

Emergency Chain of Call

In the event of an emergency that requires activating the Emergency Medical System notify one of the following Challenge program personnel **after** responding to the medical emergency:

Michael Wallace – 4-H Extension Faculty
360-676-6736 x 41 WSU Extension
360-961-6726 Cell

Scott Vanderwey – Statewide 4-H Challenge
Program Manager
253-445-4581 Office
253-320-1412 Cell

Drew Betz – Chair, WSU/Whatcom County
360-676-6736 x5 WSU Extension Office

Kenn Robinson – Director of Student Services, BSD
360/676-2787 BSD Student Services
360/734-3249 home

Bellingham Ropes Course Pocket Safety Guide

HOW TO USE THIS POCKET GUIDE

This Pocket Safety Guide documents the physical safety procedures used at the Bellingham School District (BSD)/4-H Challenge Course. It is designed for quick-reference while out on the course or for reviewing the procedures before taking a group out.

All leaders at the BSD/4-H Challenge Course must hold current certification from the 4-H Challenge program. Two fully certified leaders are required with any group. This pocket guide is not a substitute for thorough training or for the comprehensive 4-H Ropes Course Leader's Guide.

AUTHORS

This booklet was put together by the Training and Safety Committees of the 4-H Challenge User's Group.

Compiled by: *Irene Pasternack*, Challenge Volunteer, Trainer

Edited by: *Dr. Pat Haase*, Challenge Volunteer, Safety Chair
Arno Bergstrom, Area Extension Agent
Sam Tower, Program Assistant
Carey Roos, Challenge Volunteer, Trainer
John Powers, Consultant
Nancy Harold, Challenge Volunteer
Elliot Herman, Challenge Volunteer
Tom Boley, Consultant

Revised for Bellingham Ropes Course by:

Michael Wallace, Extension Agent
Jeff McKenna, Challenge Volunteer

Revision Control
First Published 2/14/90
Last Revision 5/31/07

3.1 WILD WOOSEY (12 people minimum)

Task: Two people get as far apart as possible on wires (by leaning on each other).

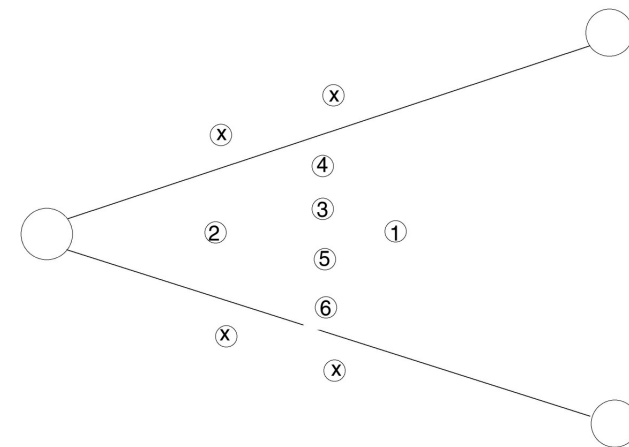
Goals: Trust and communication.

Safety: Hands on shoulders or palms together. No entwined fingers.

Spotters must be inside and directly under the two people with their hands propped on their knees. Two spotters are inserted front and back spotting in an upright position.

Variations: Try having different sized participants partner for this.

Hint: Have participants practice on ground first.



x = outside spotter
1-6 = order of engaging spotters

TIME FRAMES

Plan your activities to match your growth and learning goals for participants - not to experience everything at the site.

Goals: Group initiative, preparation for Multi-Vines, trust, personal responsibility.

Safety: Spotting is required: 6 people to each person on the wire. Warning: Direct spotters to prevent falls parallel to the wire particularly when travel is toward the tree to which participant's rope is attached.

Participants should stand with both feet pointing the same way, so that chances of slipping and straddling the wire are reduced.

When participants meet in the middle, make sure spotters' continuously spot both participants.

Setup: Tie figure-8 knots with backups at one end of two long (35') pieces of ropes, leaving a small loop. Use a carabineer to clip one rope to the cable on each of the two trees.

Variation: Entire group traverses the cable from one direction only before attempting to approach from both directions. Blindfold the people attempting the traverse. Participants, spotters or both must maintain silence.

3.0 ETRIER (5 people minimum)

Task: As a group initiative the challenge is to get the group across the Etrier without touching the ground. For emphasis on personal responsibility the individual requests the kind of support desired from the group to cross the Etrier. Emphasis is on making your needs clear to the group.

Goals: group initiative or personal responsibility

Setup: Clip prepared webbing to the cable between cable clamps with carabineers. Extend ladder 3 rungs beyond cable for setup.

Safety: Must have at least two spotters for each person on the element. May be fatiguing for the upper body. Watch for tangling of the feet resulting in head first drop. Use the staples on the tree to dismount.

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SECTION ONE: BASIC SAFETY INFORMATION

1.1 ACCIDENT PREVENTION

The key to our safety program is promoting personal responsibility for all participants. Participants must monitor themselves and each other.

Your job as instructor is to prevent and avoid emergency situations in each activity!

- Environmental factors + Human factors = Accident potential.
(E + H = A)
- Most accidents happen at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Watch out for hunger and fatigue levels.

Work within your group's and your own energy levels. Plan your activities to match your learning goals for participants - not to complete the course.

MANDATORY PROCEDURES

Before the Day:

1. Reserve the ropes course by calling the Bellingham School District, Student Services (360-676-2787). A packet of registration materials will be sent. Arrange for pick up of necessary equipment and gate key.
2. Have insurance for your group. Check with BSD, Student Services for more information.
3. Enroll all adults and youth as 4-H leaders or members by entering their names on the 4-H enrollment forms.

One participant (rotate through group) stands at the head of the two catching lines, and facilitates lining up the faller and the catchers, and directs each catcher to lean their head back.

Communication is essential!

2.8 CRISS-CROSS (5 people minimum)

Task: Start at one end with feet on one rope, and hands on the other, and get off at the other end after switching ropes.

Goals: Individual challenge, group initiative team building.

Safety: Careful spotting is required for the center part of the criss-cross, as participants can fall in several directions. (2 spotters on each side per participant minimum) Watch out for people doing the splits as they cross from one rope to the other, and overbalancing forward over the cross in the ropes.

Variations: Start two people, one at each end.

Setup: This element is setup with approximately 80 feet of Skyline rope and four(4) carabineers secured to four (4) eye-screws in the two support trees.

On one end of the skyline tie a figure-eight on a bight and back it up. With the other end of the rope, thread through the carabineers beginning at the left side, upper corner; pass down and across to the lower right corner; continue up through the top right corner; pass down and across to the left side, lower corner. Continue up through the bight on the figure-eight and back down through the carabineer again. Pull tight and tie off with a mariners hitch (wrap at least three times around the 2 parallel lines and pull the end between the 2 parallel lines) backed up with an overhand knot around the 2 lines.

2.9 TENSION TRAVERSE with HAND-LINES

(14 people minimum with two way; 7 people minimum with one way)

Task: Two groups (7 each minimum) start at each end. One person balances across in each direction while holding onto ropes, with exchange of ropes in middle.

2.6 WOBBLY LOG (5 people minimum)

Task: Participant walks length of suspended log.

Goals: Trust, communication, personal responsibility.

Safety: Spotters should always stand sideways to protect their shins/legs from sudden log movement.

If minimum number of participants, spotters should move along with walker.

Participant must be careful not to hurt the heads and necks of spotters with excess pressure.

Variation: Blindfold participant, walk backwards, walk both directions on the log, try different walking speeds.

2.7 TRUST FALL (10 people minimum)

Task: Faller stands on platform, falls backward into the arms of the group.

Goals: Trust building, communication, personal responsibility

Safety: Faller must hold arms tight to chest. Flailing arms are a potential cause of injury.

Faller must keep back stiff and not "fold in the middle."

Faller must remove helmet and eye-glasses.

Catchers must not hold hands, or cross arms or hands with anyone.

Catchers must stand in two lines, shoulder to shoulder, with their leg on the faller's side back, and their other leg in, so that they can easily see the faller. Their heads should be tilted back.

4. Collect signed consent/medical forms from all participants.

5. Get a weather report and make sure participants have proper clothing. No shorts or sandals are allowed. See "Suggested Clothing List," in the registration packet for recommended clothing. (You may want to bring extra gloves, hats and sweaters to be sure.)

6. Evaluate and screen prospective participants to ensure that they will be able to handle the personal responsibility required for safety on the course.

Start the Day:

1. Pick up emergency phone and keys from the Roeder Administration Building, 1306 Dupont Street.

2. Assess the weather and the preparedness of your group. Do not use the course during high winds or electrical storms.

3. Ask all participants about recent injuries and medical concerns. Ask participants to remove jewelry that might get caught in gear or lost.

4. Visually inspect all gear that your group will use.

5. First-aid kits, ensolite pad, and blankets must be with the group at all times.

6. Open both gates, A and B, for emergency access. Do not block the access by parking on either drive.

End the Day:

1. Complete all required paperwork, including Challenge Course Use form and, if necessary, Accident form. Accident report forms must be returned within 24 hours or the next business day to BSD, Student Services, 1306 Dupont Street, Bellingham.

2. Return keys and phone to Student Services, Roeder Administration Building by 5:00 p.m.

1.2 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURE

This procedure should be followed for any medical emergency. It assumes you have safely gotten the person needing medical attention down to the ground.

1.2.1 FIRST AID

The instructor's role is to perform and/or direct essential first-aid (maintain airway, breathing and circulation- ABC's), stabilize the situation, protect the victim from the elements, and call 911.

1.2.2 CALLING 911

- Dial 911
 - Say: "THIS IS AN EMERGENCY"
 - Identify your location, say: "BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT GORDON CARTER ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SITE IN WHATCOM FIRE DISTRICT #18 ON SOUTH BAY DRIVE AT GATE A or B."
 - Identify the problem, explain the injured person's
 - AGE:
 - SEX:
 - CHIEF COMPLAINT:
 - Give them the telephone #: cellular #: 360-201-5359
block house #: 360-595-2344
- First response is from District 18 Fire Department with back up from Sudden Valley Volunteer Fire Department. Response time may be from 90 seconds to 6-8 minutes.
- When in doubt call 911 - "If there's any doubt, there is no doubt."
- Send 2 people to end of driveway to guide ambulance to injury site. Station one person at course entry, if on the Challenge course itself.
- **Stay calm - keep person calm and still. Treat for shock. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive.**

Main dangers are falling off the beam, having the person descending jump down, or kicking spotters. Note that the beam may move, especially when the first person is mounting.

Spotters must protect their faces.

To descend, wrap legs and arms around beam, roll so your body is underneath, then lower legs and allow spotters to assist.

Variations: Limit # of people any 1 person can help from top.

2.5 WALL (12 people minimum)

Task: Entire group must get over the wall. Once over, participants must help spot but cannot support other climbers going over the wall.

Goals: Group initiative, problem solving, communication.

Safety: 2 spotters assigned for each person off the ground.

Person climbing should direct action and make sure his/her needs are met. Others need to listen.

Maximum of 5 participants at top of wall at any time. When on top of the wall, head must always be higher than knees.

Participants who are climbing ladder must be spotted.

Grabbing loose clothing may result in disrobing the participant.

Side edges of wall are off limits.

Variation: Limit # of people any 1 person can help from top.

Equipment: Extension ladder, cargo net, rope for net, rope for ladder.

Setup: Tie extension ladder to tree on backside of wall. Set cargo net as safety net behind wall platform. Secure top of net with carabineers to eye-screws in trees and bottom of net with rope to carabineers on eye-screws on back of wall.

Spotters must fill in area under tire. Spotters must protect faces from climbers feet.

Climber should descend from tire slowly. Doing a cradle at the end is a good way to slow things down.

Variation: If using as a goal setting exercise, have all participants be assisted up to the tire.

2.3 TWO LINE WALK (5 people minimum)

Task: Participant walks length of lower cable using only spotters as support. Two variations are described below.

Goals: Individual challenge, cooperation, support.

Safety: Spotting is two people for each participant on each side of cable minimum.

Multivine variation: Attach prepared multivines with carabineers to the overhead cable between cable clamps. Use ladder extended at least three rungs above cable to attach carabineers. Participants may use multivines and spotters to traverse the cable.

Webbing variation: Secure the long (30') webbing strap to the eye-bolts in the end trees with carabineers. Tie a figure eight on a bight on each end of the webbing to create the loops to attach the carabineers. Participants hold the webbing as they traverse the cable.

2.4 OVER-THE-BEAM (10 people minimum)

Task: Get entire group over the beam.

Goals: Group initiative, problem solving, trust.

Safety: Three people maximum on beam (two helpers and one climber). All three people must have 2 spotters each.

No running jumps. Standing jumps are ok.

1.2.3 REPORTING INCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES

As a part of the ongoing safety of the Challenge Course reporting of “incidents” and “near misses” is required. Following are definitions and the appropriate reporting procedures:

Incident: The occurrence of a physical accident or an emotional response that prevents a member of the group from continuing participation. [e.g. transporting a person off site for medical reasons or removing a person from the group for unsafe activities] OR, any kind of occurrence where you recommend some kind of follow up [e.g. medical, counseling, abuse reporting, etc.] Reporting procedure is to complete the *Incident Report Form* and return to BSD Student Services as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours following.

Near Miss: Occurrences where you administer minor first aid but do not consider it an “incident” or activities where you suck wind and think “whoa, that was a close call”. This may include falls that result in minor or no injury. Reporting procedure is to record these on the back of the *Bellingham 4-H Challenge Ropes Course Use Form* in the “Near Miss” section. These reports are reviewed by the Safety Committee for updating training and procedures.

1.3 LOW COURSE SAFETY PROCEDURES

1.3.1 BASIC GUIDELINES:

- A minimum ratio of 1 instructor to 12 youth is required, with a minimum of two instructors present for any site use.
- All participants and instructors must wear helmets. Check for jewelry and pocket items which might cause injury.
- Clear each element area of potential hazards, such as fallen or dead overhead branches.
- Spotting techniques must be taught prior to activities.
- Instructor must inspect each element prior to use.
- Participants must be directly supervised by instructor on all elements.
- Review safety information for each element with entire group prior to starting activity. (E + H = A) For group initiative elements, have group explain their safety plan before starting.
- All participants have a choice whether or not they want to do an activity. However, they must participate in spotting or safety watch.

1.3.2 STANDARD COMMUNICATIONS SEQUENCE:

Before beginning any activity, the following sequence must be used.

Participant: "My name is xxxx, and I choose to do this activity. Are you ready to support me?"

Spotters: "Ready!"

Participant: "Ready to fall." {climb, walk, etc.} (*exact words depend on element*)

Spotters: "Fall away." {climb, walk, etc.} (*exact words depend on element*)

Participant: "Falling." {climbing, walking, etc.}

Begin activity

1.3.3 SPOTTING

For each person off the ground, 2 spotters minimum are required.

Spotters should stand with one leg forward, with knees bent.

Spotters are responsible for protecting themselves: for example, spotters should protect their faces from being inadvertently kicked.

1.3.4 TEACHING SPOTTING ACTIVITIES

Use the standard communications sequence as part of teaching all spotting activities.

Emphasize that spotting isn't "catching" someone, but instead is "breaking their fall." The main goal is protecting the head, neck and back.

Supervise spotters closely!

- Five-person spotting: begins building trust.

- Grass-in-the-wind: builds team-work and trust.
- Bench practice: spotting someone who is higher than you.
- Trust lift: prepares for dismounts from elements.
- End-over-end: prepares for spotting person in various positions.
- Instructor dramatically models trusting spotters on wobbly-log or tension traverse.
- Each low element: go over spotting specific to that element.

SECTION TWO: LOW ELEMENTS: BELLINGHAM/4-H COURSE

2.1 ALL-ABOARD (8-15 people)

Task: Get the entire group to balance with both feet off the ground for a count of 5.

Goals: Group initiative, problem solving, leadership.

Safety: Clear ground of objects which might hurt.

When group starts falling, let go and spot yourself and others. No piggy-backing.

2.2 HOLE-IN SPACE (7 people minimum)

Task: Get the group through the tire. Cables are off limits.

Goals: Group initiative, trust, personal responsibility.

Safety: Head first through tire.

Once a participant is through, they are still allowed to come back around to spot the person who's on the way up.