion with one foot on each of a 4×4 board. Rope handles are attached to the boards and situated so that each participant holds a rope in each hand. The objective is for entire group to combine efforts in walking the "trolleys" through a designated course.

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Mountain Games- Three platforms are set up at varying distances from each other in a triangle shape. Participants must get from one platform to the next, using two boards of different lengths without touching the ground and without the boards touching the ground. All participants must stay on the platforms at all times as well.

Mohawk Walk- A single line series of cables with swinging 4×4 varying in length are strung between two trees approximately one foot off the ground. The objective is for the entire group to traverse the four lengths of cable and the 4×4 without touching the ground. No direct means of support are available to the participant except themselves.

Nitro Crossing- a thick, knotted, swinging rope is suspended between two trees. Two parallel boundary lines are designated so that the rope hangs directly in the middle. The objective is for

the entire group to swing one at a time from one boundary to the next without touching the ground between.

Spider's Web- An arrangement of rope or cord is fixed between two trees passing over itself in a symmetrical fashion forming a "web-like" configuration. In observing the web, an obvious number of holes or spaces are evident. The objective is for each participant—one at a time—to pass through an opening in the web, attempting to reach the other side. Participants may not touch the web and once one of the openings is used, it may not be used again.

Log Jam- An arrangement of logs are hung between two parallel lengths of cable in such a way that they are moveable. The objective is for the group to make their way from one end to the other by sliding the mobile logs and without touching the ground.

#### 4. High Elements

The Wall- Participants climb from the bottom of the wall to the top using foot/hand holds in various positions.

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Pamper Pole- In this element, a trapeze bar is suspended between two poles approximately thirty feet off the ground. The objective in negotiating this element is for a single participant to climb a solitary pole, stand upon it and jump off toward the bar.

Zip Line- Participant is belayed in normal dynamic fashion to a platform where an Instructor is stationed. (\*Instructor may allow participant to climb up to platform while on static belay instead of dynamic belay if the participant has successfully been taught and tested on the use of lobster claws) The participant is then transferred to the Zip pulley. When clearance is given, the participant rides the pulley down the Zip cable. A ground crew assists the participant in dismounting the Zip system by use of a stepladder.

Multi-vine- a foot cable is suspended between two poles with a series of ropes attached to an overhead cable at increasingly greater distances from each other. The participant traverses the cable from one pole to the other using only the dangling ropes for balance.

Ship's Crossing- a foot cable is suspended between two poles with two ropes also attached to the poles. These ropes cross in the middle to form an X. The objective is to cross the cable using only the extra ropes for support.

Vertical Playpen- Various elements are combined to form the playpen. (Rope ladder, free-swinging pole with staples, series of wooded logs connected by cable) The objective is to climb as high up the playpen as possible.

Cargo Net- a giant cargo net is fastened to one side of the climbing tower. The objective is to climb as high up the net as possible.

Catwalk- A log or pole is fastened between two fixed poles. The objective is for one participant to walk from one end of the pole to the other without holding on to any supports.

## ELEMENTS SET-UP PROCEDURES

List and general procedures of set-up of Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center ropes course elements.

### 1. High Elements

The Wall- The Instructor should first gather all equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claws with Zorber; 2 steel, locking carabiners; and rope marked specifically for the event. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole on the climbing tower. Once on the platform of the tower, the Instructor will clip one of his/her carabiners on to a cable and walk across to the area he/she intends to work on. Once the Instructor is to the area, he/she will unhook the carabiner from the cable and static belay up the pole until he/she has reached the cable intended to be worked on. The Instructor will then extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above the cable being worked on. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped in to something secure (i.e. staple, cable). Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can then proceed with the set-up. Two steel, locking carabiners should be clipped on to the top wire so that the gates are opposite and opposed and that the lock screws down. Once the carabiners are in place, the rope is to be placed through both carabiners so that it falls down the front of the wall. Once this is complete, the Instructor can lobster claw back down the pole and to the ground. On one end of the rope, the Instructor should tie a bowline on a bight with a double over-hand back-up knot to be clipped in to a participant's harness. On the other end of the rope a loop should be formed and placed through an H.B. Sheriff to be used by a belayer. The belayer is in charge of making sure that the participant is hooked in correctly to the event. The gates of his/her carabiners should be opposite and opposed and set up so the locks screw down. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she will initiate a verbal contract and begin climbing. The belayer will then take up extra slack from the rope as the participant climbs higher. After the participant has reached the top of an event or is ready to descend, he/she will initiate a verbal contract and begin descending. The belayer lets the rope run through the H.B. Sheriff slowly, with two hands on break, until the participant has reached the ground and ended his/her contract.

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Cargo Net- The Instructor should first gather all equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claws with Zorber; 2 steel, locking carabiners; and rope marked specifically for the event. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole on the climbing tower. Once on the platform of the tower, the Instructor will clip one of his/her carabiners onto a cable and walk across to the area he/she intends to work on. Once the Instructor is to the area, he/she will unhook the carabiner from the cable and static belay up the pole until he/she reaches the cable intended to be worked on. The Instructor will then extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above cable being worked on. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped in to something secure (i.e. staple, cable). Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can begin the set-up. Two steel, locking carabiners should be clipped on to the top wire so that the gates are opposite and opposed and

that the lock screws down. The rope should be placed through the carabiners so that it falls down the front of the net. Once this is complete, the Instructor can lobster claw back down the pole and to the ground. On one end of the rope, the Instructor should tie a bowline on a bight with a double over hand back-up knot to be clipped in to the participant's harness. On the other end of the rope, a loop should be formed and placed through an H.B. Sheriff to be used by a belayer. The belayer is in charge of making sure that the participant is hooked in correctly to the event. The gates of his/her carabiners should be opposite and opposed and set up so the locks screw down. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she will initiate a verbal contract and begin climbing. The belayer will then take up extra slack from the rope as the participant climbs higher. After the participant has reached the top of an event or is ready to descend, he/she will initiate a verbal contract and begin descending. The belayer lets the rope run through the H.B. Sheriff slowly, with two hands on break, until the participant has reached the ground and ended his/her contract.

Vertical Playpen- The Instructor should first gather all of the equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claw with Zorber; 2 steel, locking carabiners; and rope marked specifically for the event. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole on the climbing tower. Once on the platform of the tower, the Instructor will clip one of his/her carabiners onto a cable and walk across to the area he/she intends to work on. Once the Instructor is to the area, he/she will unhook the carabiner from the cable and static belay up the pole until he/she reaches the cable intended to be worked on. The Instructor will then extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above the cable being worked on. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped in to something secure (i.e. staple, cable). Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can begin the set-up. Two steel, locking carabiners should be clipped on to the top wire so that the gates are opposite and opposed and that the lock screws down. The rope should be placed through the carabiners so that it falls down the front of the playpen. Once this is complete, the Instructor can static belay back down the pole and to the ground. On one end of the rope, the Instructor should tie a bowline on a bight with a double over hand back-up knot to be clipped in to the participant's harness. On the other end of the rope, a loop should be formed and placed through an H.B. Sheriff to be used by a belayer. The belayer is in charge of making sure that the participant is clipped in correctly to the event. The gates of his/her carabiners should be opposite and opposed and set up so the locks screw down. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she will initial a contract and begin climbing. The belayer will then take up extra slack from the rope as the participant climbs higher. After the participant has reached the top of an event or is ready to descend, he/she will initiate a contract and begin descending. The belayer lets the rope run through the H.B. Sheriff slowly, with two hands on break, until the participant has reached the ground and ended his/her contract.

Cat Walk- The Instructor should first gather all of the equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claw with Zorber; 2 steel, locking carabiners; cable pulley; and rope marked specifically for the event. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole. Once to the top of the pole, the Instructor will extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above the cable being worked on. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped in to the top wire. Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can begin the set-up. The cable pulley should be placed on the top wire and secured with the two carabiners, gates opposite and opposed so

that the lock screws down. The rope should be placed through the carabiners so that it falls with both ends at either side of the log. Once this is complete, the Instructor can static belay back down the pole and to the ground. On one end of the rope, the Instructor should tie a bowline on a bight with a double over hand back-up knot to be clipped in to the participant's harness. On the other end of the rope, a loop should be formed and placed through and H.B. Sheriff to be used by a belayer. The belayer is in charge of making sure that the participant is clipped in correctly to the event. The gates of his/her carabiners should be opposite and opposed and set up so the locks screw down. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she will initiate a contract and begin climbing. The belayer will then take up extra slack from the rope as the participant climbs higher. After the participant has reached the top of an event or is ready to descend, he/she will initiate a contract and begin descending. The belayer lets the rope run through the H.B. Sheriff slowly, with two hands on break, until the participant has reached the ground and ended his/her contract

Ship's Crossing- The Instructor should first gather all equipment necessary to complete the set up: lobster claw with Zorber; 2 steel, locking carabiners; a cable pulley; and rope marked specifically for the event. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole. Once to the top of the pole, the Instructor will extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above the cable being worked on. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped to the wire being worked on. Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can begin the set-up. The cable pulley should be placed on the top cable and secured with the two carabiners with the gates opposite and opposed so that the lock screws down. The rope should be placed through the carabiners so that both ends of the rope fall to one side of the cable. Once this is complete, the Instructor can static belay back down the pole and to the ground. On one end of the rope, the Instructor should tie a bowline on a bight with a double over hand back-up knot to be clipped in to the participant's harness. On the other end of the rope, a loop should be formed and placed through an H.B. Sheriff to be used by a belayer. The belayer is in charge of making sure that the participant is clipped in correctly to the event. The gates of his/her carabiners should be opposite and opposed and set up so the locks screw down. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she will initial a contract and begin climbing. The belayer will then take up extra slack from the rope as the participant climbs higher. After the participant has reached the top of an event or is ready to descend, he/she will initiate a contract and begin descending. The belayer lets the rope run through the H.B. Sheriff slowly, with two hands on break, until the participant has reached the ground and ended his/her contract

Multi-Vine- The Instructor should first gather all equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claw with Zorber; 2 steel, locking carabiners; cable pulley; and rope marked specifically for the event. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole. Once to the top of the pole, the Instructor will extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above the cable being worked on. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped in to the wire being worked on. Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can begin the set-up. The cable pulley should go on the top wire and secured with the two steel, locking carabiners with the gates opposite and opposed so that the lock screws down. The rope should be placed through the carabiners so that both ends of the rope fall to the inside of the cable. Once this is complete, the Instructor can lobster claw back down the pole and to the ground. On one end of the rope, the Instructor should tie a

bowline on a bight with a double over hand back-up knot to be clipped in to the participant's harness. On the other end of the rope, a loop should be formed and placed through an H.B. Sheriff to be used by a belayer. The belayer is in charge of making sure that the participant is clipped in correctly to the event. The gates of his/her carabiners should be opposite and opposed and set up so the locks screw down. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she will initiate a contract and begin climbing. The belayer will then take up extra slack from the rope as the participant climbs higher. After the participant has reached the top of an event or is ready to descend, he/she will initiate a contract and begin descending. The belayer lets the rope run through the H.B. Sheriff slowly, with two hands on break, until the participant has reached the ground and ended his/her contract

Zip Line- The Instructor should first gather all equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claw system with Zorber; steel, locking carabiner; lobster claw system without Zorber; tether static belay system; and the zip pulley. The Instructor will begin set-up by lobster clawing up a pole with the system with the Zorber. Once to the platform, the Instructor will extend part of the belay system and form a wrap to go around the pole and above a cable at head-level. The other part of the belay system is to be clipped in to the zip line. Once the Instructor is clipped in and secure, he/she can begin the set-up. The zip pulley should be placed on the zip line and secured with the carabiners at the end of the static belay system for the zip line. Once this set-up is complete, the zip line is ready for a participant. Using a dynamic belay system from one of the events nearby, the participant can belay up the pole to the zip line platform. After the participant is on the platform, the Instructor will secure them to the tether static belay system (tied to the pole), and to the zip pulley static belay system. The Instructor should make sure that the longer of the two claws is clipped to the participant's back loop on the harness, and that the shorter claw is clipped in to the participant's front loop. Now the participant is in 3 belay systems: the dynamic belay, the tether belay, and the zip line belay system. The Instructor can then remove the participant from the dynamic belay. Only after the participant has gone through the safety contract with the ground crew, can the Instructor remove the participant from the tether belay system. When the participant is all clear to zip, the Instructor will assist the participant and make sure he/she does not hit on the platform as he/she steps off. A ground crew will be waiting at the end of the zip line for the participants with a stepladder and a rope with a knot tied in the end to hold the zip pulley. Once the participant has come to a stop at the end of the zip line, the ground crew will bring the ladder to the participant, unhook them from the zip pulley, and hook the carabiners in to the knot on the rope. One of the members of the ground crew can then pull the rope back to the top of the zip line for the instructor.

Pamper Jump- The Instructor should first gather all equipment necessary to complete the set-up: lobster claw with Zorber; shear reduction device; twisted carabiner; 2 steel, locking carabiners; rope specifically for the pamper jump; H.B. Sheriff; and rope for back up belayer. The Instructor begins the set up by lobster clawing up the pole. Once to the top of the pole, the Instructor will extend one of the ends of the belay system to form a wrap to go around the pole and above the top cable. The other end of the belay system should be hooked on to the top cable. The twisted carabiner should be hooked to the shear reduction device and then to the top cable. The rope specifically for the pamper jump should be put through the shear reduction device so that it splits the bottom cable. Two steel, locking carabiners should go on the lower wire, opposite and opposed so that the locks screw

down. The other rope should go through those carabiners. Once this is complete, the Instructor can lobster claw back down the pole. Once on the ground, the Instructor should tie a bowline on a bight with double over hand back-up knots in each rope. The open end of the pumper jump rope should be threaded through the post on the ground near the jump, called the Just Right Descender. This is used as the primary belay system. The open end of the other rope should be set up like the primary belay systems of the other high events, with a loop at the end through an H.B. Sheriff to be used as a secondary belay system. The primary belayer is in charge of the hook-in of the participant. The participant should be wearing a seat harness as well as a chest harness. The primary belayer begins the hook-in by placing three steel, locking carabiners through the knots tied at the ends of both ropes. One of the carabiners is then placed through the back loop of the chest harness and the other two carabiners are placed through the back loop of the seat harness. The direction of the gates of the carabiners is not important, but it is best to have them all facing the same direction. All of the carabiners should be set up so the locks screw down. After the primary belayer has finished the hook-in, the secondary belayer should also check the participant over. When the participant is ready to climb, he/she initiates a contract, and then begins climbing. The belayers are in charge of taking up extra slack as the participant climbs the pole. As the participant is ready to jump, he/she counts to three and then jumps. As the participant is jumping, the primary belayer needs to take up slack as fast as possible. The secondary belayer does not need to worry as much about taking up slack, and should leave slack in the rope. If the secondary belayer feels tension on his/her rope, or is pulled forward at any time during the belay, the primary belayer needs to take in more slack. When lowering a participant, there should always be a ground crew on hand to make sure the participant is all right to stand on his/her own. Once on the ground, the participant ends the contract, and the primary belayer unhooks the participant.

## RESCUE TECHNIQUE

In most circumstances of safe and prudent usage, a rescue will not be necessary. In an emergency a climber can easily and safely be lowered down. When a climber is unable to be safely lowered down, an attempt should be made to reach the climber with the ladder (unless the climber is unconscious).

When rescue is not possible with the ladder, a dynamic system will be set up and used to lower the climber. The Instructor will be responsible for having the rescue kit and a rescue rope readily available.

If no other persons are available to belay the climber down to the ground, the Instructor belays the climber, using the remaining carabiner and extra H.B. Sheriff from the rescue kit.

When a rescue becomes necessary on the Zip Line, the Instructor will set up a dynamic system directly to the Zip Cable. The Instructor will connect him/herself to the knotted end of the rescue rope. A belayer from the ground will walk the Instructor to the climber. The Instructor attaches himself to the climber's harness with a locking carabiner. The Instructor cuts the climber's zip line with the knife, throwing it to the

ground away from himself or any other person on the ground. They are lowered and First Aid is begun once the climber is safely on the ground.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. In an emergency the following procedures will be followed:

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  1. Within 1-3 minutes of the emergency appropriate first aid or CPR will be begun. If the emergency involves a climber, that person will be safely and quickly lowered down (first aid may be delayed if a rescue is necessary). If the injury is beyond the first aid knowledge and capabilities of the staff, more qualified help will be contacted.
  2. Within 2-4 minutes of the emergency the ambulance, sheriff, or other authorities will be contacted or summoned as the emergency dictates from phone near the ropes course.
  3. Within 6 minutes people will be designated to go to camp entrances or intersections to direct emergency vehicles to the site of the emergency if necessary. The Camp Director will be notified.

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2. After the emergency, the attending staff and Instructors to the Camp Director will file an Incident Report within 24 hours.

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- ## FALLS

In most instances if a climber falls off any event, the climber should be encouraged to re-access it. This may be difficult, depending on the event. In any case, the climber may be lowered to the ground and re-commence the event.

Falls are not an indication of failure! They are only, as with many life circumstances, something that sometimes happens to everyone.

If a climber refuses to fall or climb down, talk the person down slowly giving as much time and help as is possible.

- ## Standard Equipment

Ropes: Varying lengths. Kernmantle. Designated for event by colored tape.

Helmet: Adjustable size. Hard plastic.

Carabiner: Stainless steel, locking device used for all attachments to climbers and on cable fastenings. Standard size is four-inches, fashioned into a “D” or oval shape. A “twisted D” carabiner is used for attaching a mini-shear to a cable pulley.

Cable Pulley: Aluminum plates attached to a steel wheel, used for all traversing belay systems.

H.B. Sheriff: Aluminum/steel friction device for belaying

Lobster claws: A two-ended rope or webbing device and shock absorber (Zorber) used by qualified persons for self-belay in set up and take down of events. Also used without a Zorber as a static belay in the Zip Line event. Utility carabiners attach to each end.



Zip Line pulley: A two-wheel cable pulley designed specifically for Zip Line usage.

Seat harness: A manufactured harness device used on all climbers on high element belay systems.

Chest harness: A manufactured harness made specifically to support chest area. This harness is used on Pamper Pole.

Just right descender: An on-ground friction device used exclusively on Pamper Pole.

Shear reduction device: A used exclusively on the Pamper Pole element. Attaches to belay cable.

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## MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT

As per safety standards, all equipment will be inspected and maintained each time it is used. All cables, cable connections and back up systems will be visually inspected each time set up is accomplished. Any looseness, damage, vandalism will be reported immediately to Ropes Course Director and the event involved will not be used until repair is accomplished. (Record of possible concern form available).

All webbing, carabiners, H.B. Sheriffs, pulleys, ropes, static belays, lobster claws, and helmets will be visually inspected prior to, as needed during, and at the culmination of every activity used. Broken or damaged equipment will be repaired or replaced immediately. Helmets should be cleaned periodically with a mild soap and water solution.

Periodically the Ropes Course staff will inspect the entire course. Visual inspections by the Ropes Course Director will also occur on a regular basis (See VII.B. #8). Professional third party inspections will be conducted once per year.

Equipment will be stored in an area accessible only to qualified persons. Ropes will be appropriately wrapped. Ropes will be cleaned when dirty, or once a year at a minimum. Rope care calls for washing in cool water with just a tiny bit of Ivory soap.

Equipment will require periodic replacement as it wears and grows older. Consultation should be accomplished with the professional conduction the annual inspection of the course.

All ropes will be cut in an “element specific” fashion and color coded accordingly so that exact history on all ropes is available at all times through Rope Usage Log.

Defective and retired equipment will be “black taped,” removed from service and separated from functional gear.

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## DOCUMENTATION/RECORDS

All documentation will be done as stated in policies and procedures by Ropes Course Instructors under the supervision of the Ropes Course Director.

Records/files should reflect appropriate, accurate, and precise usage, maintenance, and inspection of all course functions. Records will be kept and maintained by the Ropes Course Director.

## FORMS

The following are standardized forms used in facilitating the Ropes Course:

1. Incident Report/ Near Miss Form

An Incident Report will be completed by Instructor in regards to any injury or possible injury occurring while involved with either Ropes Course. This includes Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center campers, community group participants and staff.

2. Rope Usages Log

3. Element inspection sheet.

4. Possible concern form

5. Registration form

Registration form must be completed prior to participation on Ropes Course. It will include an understanding of risks, release of liability and statement of health. Registration forms will be filed and kept at the camp office.

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