



ANSI/PRCA 1.0-.3 - 2014 Ropes Challenge Course Installation, Operation & Training Standards

Part 1.0 Glossary of Terms for Ropes Challenge Courses

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This American National Standard is subject to revision by the PRCA Standards Committee at any time. The standard must at a minimum be reviewed every five years, revised, reaffirmed or withdrawn. The standard is under continuous review and a form for your comments is included at the end of each section. Comments received will be reviewed and receive careful consideration by the Standards Committee at least annually. The Committee will respond in writing to all comments received after consideration.



FOREWORD

(This foreword is not part of American National Standard PRCA 1.0-.3:2014)

This code/standard was developed by industry professionals for the ropes challenge course industry under the procedures of the American National Standards Institute by the accredited Standards Committee of the Professional Ropes Course Association, PRCA 1.0-.3. The Secretariat of the Standard Committee is held by the Professional Ropes Course Association.

The PRCA 1.0-.3 committee was organized in December 2005 in response to an increasing call from within the industry for self-regulation and a formalized American National Standard. Other industry standards were reviewed and applicable portions have been adapted specifically for the use of the ropes challenge course industry, including, but not limited to: Occupational Safety & Health Act (OSHA), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Cordage Institute (CI) and others as cited. Additionally, extensive efforts have been made to harmonize with accepted general standards, guidelines, and international and proposed international standards, including but not limited to, Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA), Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT), Project Adventure (PA), Boy Scouts of America (BSA C.O.P.E.), American Camping Association (ACA), European Ropes Course Association (ERCA), European Committee for Standardization (CEN or EN) specifically EN 15567-1:2007 and EN15567-3:2008 (See ANNEX A), Standards Australia (AS) specifically DR 07324 (See ANNEX A), Australia Quality Training Framework, Adventure Activity Standards, and Australian National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards and others.

This standard was adopted by the committee on April 26, 2012 and was approved as an American National Standard on March 3, 2014.

Though designed with the products generally available in the United States, these practices may be applied worldwide.

The PRCA does not approve, evaluate or certify testing laboratories.

The PRCA takes no position regarding the validity of any patent rights asserted in connection with and product or material mentioned in this standard. Users of this standard are advised to determine the validity of any patent rights, infringement upon those rights is strictly the users' own responsibility.

The Standard Management Committee will continue to monitor ropes challenge course safety performance, provide interpretations and clarifications of the intent of these requirements. Request for interpretations must be submitted in writing to the PRCA at 6260 E. Riverside Blvd. #104, Rockford, Illinois 61111 or may be faxed to: 815-637-2964.

This standard is under review on a continual maintenance basis and is subject to revision at any time by the Standard Management Committee (SMC). The SMC has adopted a program for regular review, publication of addenda, revisions and interpretations, procedures for timely consensus action on requests to change any portion of the standard. At a minimum this standard shall be reviewed and revised every five years, or must be reaffirmed or withdrawn. Suggestions for improvement of this standard or the development of additional standards are welcome. Your comments for revisions of this standard, or any part thereof, must be addressed to PRCA headquarters utilizing the form located on the last page of this section of the code or available at www.prcainfo.org. Your comments will receive careful consideration of the committees at regularly scheduled meetings, and a written response will be forwarded in accordance with the committee guidelines. If you feel that your comment(s) did not receive a fair hearing you must immediately (within 30 days) make your views known in writing to the PRCA Board of Directors.

It is intended that this standard be utilized in conjunction with competent design, accurate fabrication, appropriate operational procedures and adequate supervision during construction and use. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein, however the PRCA, the Standard Committee and their members do not assume responsibility for errors or omissions in the standard, nor for designs, plans, construction or operations prepared from it. Those using this standard assume all liability arising from its use.

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This Standard, PRCA 1.0-.3:2014 Ropes Challenge Course Installation Operation and Training Standard is divided into the following parts:
Part 1.0 Glossary of Terms for Ropes Challenge Courses
Part 1.1 Safety, Testing and Inspection Requirements for Installation, Systems, Components and Equipment for Ropes Challenge Courses
Part 1.2 Operational Standards for Ropes Challenge Courses
Part 1.3 Staff Training, Evaluation & Training for Ropes Challenge Courses

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INTRODUCTION

In general rope challenge courses may be used for experiential education, recreational, environmental education/awareness, training, therapeutic or other authorized purposes.

Rope challenge course activities involve physical activity and have risks and hazards that should only be undertaken by persons who are physically and mentally capable of meeting the safety and other general requirements of the operator of the course.

Rope challenge courses have inherent risks that although minimized and /or managed through the hierarchy of control by the operator cannot be eliminated altogether.

Management of risks by operators should be achieved through a combination of design, trained supervision, training, participant information, instruction, etc.

Safety devices, components, systems, subsystems and procedures are designed to avoid and/or minimize the consequences of falls and/or collisions,

Operators/employers should take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of users and/or workers. Risk assessments should be utilized to determine the degree of risk in a particular action, job, and facility and balance this against the time, difficulty, cost, benefit and additional risk involved in implementing measures to control, avoid or minimize the risk.

The Professional Ropes Course Association takes no position respecting the validity of any patent rights asserted in connection with items, materials or processes mentioned in this standard. Standard users are specifically advised that the determinations of the validity of any such patent rights, and the risk of infringement upon such rights, are entirely their own responsibility.

Part 1.0: Glossary of Terms for Ropes Challenge Courses

STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION

(Not part of American National Standard PRCA 1.0-3:2014)

I. Scope

This Standard establishes safety requirements for the design, manufacture, performance, construction, inspection, maintenance, removal from service, qualification, instruction, training, use and operation of components, sub-systems, systems and courses utilized by the ropes challenge course industry as indicated in Section IV Application.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard is to provide a uniform acceptable level of performance requirements on ropes challenge courses by delineating a system of specifications, safety and performance criteria and principles that:

- a) Reflect the current state-of-the-art in ropes challenge course equipment, equipment design, adequate safety factors, safety features, maintenance of equipment and industry accepted level of safe usage.
- b) Provide guidelines that can be used for course evaluations, insurance criteria, and professional development
- c) Provide a construction, inspection, operations and training resource for properly trained professionals
- d) Serve as a technical resource for licensed professional engineers, architects, arborist, designers and manufacturers of challenge course related materials and equipment.
- e) Serve as a guide for governmental regulatory agencies, federal, state and local, in drafting their regulations and may be adopted in whole or in part.

Such an organization of guidelines with these stated objectives constitutes a safety code.

III. Application

This Standard is intended to apply to all employees/employers, both public and private institutions engaged in any design, manufacture, installation, maintenance, inspection, operation, facilitation/programming, training, certification or other facet of the ropes challenge course industry. All apparatus specifically designed, engineered, manufactured, constructed, installed, and/or utilized by individuals or teams, which through high or low, non-spotted, spotted or belayed activities, under trained facilitated supervision, guided or self-guided, are utilized as elements of experiential learning programs / curriculums and/or as adventure/ challenge recreational components or courses, or ecotourism programs, indoors or outdoors. Examples of indoors and/or outdoors permanent, temporary and/or mobile ropes challenge courses apparatus utilized in the industry and covered under this Standard include but are not limited to: the assembly of any such approved products as outlined within when used for the construction of a course or action/activity system, portable and fixed low ropes challenge course elements, high ropes challenge course elements, stand alone challenge elements, zip lines, canopy tours, adventure courses and any climbing walls and climbing structures that are components of a ropes challenge course.

Situational modifications in response to personnel emergencies may be required and this standard is not intended to limit the options available to professional emergency responders.

E.II It is recognized that certain dangers and risks are inherent in ropes challenge courses and elements of this type and their operation. It is also recognized that inherent and other risks or dangers exist for those who utilize, are in the process of approaching, climbing, attaching, detaching, and otherwise involved in the use of a ropes challenge course This standard is intended to result in ropes challenge courses that are designed, constructed, operated, inspected and maintained in such a manner to help reduce danger and risk exposure to participants and operational and maintenance personnel. The standard also intends to encourage improvements in efficiency, development, and progress consistent with the objectives.

E.III NOTE: In this Standard the terms "ropes challenge course" or "course" or the plural forms shall be intended to include all forms and types of ropes challenge courses, adventure courses, canopy tours, and zip line tours, unless otherwise specified.