

CLIMBING WALL ASSOCIATION

CLIMBING WALL INSTRUCTOR 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 Climbing Wall Association 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 Certification 11
 - G. Continuing Certification 12
- IV. CWI Certification Program Providers 13
 - A. Program Providers 13
 - B. CWI Program Provider Course 14
 - C. Training Format 14
 - D. Provider Qualifications and Professionalism 15
 - E. Steps to Becoming a CWI Program Provider 15
 - F. CWI Program Provider Responsibilities 15
 - G. Maintaining CWI Provider Status 16
 - A. Tasks for the Instructor or Instructional Team Pre Course 17
 - B. Course Format 17
 - C. Completing the Assessment Instrument for Each Candidate 18
 - D. The Candidate Exit Interview 18

E. Post Course Tasks.....	19
VI. Other Policies.....	20
A. Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee Meetings.....	20
B. Confidentiality in the Certification Program.....	20
C. Dissemination of Information.....	21
D. Re-Examination and Appeals.....	22
Informal Appeal or Re-examination	22
Formal Appeals	22
E. Alternative Qualification Process for Program Providers.....	23
F. Qualification by Reciprocity	24
G. Certification Program Evaluation	24
H. Annual Membership and Fees.....	25
I. Continuing Certification	25
J. Conflict of Interest	25

I. Introduction

A. *The Climbing Wall Instructor Certification program*

Climbing Wall Association, Inc. (CWA), a non-profit corporation, sponsors the “Climbing Wall Instructor certification program” (CWI). The purpose of the certification program is to establish a voluntary certification for climbing instructors and a uniform set of performance standards that can be easily 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 Climbing Wall Instructor certification program is to assess the ability of the candidate to teach technical climbing skills, especially belay technique, on artificial terrain.

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 CWI certification must be renewed every three years. Also, certifications can differ within a profession by level or specific area of expertise. The CWI certification program includes three levels of certification:

1. a certification for climbing wall instructors,
2. a certification for program providers; and
3. a certification for provider trainers

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 CWI certification program is the responsibility of the CWA. Responsibility for oversight of the program, program policy, day-to-day administration, 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 Climbing Wall Instructor 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 Climbing Wall Instructor certification program in the best interests of the CWA, its members, and the public. The CWI Certification Standards Committee 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 CWI certification program providers confer or deny certification for climbing wall instructors.

The CWA is responsible for safeguarding the integrity of the CWI 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 CWI 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 CWI certification program.

D. Goals of the CWI Certification Program

The primary goals of the CWI Certification program are:

1. To increase the level of professionalism in indoor climbing;
2. To improve the level of consistency and competency in indoor climbing technical instruction;
3. To define a consistent standard of care for climbing instructors in the following areas:
 - a. client orientation and instruction;
 - b. teaching general climbing skills including movement;
 - c. teaching proper belaying techniques;
 - d. teaching proper leading techniques;
 - e. teaching proper equipment care and use;
 - f. proper facility use, care, and inspection; and
 - g. emergency procedures;
4. To evaluate the technical skills of climbing instructors;
5. To provide candidates with guidance for further professional development.
6. To provide a means of promoting consistency and quality assurance in climbing instruction for the benefit of the public.

The CWI certification program focuses on education, review and skills evaluation of individual candidates using consensus performance standards developed by leading

professionals in the field of climbing sports which have been subjected to public review. Certification standards are intended to address the minimum criteria a candidate should meet to be able to comply with prevailing industry practices and standards of care. Compliance with the certification standards is determined by members of the CWI provider pool, who work in the field and maintain their provider status.

E. Eligibility

The CWI certification program maintains program eligibility requirements and recommendations. Eligibility requirements and recommendations are overseen by the Climbing Wall Instructor 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 Climbing Wall Instructor 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 CWI 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 CWI 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 movement skills.
3. The candidate can climb 5.8 top rope demonstrating calm, confidence, and good position without falls.
4. The candidate can climb 5.7 lead demonstrating calm, confidence, and good position without z-clips, back clips, or falls (optional: for lead endorsement only).
5. The candidate has or is provided with appropriate equipment in good condition.
6. The candidate can demonstrate proper care, use, and inspection of climbing equipment.
7. The candidate can demonstrate proficient belay technique.

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 Climbing Wall Association CWI Certification Program and Credentials

The CWI certification program is a voluntary program for indoor climbing instructors and is employed as a means of industry self-regulation. Neither the CWA nor CWI certification program personnel have the authority to bar or ban an individual from the practice of his or her chosen profession. The CWI 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 CWI 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 CWA 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 the performance 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 to participants, 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, reasonable inference, and most importantly, direct observation of the candidate's performance of skills and tasks listed on the evaluation instrument. The CWI 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, abilities, sound instructional practices, and risk management practices; CWI certification is not a guarantee that certified individuals or their clients will be free from harm. In fact, risks are inherent in climbing instruction and in the sport of climbing in all of its forms. Risk and the uncertain outcomes associated with climbing activities help to provide the endeavor with its allure, its value, and its power as a life-long recreational pursuit.

II. The Certification Standards

The CWI certification program has published the criteria for certification. The certification standards themselves will be made readily available to the public 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 also references the CWA publication: *Industry Practices: A Sourcebook for the Operation of Manufactured Climbing Walls*, which program providers can access free of charge.

A. Scope of Standards

The CWI certification program standards are general in nature, largely focused on technical skills, are intended to represent minimum competencies for a professional climbing wall instructor, and are designed to be applicable in a wide variety of climbing facilities.

Needless to say, the standards will not and cannot address all instruction or operations in all facilities. The certification standards should be considered the basis upon which to build an appropriate staff training program suitable for a given facility. In other words, the certification standards 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 exercise equipment). 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 Standards

CWI certification standards were designed to help professionals and the public identify key performance criteria to assess competency in basic climbing instructional skills for artificial terrain. The criteria contained in the standards are considered to be elements of effective and professional climbing instruction. CWI certification standards are intended to be statements 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 and even public attitudes and expectations. The standards are reviewed regularly and revised periodically by the Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee which is the final authority regarding standards development, application, and interpretation.

C. Format of the Standards

The standards are organized into a number of domains which are reflected in the statement of standards and the assessment instrument. Each domain of learning or 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 standards can be found on the CWA web site.

D. Compliance with Standards

A candidate for Climbing Wall Instructor certification must meet all (100%) of the required standards on the assessment instrument to achieve certification. However, certification may be conferred with a top-rope or lead endorsement. It should be clear if and how each standard is met. If a standard does not apply, the standard should be marked "Does Not Apply" or "DNA". 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 at a later time. See the appeals section later in the policy manual.

III. The CWI Certification Process

A. Candidate Preparation

Candidates should apply for certification only after they have completed all 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 certification standards 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 component of the course. Candidates should not enroll in certification courses as a means to prepare for the certification exam. Candidates can avail themselves of many sources of qualified professional instruction in the marketplace.

In order to avoid conflicts of interest between the educational and certification functions, the CWI certification program does not and cannot accredit courses of study leading to certification. In addition to not accrediting programs leading to the initial certification, the CWI certification program does not require that candidates complete a particular organization's program for certification eligibility.

However, the CWI 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 CWI 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 six (6) 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 CWI Certification Course

The CWI Certification Course is generally an eight to twelve 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 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 summary and 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. The provider must either have the candidates complete an on-line evaluation or send completed evaluations to the CWA. The evaluation should include, at a minimum: an assessment of the provider's performance as an instructor, recommendations for improvements to the certification course, and a section for general comments.

F. Initial Certification

Initial CWI certification is valid for three years. There is no individual CWA membership requirement for maintaining CWI certification, although there is an exam fee which is assessed by the provider for each candidate and paid to the CWA at the conclusion of each course.

Provider certification is contingent upon maintaining CWA membership status either through your employer or on your own, ongoing professional training, payment of 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. However, if any of the other requirements of being a provider are no longer met – for example expiration of a first aid or CPR certification, or loss of insurance – then the provider may not offer a CWI course until those requirements have been addressed.

G. Continuing Certification

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 [assessment] 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. CWI Certification Program Providers

A. Program Providers

The CWI certification program is offered through a network of program providers. Program providers have generally completed CWI certification with a lead endorsement (or higher certification or equivalent professional training) and completed all the requirements to become a provider. Candidates for provider status must complete an on-line application and submit a cover letter, resume, references and other documents. Electronic copies of the application materials are available on the CWA web site.

Any person meeting the pre-requisites to become a CWI 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 and agreement. An interview may also be required. Pre-requisites for CWI Certification program provider include:

1. Current membership in the CWA (provider or provider's employer).
2. 21 years of age.
3. Current first aid and CPR (for example, 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 experience as a climbing instructor, showing expertise in indoor climbing settings.
5. Climbing ability: 5.9 top rope and 5.8 lead on artificial structures.
6. Current CWA Certified Climbing Wall Instructor.*
7. Two non-related professional references, including contact information and phone number.
8. A signed agreement and attestation on file.
9. Proof of insurance.

*If the candidate is not a current CWA Certified Climbing Wall Instructor, 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 experience as a climbing instructor. Exceptional and wide-ranging indoor climbing teaching experience, prior experience as an instructor or guide, or other certification will be considered as evidence of qualification. Completion of a provider training course may or may not be required as part of the alternative qualification procedure.

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

B. CWI Program Provider Course

The CWA, or program provider trainers, 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 Climbing Wall Instructor certification program for prospective providers. This training reviews program and provider policies, the CWA Industry Practices, the student manual and curricula, and general course flow. Program providers may request a complimentary copy of the Industry Practices for their own use. 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 providers about the Climbing Wall Instructor certification program and to prepare providers to be effective advocates for the program;
2. To train providers to administer and deliver courses within the CWI certification program properly;
3. To help providers understand the program's policies and procedures;
4. To train providers in the program curricula.
5. To train providers in the evaluation of certification standards, use of the evaluation instrument, and how to assess students fairly.
6. To train providers in the use of the course/provider evaluation.
7. To communicate the risk management measures to be employed during certification courses.
8. To assess providers knowledge of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
9. To provide some legal education for CWI Provider Candidates
10. To provide a forum for providers to ask questions and have questions answered;
11. To ensure that the certification program is delivered with consistency and quality.

C. Training Format

The CWI program provider course is a one day, eight to twelve-hour course. Some lecture, but emphasis on demonstration, group discussion of the program and curricula, and review of course flow and scenarios to help prospective providers be able to offer a consistent course, consistent feedback to students, and a consistent standard of examination.

Course Outline:

- I. Overview of CWI certification program
- II. Maintaining the program

- IV. The Curricula - CWI certification program student manual
- V. Sample course flow
- VI. Scenarios and exercises
- VII. Training review and debrief

D. Provider Qualifications and Professionalism

Program providers represent the CWA. Providers are certified based on their experience, qualifications, demonstration of required skills 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 CWI Program Provider

Step 1: Submit an on-line application including a cover letter, resume, attestation, and agreement showing you meet the prerequisites and pay the application fee.

Step 2: Attend a CWA program provider course if applicable or complete an alternative qualification process.

Step 3: The Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards Committee reviews the candidates training records and recommendations and makes final decision for the candidate to become a CWI program provider.

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

F. CWI Program Provider Responsibilities

1. The CWI program provider will comply with all necessary rules and regulations regarding facility use and will carry or be covered by general liability insurance coverage.
2. The CWI Program provider will determine course logistics such as scheduling, registration, and course cost (if any).
3. The CWI program provider will assess an exam fee per student per course, regardless of whether the applicant past the course and will pay the fee to the CWA.
4. The program provider will provide a course summary and course evaluations to the CWA within 14 days of the conclusion of the course.

5. A CWI program provider must be present for each day of any CWI course.
6. The CWI program provider will supply course participants with the current course manual and evaluation instrument.
7. The CWI program provider must follow current CWI Certification program curriculum.
8. The CWI program provider must use the current standard evaluation instrument.
9. The CWI program provider should maintain an awareness of their continuing education requirements and participate in required updates in order to retain program provider status.

G. Maintaining CWI Provider Status

CWI program providers are expected to offer CWI 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 national consistency of the CWI program and to share ideas with other course instructors.

To maintain CWI program provider status you must:

- Teach, co-teach, or observe at least one CWI certification course every certification cycle (three years).
- Attend a CWI 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.
- Maintain your CWA or your employer's membership.

Other criteria for maintaining provider status includes recent employment or ongoing professional activity in the field of climbing instruction. 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.

CWI program providers that fail to meet the above requirements become 'inactive'. If inactive providers wish to become a CWI provider again, they must reapply.

H. CWI Program Provider Trainers

CWI program provider trainers are program provider selected and trained to offer CWI provider courses. If you are interested in becoming a provider trainer, please contact the CWA.

V. Providing a Certification Course

A provider may provide CWI certification course at any time if the CWA membership, provider certification, and first aid and CPR certifications are current. The provider must also be covered by an insurance contract covering his or her work as a certification program provider, for example a commercial general liability insurance policy purchased by the provider's employer. If the course is an open-enrollment course, please notify CWA at least thirty days in advance so we may add the course to our calendar. The size of the instructional team will vary according to the number of candidates. We recommend an instructor to student ratio of one to six, not to exceed one to eight... The second instructor may be a certified Climbing Wall Instructor with a lead endorsement or a candidate for provider status and must be approved by the CWA.

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. Download and review current paperwork from CWA web site.
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.
6. Coordinate initial meeting of instructional team.
7. Meet with course venue representative to review the schedule, logistics, conduct a site inspection, finalize space needs, etc.

B. Course Format

The following is a sample course format:

Eight to twelve hours

- Welcome and introductions
- Facility orientation for candidates
- Assess pre-requisite skills (CWA provides a sample application for providers)
- Professionalism and the role of a climbing wall instructor
- Applied risk management

- Legal information for climbing instructors
- Patron orientation and training
 - Adequate information exchange
 - Warnings, rules and expectations
- Climbing Instruction
 - Basic movement skills
 - Bouldering
 - Auto belay instruction
 - Top rope instruction
 - Lead climbing instruction
- Personal Protective Equipment
 - Selection of appropriate equipment;
 - The importance of manufacturers' instructions for use
 - Equipment care and inspection
 - Equipment retirement, useful lifetime of PPE
- Facility management and inspection: orientations, facility tour, routine facility/wall inspection
- Emergency management
 - Prevention
 - Preparation and training
 - Evidence preservation and collection
 - Witness statements
 - Incident reporting
- Evaluation of candidates' skills
- Individual candidate interviews, review of assessment instrument
- Course feedback and provider evaluation by candidates

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. Each certification standard 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. The Candidate Exit Interview

At the conclusion of the course the instructor or instructional team will meet with each candidate to review the candidate's performance. The purposes of this exit interview are to:

- 1) discuss the results of the course examination components,
- 2) clarify any remaining questions or correct any factual errors, 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 may choose to meet with the candidate in advance to prepare him/her for the feedback so there are no surprises during the exit interview.

The instructor starts the discussion with a general overview of the instructor's or team's findings including strengths, weaknesses, etc. The exit interview should focus on the observations of the candidate's 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. Again, remember that the certification standards alone form the framework for the evaluation and decision.

E. Post Course Tasks

The instructor or instructional team meets at the conclusion of the course to discuss the course and make arrangements to complete the course paperwork. 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 or the certification standards.

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 a certification standards document or documents consistent with the current edition of the CWA Industry Practices: A Sourcebook for the Operation of Manufactured Climbing Walls. The committee is also responsible for assisting in identifying individuals qualified to become providers of the certification program and to actively promote the program. 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 certification standards, 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 Climbing Wall Instructor 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 a contractual 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 maintain an authoritative and exclusive list of program providers and certificants.

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 definitive list of program providers and certificants. A list of all providers 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 it 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 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 developments, training, etc. shall not be considered by the committee on appeal.

The appeals process is conducted by the 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.
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 conclusions must be recorded in committee 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. Alternative Qualification Process for Program Providers

The CWA will has established an alternative qualification procedure for providers. The alternative qualification procedure will allow qualified candidates to become providers without the need for completing the CWI certification course initially. The alternative qualification procedure will entail documenting all qualifications, documenting extensive prior experience, participating in distance-learning activities, submitting documentation of teaching, and taking an examination. This provision will allow an owner/operator to certify his or her own staff to the published standards immediately. A provider wishing to provide a certification course to the general public must also complete the provider training prior to offering the open enrollment certification course to the public.

F. Qualification by Reciprocity

The CWA may issue certification at any time to individuals applying for certification 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 standards and pay the appropriate application fee. 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. Complete and return the certification application with the non-refundable application fee and required documentation to CWA.
2. Schedule an interview with the CWA certification coordinator.
3. Your application will be reviewed by the Certification Standards Committee.
4. If you meet all of the certification program requirements including certification, assessment, education and experience, you will 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, education and experience 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 assessment.

G. Certification Program Evaluation

The CWA values constructive evaluation of its standards and programs. Persons involved in the CWA certification program 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. An evaluation form is provided by the CWA on its web site.

H. Annual Membership and Fees

CWA membership is required of providers – even if the provider changes employers. 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 pending application, review and approval by the Certification Standards Committee. There are no individual membership requirements for non-provider certificants.

I. 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 of time (for example, greater 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 by their providers 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 certification standards current at the time of the assessment. The re-certification will focus on the current certification standards, professional development since the last assessment, and any new domains of knowledge or learning added to the standards document since the candidate's last exam.

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

J. 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, 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 Certification Standards Committee.