

The logo for the Climbing Wall Association (CWA) features the letters 'CWA' in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. Below this, the words 'CLIMBING WALL' and 'ASSOCIATION' are stacked in a smaller, white, all-caps sans-serif font, contained within a dark blue rounded rectangular background.

CWA

CLIMBING WALL
ASSOCIATION

Climbing Wall Association

WAH Certification Standards

April 2024

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WAH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM STANDARD

Responsible Position: CWA

Date Created: 2015

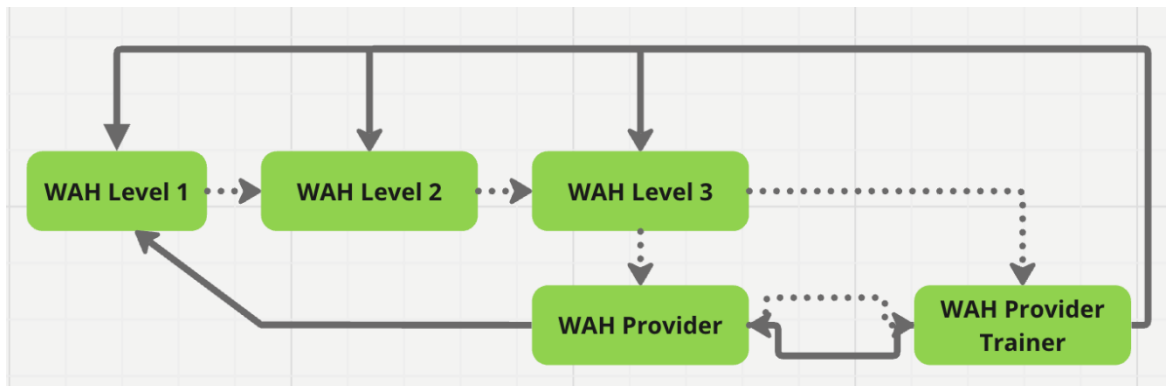
Date Last Revised: February 2024

STATEMENT OF STANDARD

The purpose of the Work at Height Certification Standard is to inform and educate workers in climbing facilities of industry standards for operations. To provide certification opportunities and assess the competency for the following areas when working at height:

- Risk management
- Technical skills
- Equipment inspection, use and care
- Rescues at height

WORK AT HEIGHT 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

The following description starts with the lowest level of certification and moves toward the most stringent level of certification.

WAH Level 1 Technicians

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older
- Complete the CWA Foundations course
- Can climb 5.9 on lead
- Can lift 50 pounds

WAH Level 2 Technicians

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older
- Completed WAH Level 1 assessment

WAH Level 3 Technicians and Provider

- Applicants must be 21 years of age or older
- Have completed WAH Level 2 assessment

- First Aid training of minimum 5.5-6 hours
- *Minimum of 200 hours of work within the supervisory and management arena in a climbing facility.*
- WAH Providers have completed and are certified CWA WAH Level 3 Technicians

WAH Provider Trainers

- Applicants to act as WAH Provider Trainer must be members of the WAH Certification Standards Committee
- Successfully completed WAH Provider Training

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of those involved in the WAH are outlined below. Note the inclusion of the facility employer responsibilities as outlined by regulatory requirements.

Common to every level of certification, responsibilities include:

- Act in accordance with the certification's scope.
- Maintain the requirements of certification as outlined in the Certification Program Policy Manual.
- Comply with WAH Certification Standard practices as outlined in the student manual.
- Proper use and care of PPE
- Uses approved access methods to work at height
- Function within one's scope of knowledge.
- Act professionally in the workplace.

WAH Level 1 Technicians

- Can be assigned work at height tasks.
- Assist in rescue activities as directed.
- Identify and avoid hazards.
- Follow the guidance of more experienced WAH workers.

WAH Level 2 Technicians

- Use effective communication skills when providing feedback and guidance.

- Demonstrate sound judgement.
- Identify and eliminate existing and predictable hazards with corrective measures.
- Enact a Rescue plan.
- Supervise work at height activities.

WAH Level 3 Technicians and Providers

- Cultivate a work environment that cultivates trust and learning.
- Can design and supervise the installation of the fall protection system for work at height in a climbing facility.
- Communicate with other climbing wall workers about the hazards, controls and required PPE equipment for working at height.
- Document work at height procedures including PPE, access methods, fall protection and rescues.
- Train and prepare WAH staff with skills and knowledge required to comply with the Work at Height Plan for your facility.
- Enroll prospective WAH Level 1 candidates in the online learning course.
- Pay the course fee on behalf of the candidates required at the time of enrollment.
- Answer candidates' questions regarding online content.
- Communicate the date, time and location of the in-person assessment.
- Conduct training and assessment of WAH Level 1 candidates.
- Deliver activities allowing WAH Level 1 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.

WAH Provider Trainers

- Assess alternative pathway and/or reciprocity requests for prospective WAH candidates.
- Maintain regular attendance at CWA WAH 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 WAH and WAH 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 WAH programs and offerings.

CWA WORK AT HEIGHT PROGRAM STANDARD

The Work-at-Height Standard is intended to meet the following:

- Assist the employer in identifying, evaluating, eliminating, or controlling the risks and hazards related to work-at-height in a climbing facility, to the extent possible, in a manner consistent with accepted industry practices and existing legal requirements.
- To be flexible in its implementation. In this regard, it is valuable to note that professional judgment is a principal element in any workplace. Although the Work-at-Height Standard represents an industry effort to outline responsible workplace practices, professional judgment may, in each circumstance, justify a deviation from any standard when a deviation is in the best interest of the worker's health, safety or well-being.
- To improve the efficiency and consistency of practice of appropriate access methods, fall protection, work positioning, material handling when there is a need to work at height and have use of both hands. These practices are assessed as technical skills in the Work at Height standard.
- This standard is intended for use by recreational climbing wall facilities, both sport climbing and bouldering facilities, where employees, or other persons, are exposed to fall hazards while working at height (for example: routesetting, performing inspections, etc.)

A comprehensive Work at Height Standard can be found through the CWA WAH resources. The following information is a short form of topics covered in the certification courses. Regulatory requirements from various sources can be found in the Annex of the comprehensive WAH Standard.

| AREA | CWA WAH PROGRAM STANDARD |
|---|---|
| Job Hazard Analysis | WAH Level 1 certificants follow a JHA WAH Level 2 and 3 certificants can prepare a JHA |
| Work at Height Plan or Fall Protection Plan | WAH Level 1 and certificants follow a Work at Height Plan WAH Level 3 certificants can prepare a Work at Height Plan |

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| Initial Access Front of wall | Attended Belay or Auto belay are recommended approaches to establishing suspension systems and fall arrest lines. |
| Initial Access Back of wall | Structure climbing may be used to access the work area. A fall arrest system or suspension must be always used. This includes a fixed line fall arrest or Y lanyards. |
| Work System or Suspension system | After initial access, suspension and fall arrest lines can be established, The most preferred system is a two rope system where one line is for ascending and descending and the other line is dedicated to a fall arrest device. Suspension systems are not designed for fall arrest. Suspension systems must always be under load during work. |
| Ladders | Ladders should be used as described in the instructions for use affixed to the ladder. CWA recommends additional stabilization methods are implemented when positioning the ladder on impact attenuating surfaces. |
| Personal Protection Equipment | The employer should provide or designate required PPE for WAH. Employer owned equipment must be maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition. PPE for WAH may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ascenders - Braking devices - Connectors - Descenders - Fall arrestors - Full Body Harnesses - Helmets - Lanyards - Lifelines PPE also includes eye protection, hearing protection and other equipment designed to protect the head, face, and extremities. All equipment should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for use. |

| Anchors | Anchor points should be above the highest anticipated work area. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|-------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--|---------|-----------|--|---------|-----------|
| | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Anchor Type</th> <th>Kilonewtons</th> <th>Pounds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fall Arrest (belay bar, structure)</td> <td>22.2kN</td> <td>5000 lbs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rescue (Lead Anchor, Belay Bar, structure)</td> <td>13.3 kN</td> <td>3000 lbs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suspension (Lead Anchor, Belay Bar, structure)</td> <td>13.3 kN</td> <td>3000 lbs.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Anchor Type | Kilonewtons | Pounds | Fall Arrest (belay bar, structure) | 22.2kN | 5000 lbs. | Rescue (Lead Anchor, Belay Bar, structure) | 13.3 kN | 3000 lbs. | Suspension (Lead Anchor, Belay Bar, structure) | 13.3 kN | 3000 lbs. |
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| Positioning systems | Positioning and progress systems may be used where a worker needs to be hands free. A separate system will be used for fall protection. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assisted Braking devices | If using an ABD, it is necessary to implement a catastrophic knot to prevent the release of the rope through the device while in suspension. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fall Arrest System | A fall arrest system should be in place when working at height in accordance with local regulatory requirements where a free fall exceeding 2 feet in USA or 0.6 meters in Canada may occur. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fall Arrest Harness | The use of a fall arrest harness is recommended when working with a fall arrest system. Ensure correct attachment of the fall arrest system to harness following manufacturer's recommendations. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Helmet | A climbing helmet is not adequate for use when working at height. A helmet which meets ANSI Z89.1, CSA Z94.1, EN 12492, EN 397 is acceptable. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Route Forerunning | Forerunning routes may be conducted as climbing activities are typically treated with climbing equipment. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rescues | Workers shall be trained in the rescue procedures, consistent with their role as prescribed by the employer. Employers are responsible for training staff to conduct rescues and enact an emergency action plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision for prompt rescues - Provisions for self-rescue - Assisted rescue | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rescue by emergency services - Rescue contact begins as soon as possible, but no later than within 6 minutes of fall - Back side of the wall should be considered a restricted space. Special considerations may need to be implemented. |
| Lifts | Workers on a mobile elevated work platform or lift must use the platform in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and local regulatory requirements. |

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

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RENEWAL

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

- Retake the WAH certification process in its entirety
- Participate in the WAH renewal course

Continued professional development and practice is recommended for certified Work at Height technicians. However, practical skills review by a certified WAH Provider or Provider Trainer is required to maintain certification.

RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS, AND TOOLS

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



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