



UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
17800 Camp Williams Road
Riverton, Utah 84065-4999

UT-AGCW-O

20 April 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Rappel Tower SOP

Purpose: Ensure the safe and professional operation of the rappel tower (RT).

Note: This SOP is in chronological order from the scheduling of an event to the closing inspection of the facility and key turn-in. All rappel tower personnel will read and follow the SOP. The rappel tower will be operated by personnel from the Utah National Guard Counterdrug State Plan (CD), Recruiting and Retention (RR), and Range Control (RC).

1. Scheduling Events: RFMSS is the only authorized scheduling mechanism for the rappel tower. Unscheduled units/groups may not use the rappel tower. No keys will be issued to unscheduled groups. No exceptions.

2. Scheduling through CD:

a. CD personnel may only staff rappel events that support continuing CD operations. CD personnel will support events and activities including church summer camps, ROTC and JROTC summer camps, community coalition activities, recruiting based operations, and law enforcement support. RC and RR rappel teams will support all other military training events.

b. Organizations scheduled through CD do not pay any operational fees associated with the use of the rappel tower.

c. To Schedule a CD sponsored rappel event: Send the request and indemnification agreement to cdut@ut.ngb.army.mil.

3. Scheduling through Army Garrison Camp Williams – Operations:

a. To schedule a rappel event with RC: Call 801-878-5533

b. Process copies of all agreements and insurance coverage through AGCW-O one calendar week prior to the scheduled event

c. An organizational representative must attend the Range Control meeting the Wednesday prior to the event for final coordination. This meeting is every Wednesday at 1400hrs

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
17800 Camp Williams Road
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d. Once initial scheduling takes place, RC will coordinate with the Rappel Tower NCOIC to verify that the event will be adequately supported with qualified tower operators

e. Rappel Tower NCOIC and RC will conduct weekly coordination to ensure all rappel events are adequately staffed

(1) Each event will have a minimum of three Camp Williams certified rappel masters/tower operators; Soldiers are identified annually by memorandum. RC will maintain a copy of the memorandum.

4. Duties and Responsibilities:

a. RT NCOIC / Rappel Safety Officer (RSO):

(1) Ensures overall operational safety

(2) Ensures all participants receive the required safety briefing

(3) Reviews equipment inspection checklist and rope log (DA5752-R)

(4) Supervises all rappelling operations

(5) Maintains/demonstrates proficiency on applicable rappel master tasks and is certified to serve in the position

(6) Ensures composite risk management is completed prior to each rappelling event

(7) Ensures personnel are properly trained and supervised for belay procedures

(8) Is a graduate of one of the following civilian or military certification courses: Rappel Master Instructor Course, Air-assault Course, or Basic Military Mountaineering Course

(9) Ensures group leaders are familiar with the emergency response procedures

b. Rappel Lane NCO:

(1) Ensures participants adhere to proper safety procedures

(2) Directs and ensures proper hookup of participants

(3) Issues commands and maintains eye contact with the person on rappel

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
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- (4) Must attend annual rappel lane operator course
- (5) The Rappel Lane NCO must have training on the following subjects
 - (a) Responsibilities and safety requirements
 - (b) Inspection and maintenance of equipment
 - (c) Identification of proper anchor points and knots
 - (d) Identification of safe and unsafe hookups
 - (e) Establishing a rappel lane
 - (f) Inspection of rappel seat
 - (g) Coaching techniques
 - (h) Rappel procedures and emergency procedures

5. Operational Preparation:

- a. The RT NCOIC will check out, maintain and return the RT key and radio
- b. RT NCOIC and support personnel will assemble one half hour prior to RT events. When all personnel are present, the RT NCOIC briefs the events of the day and issues assignments.
- c. Equipment Storage Facility:
 - (1) The storage facility is located at the southeast corner of the RT.
 - (2) Storage facility access is limited to cadre and support personnel.
 - (3) A key lock will secure the storage facility.
 - (4) The storage facility will contain a first aid/medic bag, a backboard, gloves, ropes, safety leashes, extra carabineers, extra descenders, and 15 rappel kits.
- d. The RT NCOIC will determine how many kits to issue.
 - (1) A basic issue of 15 kits will be standard.
 - (2) A kit consists of a harness, carabineer, and figure-8 descender.

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
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(3) The harness donning and inspection point provides hooks for each kit.

e. The Harness Donning and Inspection Point is on the Southern side of the tower.

f. RT NCOIC ensures inspection of all ropes and equipment, and accounts for all equipment prior to an event. Ensuring all equipment is serviceable and **SAFE**.

g. The RT NCOIC and Lane NCOs will inspect the tower to ensure it is operationally **SAFE** and free of any obstructions or hazards.

h. Lane NCOs prepare and tie ropes using at least one primary and one secondary anchor point, the RT NCOIC will check each lane to ensure safety. Each Lane NCO will then rappel his lane looking for obstructions, or other possible hazards.

i. Belay Safety Area:

(1) The RT NCOIC and Lane NCOs should ensure the belay safety area is free from obstacles and obstructions.

(2) RT personnel will groom the rubber medium at the base of the tower before each event.

j. The RT NCOIC will ensure the Latrine is open, clean, and free of hazards

6. Operations and Safety:

a. Camp Williams is the sole certification source for Rappel Masters using the Rappel Tower. Only Rappel Masters certified by Camp Williams are allowed to run the Rappel tower, no exceptions.

(1) If civilians are rappelling, only Rappel Masters from CD, RC and RR are allowed to run the Rappel Tower. Camp Williams certified Rappel Masters who do not work for CD, RC and RR are only allowed to support rappelling events for military units. No exceptions.

b. All civilian vehicles will be parked outside the fenced area of the compound with the exception of those vehicles driven by the rappel masters.

(1) RT NCOIC vehicle and those driven by support personnel will be parked north of the rappel tower in the unlikely event that they are needed to evacuate injured personnel.

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
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c. The RT NCOIC will make contact with and direct the event coordinator to the bleacher area, while getting an accurate count of all participants. The RT NCOIC should also discretely identify participants with special needs.

d. The RT NCOIC will welcome the group, introduce cadre and support personnel, and identify their responsibilities.

e. The RT NCOIC will then explain the following facility locations:

(1) Harness donning and Inspection Point

(2) Wall Side of tower

(3) Free hang side of tower

(4) Belay, Safety, and Restricted areas

(5) Latrine

f. The RT NCOIC or support personnel will summarize the following:

(1) Belay procedures

(a) Positioned approximately 1 to 2 paces from the natural hang of the rope

(b) Ground safety and lane NCOs will supervise all belay operations

(c) Ensure there is 8 to 10 feet of rope on the ground after lane is tied off

(d) Loosely hold the rappel rope with both hands to avoid interference with the person on rappel while maintaining control should the person on rappel fall.

(e) Immediately stops the person on rappel by pulling downward on the rappel ropes if the person on rappel shouts, "**FALLING,**" or loses control of his brake hand during descent.

(f) Maintain constant visual contact with person of rappel.

(2) Safety Briefing

(a) All participants must tuck in loose fitting shirts/blouses.

(b) Keep hair secured and pockets emptied

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
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(c) Only enter the tower when instructed by ground safety. (Gloves worn and harness properly inspected)

(d) No running or horseplay within the training area

(e) Do not move from the stand by position (Top Stair) until so instructed by a lane NCO.

(f) No one will lean over railing/edge, spit or throw anything off the tower.

(g) Once participants step on the tower deck, a Rappel Master/Lane NCO will immediately gain positive control by grasping the descender or carabineer of the participant.

(h) Rappel Master or Lane NCO will inspect all hook-ups before participant approaches the edge.

(i) Trade out equipment with the next participant in line or turn in equipment to the Equipment Storage Facility.

(j) Our harnesses and equipment are the only authorized equipment for civilian use.

(3) Rappelling is a controlled decent

(a) The participant will make a minimum of three controlled stops in order to maintain proper control and safety.

(b) Golden rule: do not let go of the rope with the brake hand

g. The Lane NCOs will demonstrate the following:

(1) Proper commands

(2) Proper hand positions and rope control

(3) Proper body position

(4) Controlled descent

(5) Uncontrolled Descent (Falling)

(6) Regaining control

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
HEADQUARTERS CAMP W.G. WILLIAMS
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(7) Procedures to get off the rope

h. RT personnel will inspect for proper harness fit prior to entering the tower. No less than two inches of webbing will protrude from each adjustment position. Position the harness above the hips and ensure a snug fit to the body.

7. Post Operations:

a. RT NCOIC completes Range Control paper work with event coordinator to include number of personnel trained, open and closing times.

b. RT personnel will secure and get accountability of all kits issued. Secure all kits in the equipment storage facility.

c. Lane NCOs/Rappel Masters

(1) Will untie and drop all ropes, sounding off with "Rope."

(2) Secure carabineers and carry them to the equipment storage facility.

(3) Inspect and coil ropes. Ropes will be retired after five major falls or at the discretion of rappel master.

(4) All falls will be reported to RT-NCOIC/RC and recorded in the rope log and equipment inspection lists

(5) Enters data into the rope log (DA 5752-R) and equipment inspection lists

d. RT NCOIC will confirm accountability of equipment, secure latrine, and inspect facilities.

e. RT NCOIC will debrief RT personnel (AAR), secure facility, return key and paper work to Range Control.

f. CD will ensure completion of the mission request form for each CD sponsored event, provide a detailed AAR, provide a participant count, enter appropriate information into CMIS, and log indemnification and risk assessment.

8. RT Code of Conduct:

a. All personnel will be in proper uniform for all events in accordance with current command guidance.

b. All personnel will refrain from alcoholic beverages 12 hours prior to an event.

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
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c. Fraternizing, exchanging phone numbers or "making arrangements" are grounds for termination.

d. All personnel will get 8 hours of sleep before the event, enabling peak performance.

e. All personnel will refrain from using derogatory or colorful language (no swearing).

f. GSA vehicles are for official use only. There are no exceptions.

g. All personnel will portray a positive, motivated and professional example.

h. "Hot Dogging" and horseplay will not be tolerated.

i. Confrontation or disagreements among RT personnel in the presence of any group or individual participant will not be tolerated. Discuss issues, confrontation, and disagreements during the AAR.

j. Avoid confrontation between RT personnel and participants.

9. Concerns and Closing Remarks:

a. RT NCOIC determines duty days and hours for RT personnel.

b. The RT NCOIC will make the decision to cancel or postpone an event for the following reasons:

(1) If weather conditions become **UNSAFE, as determined by the onsite RT-NCOIC/RSO**

(2) If the group is significantly late

(3) If there are not enough personnel to properly support the event

c. The RT NCOIC will make the final determination whether or not participants will rappel.

(1) The following items may excuse an individual from participation:

(a) Physical or mental limitations

(b) Sprained, broken or missing limbs

UTAH NATIONAL GUARD
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(c) Pregnancy

(d) Weight or size of an individual

(e) Inability or disregard to follow instructions

d. A copy of this SOP will be present along with TC 21-24 "Rappelling" in the equipment storage facility.

e. Make sure all RT personnel are trained and ready.

(1) RT personnel will comply with RT-SOP, the CD/RC MOU, and TC 21-24.

f. RT personnel will encourage all participants to rappel.

g. CD personnel will not use RT operations as a recruiting event. RR personnel who support RT operations are the exception.

h. To validate and ensure an accurate history of all ropes and equipment, only certified RT personnel will have access to, and utilize RT ropes and equipment.

i. The RT NCOIC will utilize the RC radio for primary communications and cell phone for secondary.

j. All other RT personnel will leave their personal cell phones at the office or in their vehicles.

10. Emergency Response Procedures:

a. Stop all tower activities in a calm and controlled manner and clear area.

b. Notify RC via radio or cell phone at 801-878-5421. EVAC will be directed by Range Control.

c. Only qualified personnel will render treatment and only at the direction of the civilian group leader.

d. Notify RT-NCOIC/RSO and RC immediately.

e. RT personnel will not administer any first aid. The Civilian group leader will make the decision of any action in the event of an accident.

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f. Every soldier that supports the RT is a safety manager. As such, soldiers have the moral and professional responsibility to identify potential safety hazards, and unsafe acts regardless of rank.

Any questions, concerns, comments, or recommendations should be addressed through the RT operations Chain of Command.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Dunton', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

ROBERT T. DUNTON
COL, EN, UTARNG
Commanding