



CLIMBING WALL
ASSOCIATION

Climbing Wall Association

CWI Certification Standards

April 2024

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CWI CERTIFICATION PROGRAM STANDARD

Responsible Position: CWA

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STATEMENT OF CLIMBING WALL INSTRUCTOR (CWI) CERTIFICATION STANDARD

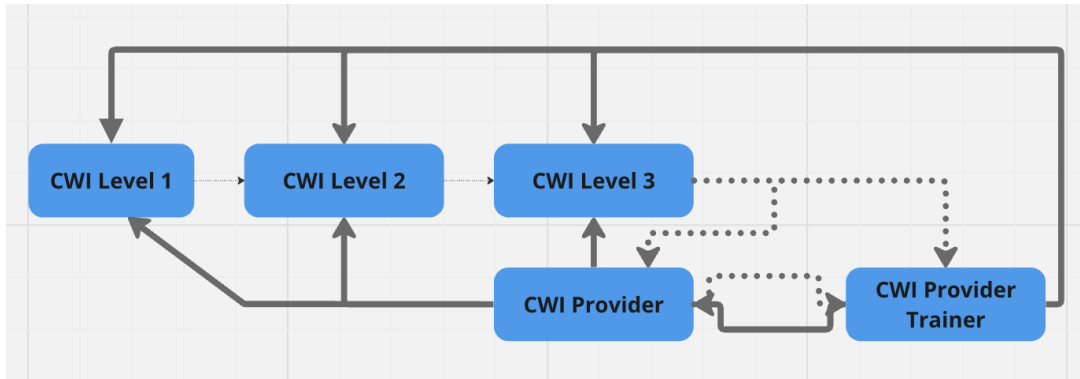
The **mission** of the CWI Certification Program is to:

- Create and maintain quality guidelines, training programs, and resources.
- Monitor and share industry information, trends, and progress.
- Educate climbing facilities on the value of instructor certification and the contributions and professionalism of instructors.

The scope of the CWI Program Standard is for the instruction of climbing skills. Specifically, the scope includes the following areas:

- Knowledge instructors need to assess the skills of climbers in a facility
- Industry Practices for indoor climbing facilities
- Use of PPE appropriate for different climbing environments
- Education principles when instructing climbing skills
- Risk Management principles

CWI CERTIFICATION PATHWAY



Key to the Graphic

- The dotted line represents the certification required as a prerequisite to the next certification.
- The solid line represents who does the training for the certification level.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

CWI Certifications may be taken concurrently. Higher levels of CWI certification are not valid if prerequisite CWI certification assessment criteria have not been met.

CWI Level 1 Certified

- Applicants must be 16 years of age or older
- Applicants for the CWI can climb V0
- Complete the CWA Foundations course

CWI Level 2 Certified

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older within 6 months of the assessment date
- Completed CWI Level 1
- Has completed 20 roped climbing outings participating in both climbing and belaying using a passive and an assisted braking belay device
- Ability to demonstrate climbing at a 5.8 level

CWI Level 3 Certified

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older
- Have completed CWI Level 2
- Ability to lead climb 5.9
- Completed a minimum of 40 lead climbing outings where they have both belayed and climbed
- Familiarity belaying with both assisted braking devices and passive belay devices

CWI Providers

- Applicants must be 21 years of age or older
- CWI Providers have completed and are certified CWA CWI Level 3
- Have current first aid certification
- Minimum 200 hours of work as an indoor climbing wall manager
- Ability to lead climb 5.9
- Signed agreement and attestation
- Proof of liability insurance coverage

CWI Provider Trainers

- CWI Provider Trainers must be members of the CWI Certification Standards Committee

RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of certified candidates within the CWI Certification program are outlined below:

CWI Level 1 Certified

- Act in accordance with the certification's scope.
- Maintain the requirements of certification as outlined in the Certification Program Policy Manual.
- Comply with CWI Certification Standard practices as outlined in the student manual.
- Act as a climbing wall worker offering orientations, and monitoring climbing activities.

CWI Level 2 Certified

- Act in accordance with the certification's scope.
- Maintain the requirements of certification as outlined in the Certification Program Policy Manual.
- Comply with CWI Certification Standard practices as outlined in the Student Manual.
- Use equipment that meets the CWA Certification Standard for climbing activities.
- Cultivate an instructional environment that cultivates trust and learning.
- Use appropriate communication skills and instructional skills to prepare climbers.
- Demonstrate sound judgement.
- Act as a climbing facility monitor, offer orientations, belay checks and orientations for top rope climbing.

CWI Level 3 Certified

- Act in accordance with the certification's scope and standards.
- Maintain the requirements of certification as outlined in the Certification Program Policy Manual.
- Comply with CWI Certification Standard practices as outlined in student manual.
- Use equipment that meets the CWA CWI Certification Standard for climbing activities.
- Cultivate an instructional environment that cultivates trust and learning.
- Use appropriate communication skills and instructional skills to prepare climbers.
- Demonstrate sound judgement.
- Act as a climbing facility monitor, offer orientations, belay checks and orientations for top rope and lead climbing.

CWI Providers

- Enroll prospective CWI Level 1,2 and/or 3 candidates in the online learning course.
- Pay the course fee on behalf of the candidates required at the time of enrollment.

- Answer any questions regarding online content Provider candidates may have.
- Clearly communicate the date, time, and location of the in-person assessment.
- Conduct assessment of prospective PRS Level 1 certificants.
- Deliver activities allowing CWI Level 1,2 and 3 registrants to demonstrate they can meet or exceed the minimum standard for certification.
- Record the results of assessment in the online learning course assessment tool, along with any person notes regarding the course delivery that are assistance to the Certification committee and/or the CWA in the review of the certification.
- Abide by the rules governing certification outlined in the CWA Certification Program Policy Manual.
- Act as a climbing facility monitor, offer orientations, belay checks and orientations for top rope and lead climbing.
- Offer CWI certification courses and assessments.
- Assist in the operational decision making within a climbing facility.
- Participate in the CWA CWI Certification Standards Committee

CWI Provider Trainers

- Assess alternative pathway and/or reciprocity requests for prospective CWI candidates.
- Maintain regular attendance at CWA CWI Certification Standards Committee meetings.
- Work in collaboration with the Certification Standards Committee members reporting any challenges, concerns with content, content delivery and course logistics.
- Abide by the rules governing certification outlined in the CWA Certification Program Policy Manual.
- Offer CWI and CWI Provider certification courses and assessments.
- Complete the certification course administration requirements for candidates in the certification program.
- Review resources and tools, develop resources and/or deliver instruction and assessment for prospective CWI programs and offerings.

CWI CERTIFICATION INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARD

The CWA has an Industry Practices committee who defines and publishes Industry standards for facility operation. The Certification Standards committee determines the standards for the CWI Program.

Operational practices will vary from one climbing facility to another. Some facilities will opt for a higher standard or more rigid set of policies than the prescribed industry standards. The following is a table outlines the **CWI Certification Standards** defined by the CWA.

As a representative of the CWA, it is expected that CWI certified instructors will follow the CWI certification standards.

Area	CWI Certification Program Standard
Professionalism	CWI certified instructors and Providers are expected to operate in accordance with a demeanor of professionalism as defined through this program, Embodying the respect toward oneself and others, being responsible, holding oneself to account, being conscientious and to continue to develop and expand one's knowledge regarding the climbing industry.
Access rules and practices	<p>Instruction of youth can begin at an early age, assuming the youth can properly wear the equipment required and the impact from falls is adequately protected.</p> <p>Parents or guardians of any youth are expected to be informed of the risks and agree to the youth's participation PRIOR to participation in climbing activities.</p> <hr/> <p>Youth are directly supervised when in instructional programs throughout the program's duration.</p> <p>The ratio of instructor to student for youth between 5-7 years of age is 1:6.</p> <p>Youth is defined as any participant under 14.</p>

Participant Agreement	<p>Ensuring that the participant agreement was signed prior to instructing a group is part of an instructor's role.</p> <p>Documented participant agreements must be properly stored to protect confidentiality of participants. It is part of the instructor's responsibility to protect the personal information of all facility users.</p>
Instructor/student ratio	<p>8:1 is recognized ratio for adults 6:1 for youth</p>
Facility Inspection	<p>Inspecting the area of a facility where instruction will occur is the instructor's responsibility before the course starts. Inspection of the facility, walls, flooring, equipment should be documented. Review the facility inspection elements of the manual for details.</p>
Equipment	<p>Any equipment used during instruction should be inspected prior to use. Questionable equipment should not be used. Equipment inspection should be documented. Monitor the care during the course. Ensure that equipment is used and inspected in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.</p>
Emergency Action Plans	<p>Instructors should ensure they are aware of the Emergency Action Plan and their role in an emergency situation. Instructors have a duty of care to maintain the safety and supervision of participants.</p>
Duty to Report	<p>An instructor working with youth has a duty to report any suspected mistreatment or harm. It is an instructor's responsibility to be clear to whom they need to report this information and how to document the incident.</p>
Height limits	<p>Instructors are responsible for reviewing the height limits for smaller participants in their programs and determining if it would be in the best interest of the participants to lower the height limit to reduce the risk of injury or harm.</p>
Participation limits	<p>There are no minimum or maximum ages for participation in climbing. However, equipment may not be suitable for all bodies or health</p>

	<p>considerations. If equipment cannot be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, participation may be limited.</p>
Flooring in facilities	<p>Each climbing facility is expected to follow the guidelines of the flooring installer. Instructors are likewise expected to follow the guidelines for inspection, use and care of any flooring in the facility. Limits may include whether participants can rest on the floor near the walls, food and drink in the climbing area, the use of outdoor shoes. Instructors must abide by and enforce the rules in the facility they are instructing.</p>
Bouldering	<p>Confirm climbers are willing to accept the risks in bouldering. This can be done by asking the climber to climb and demonstrate a fall.</p> <p>Expected elements of the Bouldering Orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have climbers demonstrate a fall ○ Have climbers demonstrate falling techniques, downclimbing ○ Have climbers explain where the fall zones extend to <p>New climbers participate in bouldering orientation Explain rules, enforce the rules</p>
Spotting	<p>An instructor has a responsibility to explain the pros and cons of spotting, when it is appropriate, how to spot correctly if it is allowed in the facility.</p> <p>Follow facility rules on spotting</p>
Facility monitoring	<p>Monitor all climbing activities of course participants Monitoring includes periodically walking through the climbing area to ensure that hidden areas can be monitored. Monitoring includes checking that climbers are exhibiting the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sound falling techniques ○ Communication with others climbing in the same area ○ Partner checks or double checks on auto belays ○ Tying in correctly, clipping in correctly on auto belays ○ Conducting a retraction test of auto belays ○ Using equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions ○ Maintaining control of the brake strand of the rope when belaying

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Returning equipment to stations for next climbers use ○ Abiding by the rules of the facility
Auto belays	<p>Provide orientation as directed by the manufacturer and the key elements outlined in the Unit 3 Auto Belay and Top Rope Student Manual.</p> <p>CWI Instructors ask the climber to demonstrate use of the auto belay device, including taking a fall and being lowered as part of the orientation.</p>
Auto Belay check	<p>Prior to assuming a client understands how to safely use an auto belay, the CWI conducts an auto belay check. Elements of the check include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climber can clip into the device correctly ○ Climber conducts a retraction test ○ Climber conducts a self-check or double-check prior to climbing ○ Climber climbs within the area appropriate for the device ○ Climber does not redirect the lanyard ○ Climber is comfortable taking a fall ○ Climber lowers properly to the ground ○ Climber returns the lanyard to the floor anchor, leaving it appropriately set up for the next climber ○
Belay check	<p>Back up belay is provided with new belayers or where there is unknown skill.</p> <p>CWI Instructors ask climbers to demonstrate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set up for climbing using the figure eight rethreaded ○ Set up for belaying properly <p>Ensure climber and belayer make appropriate adjustments to manage weight difference. This could include the use of an anchor, weighted backpack, where the belayer stands and how they react to the fall, use of a braking resistor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct partner checks ○ Use commands to confirm readiness for climbing ○ Ensure climber climbs in the appropriate area for the rope they are on

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the belayer maintains control and is ready to place the rope in the brake position in case of a fall. ○ Ensure the climbers have the appropriate reaction to a fall. ○ Ensure lowering is done at the appropriate speed and consistency ○ Leaving the equipment ready for use by the next group of climbers
Knots	CWI instructors use a figure eight rethreaded with a safety knot or a minimum of 6 inches for a tail during instruction.
Knot at end of brake rope	Not required
Belay device	<p>All belay equipment should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation for use.</p> <p>If the instructor is not familiar with a piece of equipment and how it should be correctly used, the instructor should not allow that equipment's use.</p> <p>Some facilities have rules regarding which equipment may be used in their facility. Instructors are expected to follow the specific rules of the facility in which they are working.</p>
Belay technique	<p>Back up belay for new belayers or unknown belayers.</p> <p>Instructors may offer instruction with the following belay techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Waterfall ○ PBUS ○ Hand Over Hand <p>Pinch and Slide, Slip Slap Slide NOT recommended</p> <p>Tunnelling is not recommended for novice belayers</p>
Elements of Lead belay check	<p>See all the previous belay check elements and additionally confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climber demonstrates appropriate clipping stances ○ Climber demonstrates finding the appropriate clipping position relative to the bolt – i.e.: not reaching too high or passing the clips ○ Belayer smoothly feeds out rope in preparation of clipping and takes in slack as appropriate ○ Belayer provides a soft catch, allowing the appropriate fall length

Lead climbing – personal ropes	Some climbing facilities may allow users to bring in their personal climbing equipment including ropes. In this instance, the facility may recommend or enforce users to tie a knot at the end of the rope to ensure the belayer does not run out of rope.

CWI CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RENEWAL

Certifications expire after a three-year period. Renewal of certification can occur in the following ways:

- Retake the certification process in its entirety
- Participate in the renewal course
- Successful completion of required CEU’s provided and/or recognized by the CWA

The CEU pathway requires candidates to obtain CEU credit hours in the following distribution:

- Risk Management 0.5 CEU
- Education, Coaching 0.5 CEU
- Rescues and Technical Skills 0.5 CEU
- Conference, Volunteer contribution 0.5 CEU

Candidates who earn 1.5 CEU’s per certification cycle (3-year period) will maintain their certification. The 1.5 CEU credits may be earned in any combination of the four areas identified. CEU credit hours may be earned with attendance at approved conferences and/or committee contributions.

One CEU may be obtained by participation and successful completion of a **recognized ten contact hour course, conference or committee attendance** offered by a qualified Provider for CEU credential.

A CEU cannot be awarded for an event less than one hour in length or for a course or program which does not assess the candidates or receive a course evaluation.

RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

- The CWA Industry Practices
- The CWI Student Manuals – Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3
- The CWA Certification Program Policy Manual
- The CWA CWI Provider Program Manual
- Activity Planning Tool
- CWI Assessment Tools for each level of certification

NOTE: Employees should have awareness and training for any specific facility Emergency Action plan.



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