

CLIMBING WALL ASSOCIATION

WORK-AT-HEIGHT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

POLICY MANUAL

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Editor:

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Contents

I. Introduction	4
A. The Climbing Wall Instructor Certification program	4
B. Certification programs	4
C. Governance	4
D. Goals of the CWI Certification Program	5
E. Eligibility	6
F. Limits of the CWI Certification program and Credentials	7
II. The Certification Standards	8
A. Scope of Standards	8
B. Intent and Interpretation of Standards	8
C. Format of the Standards	9
D. Compliance with Standards	9
III. The CWI Certification Process	10
A. Candidate Preparation	10
B. Request Information and Submit Application	10
C. Attend CWI Certification Course	11
D. Candidate Evaluation	11
E. Provider Evaluation	11
F. Initial and Continuing Certification	11
IV. CWI Certification Program Providers	13
A. Program Providers	13
B. CWI Program Provider Course	14
C. Training Format	15
D. Provider Qualifications and Professionalism	15
E. Steps to Becoming a CWI Program Provider	15
F. CWI Program Provider Responsibilities	16
G. Maintaining CWI Provider Status	16
V Providing a Certification Course	18
A. Tasks for the Instructor or Instructional Team Pre Course	18
B. Course Format	18
C. Completing the Assessment Instrument for Each Candidate	19
D. The Candidate Exit Interview	19

E. Post Course Tasks.....	20
VI. Other Policies.....	21
A. Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee Meetings.....	21
B. Confidentiality in the Certification Program.....	21
C. Dissemination of Information.....	22
D. Re-Examination and Appeals.....	23
Informal Appeal or Re-examination	23
Formal Appeals	23
E. Reciprocity.....	24
F. Certification Program Evaluation	25
G. Annual Membership and Fees.....	25
H. Continuing Certification	25
I. Conflict of Interest	26

I. Introduction

A. *The Work-at-Height Certification Program*

Climbing Wall Association, Inc. (CWA), a non-profit corporation, sponsors the “Work-at-Height Certification Program” (WaH). The purpose of the certification program is to establish a voluntary certification for climbing wall workers and a uniform set of performance standards that can be easily assessed and adopted worldwide.

B. *Certification programs*

Certification refers to the confirmation of certain characteristics and/or skills of a person at a particular time. This confirmation is often provided or confirmed by some form of educational preparation, review, and assessment. One of the most common types of certification is professional certification, where a person is certified as able to competently conduct a job or task, usually by passing an examination. The focus of the Work-at-Height Certification Program is to assess the ability of the candidate to work as a Competent Person or Qualified Person in a climbing facility.

There are two general types of professional certification: one is valid for life once the exam is passed; the other must be renewed after a certain period of time on an ongoing basis. The WaH certification must be renewed every three years. Also, certifications can differ within a profession by level or specific area of expertise. The Work-at-Height Certification Program includes three levels of certification:

1. Competent Climbing Wall Worker
2. Qualified Climbing Wall Worker
3. CWA Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider

Certification is a *voluntary process of training and evaluation* that credits an individual with conforming to a prescribed set of certification standards that existed at the time of the evaluation or examination.

C. *Governance*

The Work-at-Height Certification Program is the responsibility of the CWA. Responsibility for oversight of the program, program policy, day-to-day operation, and development and support of the program provider pool is the responsibility of the CWA. Responsibility for

maintenance of the certification standards is delegated to a chartered committee of the CWA called the CWA Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee.

The program and committee have been established and empowered by the CWA Board of Directors. Program personnel are charged with the promotion, delivery, and maintenance of the Work-at-Height Certification Program in the best interests of the CWA, its members, and the public. The Work-at-Height Certification Program develops and maintains standards; confers, denies, or withdraws certification for providers; sets policies and procedures concerned with the governance and operation of the program; develops educational material; and evaluates the program periodically. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Providers confer or deny certification for climbing wall instructors.

The CWA is responsible for safeguarding the integrity of the Work-at-Height Certification Program. Therefore, the CWA reserves the right to confer, deny, temporarily suspend, or permanently withdraw certification or program provider status at any time for any reason. The Work-at-Height Certification Program's decision to confer, deny, temporarily suspend, or permanently withdraw certification or program provider status is in no way intended as a judgment by the CWA on any aspect of the certificant's or program provider's programs or services other than the ability to participate in the Work-at-Height Certification Program.

D. Goals of the Work-at-Height Certification Program

The primary goals of the Work-at-Height Certification Program are:

1. To establish acceptable criteria for an employer's managed work-at-height program for recreational climbing facilities.
2. To assist employers in proactively identifying, evaluating, eliminating or controlling risks and hazards related to work-at-height in a climbing facility to the extent possible.
3. To improve the level of compliance, consistency and competency in workplace practices for work-at-height in recreational climbing facilities.
4. To define a training pathway for climbing wall workers.
5. To define a certification standard for Competent and Qualified Climbing Wall Workers.
6. To provide candidates with guidance for further professional development.

The Work-at-Height Certification Program focuses on education, review and skills evaluation of individual candidates using consensus performance standards developed by leading professionals in the field of recreational climbing sports which have been subjected to public review. Certification standards are intended to address the minimum criteria a candidate should meet to be certified as a Competent Climbing Wall Worker, Qualified Climbing Wall Worker or Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider. Compliance with

the certification standards is determined by Work-at-Height Certification Program Providers, who work in the field and maintain their provider status.

E. Eligibility

The Work-at-Height Certification Program maintains program eligibility requirements and recommendations. Eligibility requirements and recommendations are overseen by the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee. The committee is required to take stakeholders into account when developing, evaluating, or modifying eligibility requirements and recommendations.

Candidates may question eligibility determinations made by a provider by appealing to the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee. The appellant must demonstrate to the committee that the eligibility requirements are inappropriate, irrelevant, or unreasonable prerequisites for competence in their professional role in order to successfully challenge an eligibility decision.

Any person meeting the pre-requisites for certification may stand as a candidate for certification. Eligibility is determined based upon review of the pre-requisites by the course provider. Pre-requisites for Work-at-Height Certification include:

1. The candidate will be at least 18 years of age by the conclusion of the course. (Note: persons less than 18 years of age may audit the course and will not receive certification, but will receive a letter of completion.)
2. The candidate can demonstrate basic climbing skills.
3. The candidate has or is provided with appropriate equipment in good condition.
4. The candidate can demonstrate proper care, use, and inspection of climbing equipment.
5. The candidate can demonstrate proficient belay technique.
6. The candidate can lead climb 5.9 on artificial terrain
7. The candidate can ascend a rope.
8. The candidate has reviewed the relevant regulatory requirements of the code of local adoption.
9. The candidate has the ability to successfully complete the assessment.

A determination that the candidate is eligible to apply for certification in no way expresses or implies that the candidate will meet the requirements for certification.

F. Limits of the Work-at-Height Certification Program and Credentials

The Work-at-Height Certification Program is a voluntary program and is employed as a means of industry self-regulation. Neither the CWA nor Work-at-Height Certification Program personnel have the authority to bar or ban an individual from the practice of his or her chosen profession. The Work-at-Height Certification Program only has the authority to confer, deny, suspend, or remove certified status within the program.

While certification is a credential conferred to an individual by the Work-at-Height Certification Program, this credential has limits. Certification is an assessment by the provider that an individual has met, or appears to meet, the specific minimum standards current at the time of the examination. These certification standards are contained in a published document which is readily available to the public. The certification standards are maintained by the Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee.

The certification credential is further limited by other factors. Given the varied prior experience of the candidates, the varied experience and perspectives of the providers, the finite time available to complete the course and evaluation, and the nature of performance-based standards, it is not possible to guarantee absolute consistency from provider to provider, course to course, or certification decisions from different providers. However, identical course materials, evaluation instruments, and performance standards are adopted, made available and applied throughout the program. A certain degree of consistency is the goal of the certification program.

Compliance with the certification standards must be observed directly, and an informed conclusion should be reached by the provider(s) with respect to the candidates' compliance with the current certification standards. A person's compliance with the standards is assessed through a variety of methods including: interviews, knowledge of written material, testing, reasonable inference, and most importantly, direct observation of the candidate's performance of skills and tasks listed on the evaluation instrument. The Work-at-Height Certification Program providers evaluate the candidates' actual performance with the understanding that if these skills and tasks are performed adequately, then the candidate has the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities and may be certified.

While certification standards focus on the performance of technical skills, demonstrated abilities and application of sound practices and techniques; Work-at-Height Certification is not a guarantee that certified individuals will be free from harm. In fact, risks are inherent in work-at-height in all of its forms and can be managed but not necessarily eliminated.

II. The Work-at-Height Standard and Certification Criteria

The Work-at-Height Certification Program has published the criteria for certification based on the CWA Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities. The certification standards themselves will be made readily available to certification candidates at no charge. The certification standards are primarily performance-based skills or observable attributes. Conformity with the certification standards will be assessed using a standard assessment instrument. Certification providers grant or deny certification according to compliance with the standards.

The program also maintains a course manual and supporting documents. All candidates registered for courses are provided a current copy of the course manual. The certification program may also reference other CWA publications, which, if referenced, program providers can access free of charge.

A. Scope of the Standard

The Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities focuses on acceptable criteria for an employer's managed work-at-height program including employer responsibilities, administration, policies and procedures, role of personnel, hazard assessment, fall protection planning, rescue planning, training and application of appropriate equipment and systems to access elevated work positions. The standard is designed to represent minimum competencies for Competent and Qualified Climbing Wall Workers and are designed to be applicable in a wide variety of climbing facilities.

The standard will not and cannot address operations in all facilities. The standard should be considered the basis upon which to build an appropriate and adequate managed work-at-height program for a given facility. In other words, the standard may include material not relevant to a particular facility (e.g. auto belay devices) or may omit essential material applicable to a particular facility (e.g. use of fixed ladders). Regardless of the course venue, the entire certification curriculum, including all standards, must be covered and assessed in order to confer the certification credential.

B. Intent and Interpretation of the Standard

The Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities was designed to help professionals identify key performance criteria to assess competency in basic work-at-height operations for recreational climbing wall facilities. The criteria contained in the standard are considered to be elements of an effective and conforming managed work-at-height program. The Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities is intended as a

statement of acceptable practice as defined by experienced professionals and climbing equipment manufacturers.

Finally, while standards should remain stable over time, standards are not fixed. Standards must evolve according to a variety of factors including: theory, practice in the field, new and emerging technology, experience, research, the regulatory environment, the insurance marketplace and even public attitudes and expectations. The standard is reviewed regularly and revised periodically by the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee which is the final authority regarding standards development, adoption, reaffirmation, application and interpretation.

C. Format of the Standard

The standard is organized into eight sections which are reflected in the assessment instrument. Each part of the standard, domain of learning or area of performance includes a set of related criteria that may be presented by the provider in an order suitable for the course and the candidates as the provider sees fit. The current standard can be found on the CWA web site.

D. Compliance with the Standard

A candidate for Climbing Wall Worker Certification must meet all (100%) of the required criteria on the assessment instrument to achieve certification. It should be clear on the assessment that each standard is met. Determining conformity with the standards is the prerogative of the course provider. However, if a candidate disagrees with the assessment the candidate can appeal to the provider request to be re-tested later. See the appeals section later in the policy manual.

III. The Work-at-Height Certification Process

A. Candidate Preparation

Candidates should apply for certification only after they have met all of the pre-requisites and have developed the skills necessary to pass the examination component of the course. Prior preparation for certification is perhaps the most important element in a successful certification experience. Candidates should evaluate their knowledge and skills against the standard and evaluation criteria and undertake any training needed prior to the certification course.

Preparation for certification may take as long as several months or years; it may be necessary to develop new skills and abilities in order to pass the examination. Candidates should not enroll in certification courses to prepare for the certification exam. Candidates can avail themselves of many sources of qualified professional instruction in the marketplace for basic skills training.

To avoid conflicts of interest between the educational and certification functions, the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee does not and cannot accredit or endorse courses of study leading to certification. In addition to not accrediting or endorsing programs leading to the initial certification, the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee does not require that candidates complete a particular organization's program or course for certification eligibility.

However, the Work-at-Height Certification Program may provide supplemental educational materials and programs including but not limited to primary education, exam preparation courses and study guides. Regardless of any educational materials or programs offered by the Work-at-Height Certification Program, in no case are these materials or programs the only available route to certification and purchase of these supplemental materials or participation in these programs are not required for initial certification.

B. Request Information and Submit Application

The candidate contacts the provider for the application. The program provider can answer questions regarding the application. The candidate completes the application and the provider determines eligibility of the applicant. If the applicant is deemed eligible, the application remains valid for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of acceptance of the application. The applicant must complete the requirements for certification within twelve months or must reapply to the provider.

C. Attend Certification Course

The Competent Climbing Wall Worker Course, including assessment, is generally an eight sixteen-hour course. The Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Course, including assessment, is generally a twenty to twenty four-hour course. The certification applicant must attend the entire course, or substantially the entire course, in order to be eligible for certification. The provider must, at the very least, complete the entire assessment for each candidate in order for the course to be considered complete and valid.

D. Candidate Evaluation

The provider evaluates each candidate as the course progresses using a standard assessment instrument. The provider marks each element on the assessment instrument with a grade of pass or fail, and may record comments on specific tasks, skills or abilities. The provider also records an overall grade for the course of pass or fail. The provider submits a course roster to the CWA within two (2) weeks of the conclusion of the course.

E. Provider Evaluation

The candidates evaluate the certification provider in writing and submit the evaluation to the provider. The provider must send the completed evaluations to the CWA. The evaluation should include: 1) assessment of the provider's performance as an instructor, 2) recommendations for changes and improvements to the Standard, 3) recommendations for specific changes and improvements to the certification program, 4) recommendations for specific changes and improvements to the certification course, 5) any other comments.

F. Initial and Continuing Certification

Initial certification is valid for three years. There is no individual CWA membership requirement for maintaining Competent Climbing Wall Worker Certification or Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Certification, although there is an exam fee of \$75.00 USD which is assessed by the provider and paid to the CWA.

Provider certification is contingent upon maintaining current CWA membership status, ongoing professional development training, payment of exam and application fees and re-certification every three years. The provider's certification will remain valid so long as the membership is maintained and other requirements are met.

Certificants are notified approximately six (6) months prior to the expiration of their certification and are encouraged to renew their certification. The certificant can either

choose to take the entire course over again or take an exam for prior certificants. At a minimum, the re-certification course must include an evaluation using the current program assessment instrument. If certification lapses, the certificant will be removed from the certification roster maintained by the CWA until the certification is reinstated.

IV. Work-at-Height Certification Program Providers

A. Program Providers

The Work-at-Height Certification Program is offered through a network of program providers. Program providers have generally completed Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Certification (or higher certification or equivalent professional training) and completed all of the requirements to become a provider. Candidates for provider status must contact the CWA for an application and must also submit a cover letter, application, proof of membership, proof of insurance, current first aid and CPR certification and references. Electronic copies of the application materials are available on the CWA web site.

During the initial three years of the certification program, the CWA will establish an alternative qualification procedure for providers. The alternative qualification procedure will allow qualified candidates to become providers without the need for completing the Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Certification course prior to becoming a provider. The alternative qualification procedure will entail documenting all qualifications, existing certifications (e.g. SPRAT or IRATA) and extensive prior experience. This provision will allow an owner/operator or staff member to certify his or her own employees to the Competent or Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Certification standard immediately. However, a provider wishing to provide a certification course to the general public must complete the provider training prior to offering the open enrollment certification course to the public.

Any person meeting the pre-requisites to become a Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider, and who maintains appropriate membership status, may stand as a candidate for certification to be a provider and is encouraged to apply. Eligibility is determined based upon review of an application, a current résumé or *curriculum vitae*, references, completion of a provider course if applicable, and willingness to complete an attestation of qualification and a written agreement. An interview may also be required. Pre-requisites for Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider include:

1. Current membership in the CWA.
2. 21 years of age.
3. Current first aid and CPR (American Red Cross Basic - 5.5 to 6.5 hours, or equivalent).
4. A résumé or other document showing a minimum of 200 hours of work-at-height experience and 200 hours of teaching experience.
5. Current Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Certification.*
6. Two non-related professional references, including contact information and phone number.
7. A signed attestation of qualification and agreement on file.
8. Proof of insurance.

9. The candidate can lead climb 5.9 on artificial terrain
10. The candidate can ascend a rope.
11. The candidate has reviewed the relevant regulatory requirements of the code of local adoption.
12. The candidate has the ability to successfully complete the assessment.

*If the candidate is not a currently certified Qualified Climbing Wall Worker, the candidate may complete an alternative qualification procedure documenting that the candidate meets the requirements of becoming a provider but showing a minimum of 400 hours of work-at-height experience and 400 hours of teaching experience. Exceptional and wide-ranging indoor climbing work experience, prior experience as an instructor or guide, or other related certification will be considered as evidence of qualification. Completion of a provider training course may or may not be required, at the sole discretion of the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee, as part of the alternative qualification procedure.

The CWA Certification Standards Committee approves all new applicants to the provider pool within 60 days of completing the application and maintains a list of approved providers.

B. Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider Course

The CWA will offer a program provider training course from time to time. The CWA is the only organization that may sanction program provider trainings. The provider training provides an overview of the Work-at-Height Certification Program for prospective providers. This training reviews program and provider policies, the Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities, the student manual and curricula, and general course flow. A significant portion of the training will be spent in scenarios to develop provider skills in consistent nationwide delivery of course content, fair student evaluation, providing effective student feedback, risk management, student safety during the course, and in establishing a consensus in pass/fail performance standards.

The goals of the provider course are:

1. To educate provider pool members about the Work-at-Height Certification Program and the Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities.
2. To help provider pool members understand the program's policies and procedures.
3. To train provider pool members to administer and deliver courses within the Work-at-Height Certification Program.
4. To train provider pool members in the program curricula and familiarize candidates with the program materials available for certification candidates.
5. To train provider pool members in using the evaluation instrument, and how to assess candidates consistently and fairly.
6. To communicate the risk management and safety measures to be employed during the course.

7. To establish certification program expectations for consistency and quality.
8. To provide a forum for provider pool members to have questions answered and discuss program issues.
9. To prepare provider pool members to be effective advocates for the program.

C. Training Format

The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider course is generally a one to two day, eight to sixteen-hour course. Some lecture, but emphasis on demonstration, teaching, group discussion of the program and curricula, and review of course flow and scenarios to help prospective providers be able to offer a good quality course, constructive feedback to students and a consistent standard of evaluation.

Course Outline:

- I. Overview of Work-at-Height Certification Program
- II. The Work-at-Height Standard for Climbing Wall Facilities
- III. Work-at-Height Certification Policies and Procedures
- IV. The Curricula - Work-at-Height Certification Program Student Manual
- V. Sample course flow
- VI. Scenarios and exercises
- VII. Training review, evaluation and debrief

D. Provider Qualifications and Professionalism

Program providers represent the CWA. Providers are selected based on their experience, qualifications, and reputation. Provider adherence to this policy document and any other required agreements are expected of all providers. Courtesy, collegiality and confidentiality are necessary qualities in providers. The CWA may remove any provider if it finds that the person has compromised the integrity of the certification program.

E. Steps to Becoming a Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider

Step 1: Submit a cover letter, resume, application, attestation of qualification and agreement, and any other required documents, showing you meet the prerequisites.

Step 2: Attend a CWA program provider course or complete the alternative qualification procedure.

Step 3: The Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee reviews the candidates training records and recommendations and makes final decision for the candidate to become a Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider.

Expenses and fees associated with obtaining and maintaining provider status are the responsibility of the candidate.

F. Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider Responsibilities

1. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider will comply with all necessary rules regarding facility use.
2. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider will carry, or be covered by, a commercial general liability insurance policy or professional liability insurance policy sufficient to cover activities of a program provider.
3. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider will determine course logistics such as scheduling, registration, and course cost (if any).
4. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider will assess an exam fee of \$75.00 USD per student per course and will pay the fee to the CWA.
5. The program provider will provide evaluations of the provider's performance and a course roster to the CWA within 14 days of the conclusion of the course.
6. A Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider must be present for each day of any course.
7. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider will supply course participants with the current standard, course manual and evaluation instrument in advance.
8. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider must follow current Work-at-Height Certification Program curriculum.
9. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider must use the current standard evaluation instrument.
10. The Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider should maintain an awareness of their continuing education requirements and participate in required updates to retain program provider status.

G. Maintaining Work-at-Height Provider Status

Work-at-Height Certification Program Providers are expected to offer certification courses periodically in order to keep their knowledge of the program and curriculum current. Alternatively, providers may participate in refresher training workshops for providers. These workshops are intended to improve the delivery and consistency of the certification program and to share ideas with other course instructors.

To maintain Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider status you must:

- Teach, co-teach, or observe at least one certification course every year.
- Attend a Work-at-Height Certification Program Provider training or refresher course once every certification cycle (three years).
- Actively participate in on-going professional development training.
- Pay the program provider application fee of \$75.00 USD.
- Maintain your CWA membership.

Other criteria for maintaining provider status includes recent employment or ongoing professional activity in the field of recreational indoor climbing. Retirees who meet all criteria except current employment may be approved as a provider. From time to time the CWA may approve an expert who may not meet all of these criteria but whose participation in the program is deemed necessary or advantageous.

Work-at-Height Certification Program Providers that fail to meet the above requirements become 'inactive'. If inactive providers wish to become a provider again they must reapply.

V. Providing a Certification Course

A provider may provide Competent Climbing Wall Worker or Qualified Climbing Wall Worker Certification courses by notifying the CWA and filing the appropriate paperwork. The size of the instructional team will vary according to the number of candidates. Courses with more than eight participants must have at least two instructors. We do not recommend an instructor to student ratio exceeding one to six (1:6). The assistant instructor may be a candidate for provider status.

A. Tasks for the Instructor or Instructional Team Pre-Course

The effectiveness of the instructional team depends upon the ability of the team to organize the training. The following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Contact the CWA for appropriate paperwork.
2. Contact the venue to reserve course dates and organize logistics and any other arrangements with the host venue.
3. Review the candidates' applications and resolve any questions or concerns regarding eligibility or qualifications.
4. If working in an instructional team; determine individual team member's preferences, skills and areas of expertise and allocate tasks accordingly.
5. Develop a detailed course schedule including an instructional and evaluation sequence that addresses all certification criteria.
6. Coordinate initial meeting of instructional team. Team members typically arrive in the afternoon or evening prior to the course. Instructors should arrange to meet by themselves at some time to review notes, confirm each member's responsibilities and finalize the schedule.
7. Meet with course venue representative to review the schedule, logistics, conduct a site inspection, finalize space needs, etc.

B. Course Outline

The following is a sample course outline for the Qualified and Competent Climbing Wall Worker Course. The Qualified Climbing Wall Worker course is typically twenty to twenty-four hours in duration, the Competent Climbing Wall Worker Course is typically twelve to sixteen hours in duration. Assessment criteria is evaluated according to completion and/or participation in all coursework, competent demonstration of applied skills - documented on the assessment instrument by the provider and a written test.

- Welcome and introductions

- Assess pre-requisite skills
- Facility orientation, rules and course risk management
- Climbing Wall Industry – roles and responsibilities
- The standards and regulations
- Hazard assessment
- Fall hazards and fall protection control hierarchy
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Technical skills for work-at-height
- Access methods
- Written Rescue Plan (Qualified Person) or Rescue Skills (Competent Person)
- Written Fall Protection Plan
 - Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) /Job Safety Analysis (JSA)
 - PPE register
 - Training plan
- Assessment: course work, skills demonstration, written test
- Course evaluation by candidates
- Conclusion.

C. Completing the Assessment Instrument for Each Candidate

The purpose of the assessment instrument is to communicate the instructor's or instructional team's findings to the candidate formally. The instructor or instructional team will spend some time comparing their notes and recording results on the assessment as the course progresses. Each certification criterion is listed as pass or fail. *A draft of the report must be completed before the end of the course team departs the site, and a copy provided to the candidate before departure.*

D. Course Review, Evaluation and Conclusion

At the conclusion of the course the instructor or instructor team will meet with the candidates to review their performance. The purposes of the review are to:

- 1) discuss the results of the course assessment,
- 2) clarify any remaining questions or correct any misunderstandings,
- 3) collect evaluations of the course from the candidates, and
- 3) describe the next steps in the certification process.

If there is feedback for the candidate of a sensitive nature, or if the candidate is likely to fail the course, the instructor or instructors may choose to meet with the candidate in advance to prepare him/her for the feedback so there are no surprises during the review.

The review should focus on observations of the candidates' performance and the facts. If there is a difference of opinion regarding the instructor's or team's findings and the candidate's assessment of his or her own performance, this should be stated in the written assessment. However, the instructor's assessment is final pending an appeal. Remember that the standard and certification criteria alone form the framework for the evaluation and decision.

E. Post Course Tasks

The instructor or instructional team meets after the course to discuss the course and make arrangements to complete the course paperwork – specifically the course evaluations and the course roster. The course paperwork is due to the CWA within two (2) weeks of the conclusion of the course. If there are any issues that emerge during the course that require attention; the instructor or instructional team may submit a separate evaluative report to the CWA or the Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee. This report may include recommendations for changes or improvements to the certification program, the certification criteria or the certification curriculum.

VI. Other Policies

The Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee meets periodically either in face-to-face meetings or via teleconference. It is the responsibility of the committee to maintain the standard, certification criteria, and program documents. The committee is responsible for assisting in identifying individuals qualified to become providers of the certification program and to actively recruit candidates to stand for qualification to become providers. The committee is also responsible for developing and overseeing a fair, impartial, and transparent appeals process related to certification decisions which are contested. The committee may also remove any certificant or certification program provider that should be removed from the roster for cause, ethical breach, conflict of interest, or for a lack of participation.

A. Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee Meetings

The committee meets periodically to conduct its business. The committee, at its discretion may invite providers and/or candidates to participate in open portions of its meeting, for discussion and information gathering, but reserves the right to enter executive session to determine its course of action regarding appeals or other potentially sensitive matters. In executive session, the committee will prepare motions regarding any outstanding issues and move its adoption by simple majority vote.

The committee has the authority to grant, deny, suspend or withdraw certification status for any certificant or provider. The committee also has the authority to give a warning to any certificant or provider if there is cause for such a warning. Usually a warning results in some failure, oversight, or lack of compliance with the standard, certification criteria, program policies, or program procedures. The person will be advised of the decision in writing.

B. Confidentiality in the Certification Program

The official minutes of CWA Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee are available to the public upon request. However, all other data, recommendations, observations, conversations, reports, and working documents related to the committee's business are confidential. Acceptance of membership on the committee or acceptance as a program provider, constitutes an agreement to safeguard the confidentiality of information acquired in these capacities.

Certification decisions are made by program providers. The provider is responsible for ensuring that the candidate's application status and examination results are held

confidential. If a candidate is certified that information shall be disclosed to the public. The provider shall not disclose any other data, recommendations, observations, conversations, reports, and working documents related to the certificant without the express written or opt-in permission of the certificant, or unless the provider is compelled to disclose such information by legal action.

CWA shall only share information about providers or certificants in the following limited circumstances:

- You claim to be certified and we are verifying your certification status.
- You provide us with your express written or opt-in consent for the sharing of program related information.
- We provide such information to our subsidiaries, affiliated companies, providers or other trusted businesses or persons for the purpose of administering the program. We require that these parties agree to handle such information based on our instructions and in compliance with this confidentiality policy and any other appropriate security measures.
- We have a good faith belief that access, use, preservation or disclosure of such information is reasonably necessary to (a) satisfy any applicable law, regulation, legal process or enforceable governmental request (b) detect, prevent, or otherwise address fraud, violations of policy, security or technical issues, or (c) protect against harm to the rights, property or safety of CWA, its members or the public as required or permitted by law.

C. Dissemination of Information

The provider notifies the candidate of the certification decision in writing through the evaluation instrument at the conclusion of the course. The provider is responsible for notifying the CWA of the certification decision within two weeks of the conclusion of the certification course. Only the provider is authorized to notify the candidate of the certification decision and reports the information to the CWA. The CWA will issue award letters and certificates to successful candidates.

Certification decisions, affirmative or negative, or decisions to withdraw certification status shall be public information unless under appeal. Providers or certificants must not misrepresent their certification status to the public or to their clients. The CWA retains the right to release information or reports, when necessary, to correct or clarify inaccurate information released by a provider, certificant or other sources. Requests for information regarding the official list of providers or certificants may be directed to the CWA staff. The

only information that shall be released regarding non-certified individuals is simply, “The person is not CWA Certified.”

The CWA will maintain the authoritative and definitive list of program providers and certificants. A list of all providers and certificants shall be published periodically by the Climbing Wall Association and made available on its web site.

D. Re-Examination and Appeals

Informal Appeal or Re-examination

Candidates may appeal decisions of the certification provider in the case of a disagreement regarding the certification decision. The first step in the appeals process is for the candidate to inform the provider and request a date for re-testing. The request for re-testing must be made to the provider in writing within thirty days of the conclusion of the course. The provider will inform the CWA of the request for re-testing.

The date of re-testing must be at least two weeks from the conclusion of the course. This means that if you have been evaluated, failed and need to be evaluated again, you will be required to wait two weeks before taking the exam again. We encourage candidates and providers to plan their testing schedules carefully. An exam fee will be assessed by the provider for re-testing.

Formal Appeals

If the candidate has failed upon re-testing, the candidate may appeal the decision of the provider to the CWA in writing within 30 days of the re-testing. The written appeal, and any supporting documentation, must be sent to the CWA staff. The CWA staff will notify the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee and schedule a teleconference. If the deadline is not met, the provider’s decision will stand. The provider’s decision may be overturned or modified if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

1. When it can be shown that the provider acted arbitrarily, capriciously, or unfairly.
2. When it can be shown that the certification decision was based on a dated, inaccurate or incomplete assessment.

The issues to be considered on appeal must be limited to the original information previously submitted to the provider and the CWA. Reference to subsequent information, developments, training, etc. shall not be considered by the committee on appeal.

The appeals process is conducted by the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee that either affirms the provider's decision or makes a recommendation for reconsideration to the provider. The process is described below:

1. The hearing shall be held at a mutually convenient time for the committee, candidate and provider.
2. The committee shall convene a hearing via teleconference. The members of the committee must be mutually acceptable to the candidate and the provider. A committee member may be asked to recuse himself or herself at the request of either the candidate or the provider if a conflict of interest exists or appears to exist.
3. The hearing must be conducted by a quorum of the committee. If a quorum of mutually agreeable persons cannot be established, the CWA board of directors may appoint a three-person panel for the purposes of hearing the appeal. The members of the panel must be mutually acceptable to the candidate and the provider.
4. The committee or hearing panel may affirm the provider's decision; recommend to provider that it reconsider the decision, giving reasons; or refer the candidate to another provider. The committee's or panel's conclusions must be recorded in meeting minutes.
5. The status of the candidate shall remain unchanged during the appeal. There shall be no public notice related to the matter until the appeals process is completed and the committee or panel has made its final decision. The final decision of the committee or panel shall be forwarded to the candidate and provider in writing.
6. Any expenses related to referral, re-taking the course with another provider, or re-testing shall be borne by the candidate.

E. Reciprocity

The CWA may issue certification at any time to individuals applying for certification by reciprocity. To qualify for reciprocity an applicant must have a current certification, meet or exceed all of CWA's experience requirements, meet or exceed CWA's certification criteria and pay the appropriate application and examination fees. The applicant must have taken and passed an equivalent assessment of skills as required by the CWA within three years of the date of application. If you are currently certified by another body (i.e. hold a certificate which is active and was obtained through direct assessment with a passing score) you may be eligible to receive certification from CWA through reciprocity, following these steps:

1. Contact the CWA office to obtain an application form for CWA certification.

2. Complete and return the certification application with the application fee, examination fee and all other required documents to CWA.
3. Your application will be reviewed by the Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee.
4. If you meet all of the program requirements including pre-requisites, certification criteria, skills assessment, written assessment and education and experience you are eligible to receive a CWA certification.
5. The certification expiration date for reciprocity candidates will be identical to the current certification expiration date.

If you meet CWA's certification program requirements, but have not taken an assessment which is equivalent to CWA's certification assessment, you are not eligible to receive a CWA certificate through reciprocity. However, you may request a certification test to seek certification through direct assessment. The cost of this assessment will be the responsibility of the candidate.

F. Certification Program Evaluation

The CWA values constructive evaluation of its standards and programs. Persons involved in CWA certification programs should be afforded the opportunity to evaluate the standards, the program, and the provider. The provider must distribute and collect completed evaluations of certification courses. The completed evaluations must be submitted to the CWA within two weeks of the completion of the course. The evaluation should include: 1) assessment of the provider, 2) suitability of the standards including recommendations for specific changes and improvements, and any other comments. A standard evaluation form is provided by the CWA on its web site.

G. Annual Membership and Fees

CWA membership is required of providers. CWA membership fees are assessed annually. A provider whose membership lapses for greater than 90 days shall be removed from the provider roster. However, certifications conferred by the provider will remain in effect until the certifications expire. If a removed provider re-joins, provider status may be reinstated. There are no individual membership requirements for non-provider certificants.

H. Continuing Certification

Certification is valid for three years contingent upon ongoing activity and professional development in the recreational climbing industry. If a certificant becomes inactive for a substantial period (e.g. more than a year), we recommend the certificant complete a certification course or assessment prior to their certification expiration. A certificant seeking re-certification may opt to complete a full certification course or an assessment.

Certificants are notified approximately six months prior to their certification expiration and provided an opportunity to re-certify. The certificant must contact a provider regarding his or her intent to re-certify and register for a course or exam. The re-certification process should be complete within six months of the certification expiration date. If a certificant allows his or her certification to lapse, the certification is expired for the period from the certification expiration date until re-certification.

The requirements for continuing certification are based on the standard and certification criteria current at the time of the assessment. The re-certification will focus on the current standard, professional development since the last assessment, and any new domains of knowledge or learning added to the standard or certification criteria since the candidate's last exam.

The standard and certification criteria are reviewed and revised from time to time. It is the responsibility of certificants to keep their knowledge and professional practices current.

1. Conflict of Interest

The CWA maintains a conflict of interest policy for board members, staff, committees and volunteers. Persons associated with the certification program should be careful to avoid any situation where there is a conflict of interest. Any persons with a conflict of interest or who may not be able to act impartially regarding the program or certification decisions shall disclose the conflict to the CWA staff, recuse themselves from the specific program matters at issue or certification process in question, and under extraordinary circumstances offer to resign his or her position if the conflict cannot be resolved and is of a sufficiently important nature.

Furthermore, committee members and providers should avoid any situation that might compromise their professional judgment regarding candidates and certification decisions. Questions concerning potential conflicts of interest for providers should be referred to the CWA staff or to the CWA Work-at-Height Certification Standards Committee.