

AMC BCMC Community Crag Day Guide

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Thank you for volunteering to be a Community Crag Day Leader for the AMC Boston Chapter Mountaineering Committee. The information below contains requirements and recommendations for running a smooth activity. This document is part of the [Boston Chapter Mountaineering Committee Activity Leader Requirements](#).

This is a living document, intended to be improved and updated over time. Program leaders should feel free to recommend changes at any time. Please email suggested changes to secretary@amcbostonclimbers.com.

- ✓ Confirm activity date/time/meeting location
- ✓ Make [AMC Outdoor Connector](#) posting, screen participants, delegate tasks
- ✓ Checkout gear bags /crashpads/medkits from BCMC gear manager (Steve & Frannie atm)
- ✓ Send activity reminder email
- ✓ Run activity (see details below for activity types, and leadership requirements for each)
- ✓ Follow up & gear bag return

Locations & Activity Types* (Please note that Rattlesnake Rocks & Blue Hills do not allow groups; Farley and Merriam Woods should also be avoided due to access concerns.)

☐ **Bouldering Day**

- ☐ This includes any form of bouldering and requires crash pads for gear (BCMC has two).
- ☐ Participants must bring their own shoes and ideally have bouldered indoors (but not required).
- ☐ *Examples: Lynn Woods, The Fells, Hammond Pond, Lincoln Woods*

☐ **Top Rope Crag Day**

- ☐ This includes any form of top rope climbing with top access. No lead/trad climbing is required.
- ☐ The gear required for this type of climbing is available in the BCMC gear bags.
- ☐ Participants must be competent in top rope belaying and climbing and bring their own shoes, helmets, harnesses, and belay devices (such as an ATC, Gri-Gi, Jul, etc).
- ☐ *Examples: Waitts Mountain, Hammond Pond, Quincy Quarries, College Rock, Den Rock*

☐ **Sport Crag Day**

- ☐ This includes any form of sport climbing and may include top roping.
- ☐ Some of the gear required for this type of climbing is available in the BCMC gear bags.
- ☐ Participants must be competent climbers and top rope belayers (lead belay preferred).
- ☐ Participants must bring their own shoes, helmets, harnesses, belay devices (such as an ATC, Gri-Gi, Jul, etc). Programs will use BCMC quickdraws and sport anchor materials (slings and locking carabiners).
- ☐ *Examples: Rumney, Hanging Mountain, Sunbowl*

☐ **Ice Crag Day**

- ☐ This includes any form of top rope ice climbing with top access.
- ☐ The BCMC gear bags contain the equipment that can be used to set up top rope anchors. Activity leaders can also access Ice Program/BCMC ice tools for participants if needed.
- ☐ Participants must be competent climbers and top rope belayers with a tube style device.

- ☐ Participants must bring their own helmets, harnesses, mountaineering boots, crampons, tube style belay devices, and cold-weather gear.
- ☐ *Examples: Frankenstein, Champney Falls, Texaco*
- ☐ *BCMC approval is required for locations with terrain that require additional skills such as lowering from the top, rappelling, etc. like Acadia or Crow Hill. For programs at Rumney, leaders must carry White Mountain National Forest cards, which they can obtain from the BCMC.*

Crag Day Activity Organization (Planning, Communication, Delivery, Reporting):

1. **1-2 Months Before:** Confirm and commit to the date/time/location with your co-leaders. If you are the approved activity leader, check in with any Leader In Training (LIT) candidates, delegating tasks from this document and mentor them through leading the day. Leaders should ensure all tasks are completed. Some things to consider include but are not limited to:
 - Choose a crag with terrain considerations: How will you set up and clean anchors? Are falls safe? Is there risk of loose rock / rock falls? Participant considerations: Does it have routes with a variety of grades? How long is the approach? Is it popular / does it get crowded?
 - Group management: How many participants can safely join given the # of leaders? How many routes to put up? What prerequisites do participants need and what supervision will be needed? What is each leader responsible for on the day of?
 - Rain plan: Back up location that may be drier? Alternate date?
 - Emergency: Is there good cell reception? How far is the nearest hospital?
2. **1-2 Months Before:** Post the activity on the [AMC Outdoor Connector](#) page. Set appropriate guidelines for gear, number of attendees, and other requirements according to the crag day type as listed above. Generally posts may include a trip date, meeting time, parking information and location, carpooling information, schedule for the day, skill prerequisites, required gear, expectations from participants, etc.
 - Registration: you need to decide whether you want participants to register through Outdoor Connector or a separate registration link. The benefit of going through Outdoor Connector is that all participants will sign the waiver online, the disadvantages are that participants must register an account with AMC (they do not need to be AMC members) and you cannot set custom screening questions. You can also add a custom google form if you'd like to ask questions there.
 - Review registrations periodically by logging in to the Outdoor Connector site to approve, reject, or waitlist the applications. Screen participants, and if any participants do not meet trip prerequisites, respectfully explain to them and ask them to return for future events instead.
 - Please note you cannot edit a post after you have sent it in for approval, so triple-check that all information is correct. Make sure to include any leaders or leaders in training in the listing!
 - Optional - Join the [AMC Boston Chapter Climbing Community](#) Facebook Group and post the Outdoor Connector link. Make a Canva or other post for our [Instagram page](#) and share it.
3. **1 - 2 Weeks Before:** Reach out to the [BCMC Gear Master](#) to check out the gear bags or crash pads as needed. To accommodate around 8-10 people, you should have 2 gear bags and 4 ropes, or 2 crash pads.
4. **A Few Days Before:** Send out a reminder email with all relevant information, such as date/time/location/waiver/fee, to those who signed up in Outdoor Connector (See example below).

Funds are available for Community Crag Days if you'd like to buy snacks or something! Confirm the budget with the BCMC Treasurer. Use this [AMC Expense Form](#) for any appropriate reimbursements. Print out the [waiver](#) if you didn't have participants fill out the electronic waiver thru Outdoor Connector.

5. **Day of Activity:** Show up 30+ minutes early to set up. When the activity starts, gather folks to do introductions, talk about the AMC and any upcoming programming, set ground rules, and communicate the schedule for the day. Keep track of gear and attendance with the sign-in sheet or a head count.
 - Optional - Have participants sign the [photo release](#) and take a group photo. Post it if you'd like on the BCMC Facebook page, or Instagram and tag @amcbostonclimbers.
 - In case of an emergency for all injuries: fill out an [Incident Report](#). For disabling injury or life threatening situations: follow the [Crisis Communication Plan](#) (call 911 and notify chapter chair).
6. **After the Activity:** Clean, dry, and organize all gear. Return the gear bags and follow up as needed. Were there issues with the location or participants? Any participants feedback? Email the BCMC, attend a BCMC meeting, or otherwise relay important information to the pertinent BCMC member.

Reminder Email Sample (by Amber C)

Hi Everyone,

We are excited to climb with you later this week at Hammond Pond! The current weather is supposed to be warm and sunny, so summer is near. We will meet at the mall parking lot (highlighted in yellow below) at Hammond Pond at 5:00 pm and climb the lower wall in Boston Rocks/ Mountain Project (circled in red below). If you know you are running a few minutes late, send us an email or text.

Personal Gear List: Helmet, Harness, Belay Device, Climbing Shoes, Snacks, Water, Sunscreen, Bug Spray, and Stoke

We do have a waitlist for this activity, so if you can no longer attend, please let us know.

Thanks, and let us know if you have any questions,

AAA and BBB

Leader Skill Checklist: Crag Day Activity Organization

- ☐ Coordinate logistics as stated in the best practices section above
- ☐ Make clearly worded Outdoor Connector posts, ensure all necessary information is given in the post
- ☐ Select crags and routes appropriate for participants' skill level including screening participants, this includes making sure they know how to belay, have climbed outdoors, have the appropriate gear, etc.
- ☐ Recognize the impacts of large groups and ensure positive community relations are maintained e.g.
 - ☐ Ensuring all participants pay the parking and/or entrance fees (if any), carpooling when possible
 - ☐ Follow the local policies around guided groups, don't hog routes or monopolize parking areas
 - ☐ Follow [Leave-No-Trace](#) protocols and understand climbing ethics and norms for the location
- ☐ Be accurate in assessing your own abilities and take feedback from other leaders and participants
- ☐ Demonstrate effective group management and effectively mentor participants and leaders in training

- ☐ Consider safety, weather, risk management, and evac needs, and explain considerations to participants
- ☐ Act as an ambassador of the AMC by creating a positive and inclusive environment for newer climbers, emphasizing physical and emotional safety

Safety and Skills Checklists: This material is intended as a set of general guidelines for leading safe and effective programs. It is not exhaustive, is not to be seen as a rigid standard of practice, and is not a substitute for leader proficiency in the relevant subject areas. Leaders are expected to use their own knowledge, judgment, and discretion in guiding safe and effective programs.

Bouldering Crag Days

Safety Considerations

1. Every portion of the bouldering route should have a safe fall directly on the crash pad
2. No bouldering on wet and/or loose rock
3. No high-ball bouldering (boulders taller than 12 feet from the surface of the crash pad)

Activity Leader Skill Checklist: Bouldering

- ☐ Knowledge of local bouldering areas/climbs that are suitable for participants with all level of experience
- ☐ Able to identify walk-offs and safe down-climbs
- ☐ Safely pad climbs based on terrain and consequences
- ☐ Safely spot climbers and help others when appropriate, all climbers must have a spotter before climbing
- ☐ Ensures participants follow instructions, communicate injuries, check crash pads and spot safely

Top Rope Crag Days

Safety Considerations:

1. Build SERENE (Strong, Equalized, Redundant, Efficient, No Extension) anchors:
 - a. For bolted anchors: bolts should have minimal to no amount of rust, and the rock around the bolts should be part of the cliff (monolithic) and not loose
 - b. For natural anchors (tree or rocks): The tree should be alive, the diameter of the tree should be ≥ 6 inches, the tree base should not have any weaknesses, the rock should be able to hold body weight, and the rock/tree structure should not allow cutting of the anchor material
2. Leaders, LITs, and participants must be tethered to a closed rope system (rope ends are knotted, blocked, or anchored) when approaching the cliff edge (≤ 6 ft from the cliff edge)
3. The master point of the anchor should be extended such that the carabiners and the climbing rope do not rub over the cliff edge. If unavoidable, soft material may be used under the rope for padding
4. Ensure activity leaders, LITs, and participants wear climbing helmets at all times when at the crag
5. Group management
 - a. Suggest keeping overall group size at each wall to 10 people, including activity leaders.
 - b. For smaller crags, split the overall group into smaller groups to avoid overcrowding.
 - c. For Gym to Crag type Crag Days, 4 leaders/LIT is ideal where 2 leaders can setup / clean routes, 1-2 leaders can be on the ground watching over participants.
6. Suggested best practices for Top Rope Crag Days:

- a. Only activity leaders will lead belay, climb, and set and clean anchors
- b. All participants will belay with a leader on back up belay for first few climbs, until leader feels confident in their belay and lowering techniques
- c. Participants should not belay leader for cleaning anchor

Activity Leader Skill Checklist: Top-Rope Climbing

- ☐ Able to inspect safety equipment for wear and identify unsafe equipment
- ☐ Confidently and independently build SERENE top rope anchors from bolts or natural features such as trees or rocks while maintaining safety from a top access, be able to explain what SERENE means
- ☐ Demonstrate knots, including a bowline, clove hitch, figure 8 on a bight, and girth hitch
- ☐ Model top rope safety norms and enforce them for participants

Sport Climbing Crag Days

Safety Considerations (All top-rope safety considerations and skill requirements apply):

1. Choose appropriate climbs by understanding the terrain and overall safety:
 - a. No climbing on wet and/or loose rock
 - b. Ensure that the length of the rope is appropriate for the route being climbed
 - c. Carry a sufficient number of quickdraws to safely finish the route (no bolt skipping allowed)
 - d. Use a stick clip to clip the first bolt at the beginning of the route when needed and possible.
 - e. Avoid routes where a most likely fall has a chance of hitting a ledge or a sharp rock
2. Always set up a top rope through a SERENE (self-equalizing quad or a pre-equalized two-point) anchor (the quickdraw anchor is NOT a SERENE anchor as it is never equalized) on two bolts with lockers
3. Anchors should be cleaned while on belay with a weight-tested personal tether as a backup
4. The rope should be supported by two bolts at all times while performing the anchor cleaning technique
5. Use alpine draws and/or extend the anchors appropriately to minimize the rope rubbing on a sharp edge
6. Rumney Specific Crag Considerations:
 - i. Jimmy Cliff Left or Right: easy to keep group together; variety with moderates. Long approach.
 - ii. Venus wall: nice alcove that you can have to yourselves. Moderate approach.
 - iii. Buffalo Corral / Northwest Territories: park at Buffalo lot, generally less busy. Long approach.
 - iv. Parking Lot / Meadow: good variety of climbs however moderates are somewhat spread out. Harder to keep the group together. Easy approach.

Activity Leader Skill Checklist: Sport Climbing

- ☐ Confidently lead sport climbs, understand clipping stances, fall risks at different heights, etc.
- ☐ Confidently build quick draw, quad, or other anchors managing for rope drag and wear over rock edges
- ☐ Safely model lead belay skills, managing for weight differences, and other factors
- ☐ Demonstrate proper use of a stick clip and understand when it is necessary
- ☐ Clean sport anchors with various types of lowering hardware: quick links, ram's horns, rappel rings, small chains, and know how to do this safely while remaining on belay until ready to lower
- ☐ Able to inspect safety equipment for wear and identify unsafe equipment
- ☐ Model sport cragging safety norms and enforce them for participants

Ice Climbing Crag Days

Critical Safety Considerations (All top-rope safety considerations and skill requirements apply):

1. Avoid climbing in severe weather conditions, such as:
 - a. Active snowstorms or whiteout conditions
 - b. High winds (≥ 25 mph)
 - c. Warm weather ($\geq 45^{\circ}\text{F}$) that could compromise the condition of the ice
 - d. Cold weather ($\leq 0^{\circ}\text{F}$) that could compromise participants ability to stay warm
2. Choose, to the best of your ability, a crag that has well-bonded ice in good climbing condition ([NEClimbs](#) is a helpful resource for watching this.)
3. Be prepared to help participants manage the cold-- it is recommended that activity leaders bring additional safety gear with them such as emergency blankets, hand warmers, a stove/pot, etc.

Activity Leader Skill Checklist: Ice Climbing

- ☐ Be an experienced winter activity participant and have your cold systems dialed; know how to help others manage their temperature throughout the day. This could include:
 - ☐ Asking participants if they are getting too warm on the approach to the crag
 - ☐ Reminding individuals to eat and drink over the course of the day
 - ☐ Modeling adding and removing layers before and after climbing and hiking
 - ☐ Suggesting movements for warming up (jumping jacks, squats, penguin arms)
- ☐ Identify and select routes that have good-quality ice
- ☐ If applicable to the climbing area and crag day activity leader comfort level, understand where ice screws may be helpful:
 - ☐ Identify where to place top rope route directional screws
 - ☐ Know how to build safe ice anchors with screws
- ☐ Enable the group to manage icefall hazards by:
 - ☐ Ensuring participants wear helmets at all times
 - ☐ Identify safe spots for belayers where possible
 - ☐ Tell participants to yell “ICE” when they break something off the route
- ☐ Maintain a positive and inclusive environment such that participants feel empowered to ask for help
- ☐ Model good cragging etiquette and enforce them for participants. For example, not climbing under routes, or too close to others, and keeping gear organized and away from the trail.