

Cliffhanger Lead Climbing Policy & Assessment Criteria

Updated on 6 February 2024

Lead climbers must comply with the rules and requirements set out in Cliffhanger's Lead Climbing Policy. Cliffhanger may revoke the lead pass of any climber who is not complying with the Policy.

Climbers must complete and pass a lead assessment in order to lead climb at Cliffhanger.

Members of the general public must be 18 years of age in order to undertake a lead assessment for Lead Climbing and Lead Belaying. Under special circumstances, climbers under the age of 18 may attempt a Lead Belaying assessment with a parent or guardian present.

Members of the general public must be at least 11 years of age in order to undertake a lead assessment

General Public	Minimum Age	Lead Pass Type
Top Rope Belay	13	n/a
Lead Climb Only	11	2
Lead Climb & Belay	13	1
Bouldering	13	n/a
Bouldering (under supervision)	n/a	n/a
Within accredited coaching program		
Top Rope (supervised by coach)	11	n/a
Lead Climb & Belay (supervised by coach)	11	3

Equipment

The only devices permitted for use by lead climbers are: the **Petzl GriGri+**, **Camp Matik** and **Edelrid Eddy**.

Lead climbers must use a carabiner made to CE standard EN 12275 Type H (HMS), which must:

- Have a **locking mechanism**, and
- Be shaped suitably for the belay device.

Lead climbers must wear a **padded sit-harness** made to CE standard EN 12277 (Type C), which must also:

- Have **two tie-in points** and a **belay loop**.

Lead climbers must use a **single dynamic rope** made to CE standard 892, which must also:

- Be a **minimum thickness of 9.7 mm**, and
- Have a **minimum length of 40 m**.

Climbers may choose to utilise an Edelrid Ohm device (attached to the first bolt) where the climber weighs considerably more than the belayer.

All equipment must be in safe condition and be within the manufacturer's recommended lifespan.

Cliffhanger reserves the right to deem a lead climber's equipment unsuitable for lead climbing in the facility based on its age, condition or use.

Preparation

Lead climbers must select an appropriate wall, where:

- The wall is an intended lead climbing wall,
- The climber intends to follow a line of quickdraws in the appropriate order,
- There are no other climbers on the wall, and
- The quickdraws are not being utilised and are hanging correctly (i.e. not clipped back on themselves).

The entire length of **rope must be flaked** before climbing in order to check the quality of the rope and prevent knots.

The rope must be placed in a position that is safe and out of the way of other patrons. The best place is generally at the bottom of the climb, below the first quickdraw.

Both climbers must communicate effectively before and during climbing.

Buddy checks

Before each climb, both the climber and belayer must perform buddy checks on each other.

Climbers must check that the belayer's:

- Harness is correctly fitted,
- Rope is threaded through the belay device as per the manufacturer's instructions,
- Carabiner is connected to both the belay device and the belayer's belay loop correctly, and
- Carabiner is locked (checked by squeezing).

Belayers must check that the climber's:

- Harness is correctly fitted,
- Rope is tied in through both tie-in points on the harness,
- Figure-eight knot is tied correctly.

Climber

The climber must:

- Tie the rope through both tie-in points on their harness,
- Use a **rethreaded figure-eight knot** (with an appropriate stopper knot if wished),

- Follow the correct line of quickdraws for the climb,
- Clip all quickdraws in order,
- Clip each quickdraw from a safe position, where
 - The first quickdraw should be clipped as early as possible,
 - Subsequent quickdraws should be clipped at around chest height,
 - The climber must not intentionally runout any clips,
 - The climber must be in a stable position whilst holding the rope and making the clip,
- Not back-clip or Z-clip quickdraws,

- Safely manage their body position on the wall, including
 - Not placing their leg or heel between the rope and the wall, and
 - Not wrapping the rope around any part of the body,
- Not take unnecessarily large falls,
- Have an appropriate body position/reaction when falling
- Manage their body position appropriately when being lowered, by
 - Remaining seated in the harness with feet against the wall when close to the wall, and
 - Being aware of other climbers and patrons in the landing zone.

Once the climber is lowered to the ground, the rope:

- Must be removed, and
- Must not be used for top roping, regardless of where it was last clipped.

Climbers are not allowed to use their own quickdraws.

Belayer

The belayer must:

- Install the rope into the belay device as per the manufacturer's instructions,
- Correctly attach the locking carabiner through the belay device and belay loop of the harness,
- Lock the carabiner,

- Safely spot the climber until the first quickdraw has been clipped,

- Effectively manage the amount of rope slack in the system for the entirety of the climb, where
 - The belayer must keep some slack in the system so as to not impede the climber's progress,
 - The belayer must keep only the necessary amount of slack and take in any excess, and
 - In general the rope must go from the belay device towards the first quickdraw upwards and not below the height of the belay device (which would create a loop of slack),

- Position themselves in relation to the wall and the climber in a way that ensures the safety of themselves and surrounding patrons, for example
 - The belayer must stay within two metres of the bottom of the climb,
 - The belayer must move to the side of the wall (i.e. not stand directly below the climber) until the fourth quickdraw has been clipped, in order to move the rope out of the potential fall zone,
 - The belayer must ensure that no other patron is between themselves and the wall, and
 - The belayer must remain standing whilst belaying

- Give out slack to a climber in accordance with device instructions:
 - Always have at least one hand firmly around the brake rope,
 - To give slack slowly, the primary hand moves towards the device while gripping the rope, while the secondary hand pulls the rope out, or
 - To give slack rapidly (for GriGri+, Matik), whilst keeping all other fingers in a firm grip around the brake rope, the thumb of the primary hand temporarily disengages the camming mechanism by pressing on the necessary part of the belay device, while the secondary hand pulls the rope out. As soon as this is completed, the primary hand moves away from the device back into braking position.

- Be able to anticipate a fall and provide a safe catch to the climber,
- Lower the climber slowly and safely in accordance with the device instructions, where
 - The primary hand remains on the brake rope at all time,
 - The secondary hand pulls gently the device handle as required,
 - The belayer is aware of the climber's position at all times, and
 - The belayer is aware of other climbers/patrons in the landing zone.