



inSPIRE Rock Lead Climbing/Belaying Standards

All climbing is dangerous; lead climbing, particularly so. The dangers involved with lead climbing affect not only you and your partner but also those around you. **Because our goal is to set and maintain the highest standards safety for all gym guests and staff, we must require and enforce strict adherence to our lead climb/belay standards.** These standards and practices may differ from what you do at other gyms or outside; these standards are particular to inSPIRE Rock. Remember lead climbing (or any climbing) at inSPIRE Rock is a **privilege not a right**; consistent or gross disregard for our standards will result in the loss of that privilege. **Belaying is restricted to those 14 years of age or older.**

Standards – Equipment:

- Lead climber/belayers are required to use a UIAA/CE certified sit type harness with a belay loop that is less than 5 years old and does not show excessive wear.
- UIAA/CE approved belay devices must be used. These devices must be in good working order and not show signs of excessive wear. Stitch plates, plate type plaquette devices (e.g. Kong Gi Gi, and figure 8 devices) are not permitted.
- Belay carabiners must be UIAA/CE approved HMS/Pear-shaped locking carabiners, which are free from excessive wear and in good working order.
- Lead ropes are provided by inSPIRE Rock, however you may elect to use your own rope. Only UIAA certified dynamic single ropes are allowed. Ropes must be less than 5 years old, regularly inspected and have a known history. **Any rope less than 95 ft. (29m) in length is not permitted.**
- inSPIRE Rock staff may disallow any rope, harness, belay device, carabiner or other piece of equipment at any time at their sole discretion.

Standards – Lead Climbing:

- All lead climbers must be reasonably comfortable red-pointing routes rated 5.10- top rope. This standard does not require the ability to regularly on-sight at this level.
- Climbers may only tie in using a figure-eight-follow-through knot. A minimum of seven inches of tail is required; Yosemite finishes are permitted. **Bowline knots are not permitted** due to the number of variations and difficult nature of checking them.
- Climber must demonstrate proficiency at clipping one handed. Climbers must clip all quickdraws correctly and from proper clipping stances. Back-clipping, z-clipping, clipping while positioned too low, clipping from difficult positions, and **skipping clips are not permitted.** Great care must be employed when selecting clipping stances and deciding when to clip. Falling while trying to clip will result in a longer fall.
- Great care should be taken when climbing low on the wall. Falls taken before clipping fourth clip can easily result in collisions with the belayer and even ground falls. Strongly consider trying new routes on top rope first when possible, particularly when the grade of the route is near your limit.
- Climbers must keep limbs clear of the lead rope at all time. No limb should ever be positioned between the rope and the wall nor in a position where a fall would likely cause it to be. Tangling in the rope is extremely dangerous and every effort must be made to avoid it.

Standards – Lead Belaying:

- Lead belayers must demonstrate proficiency giving and taking slack as well as arresting falls with a manual tube type belay device. Other approved belay devices are permitted after testing.
- The belayer's brake hand may never leave the rope. Brake hand shuffling is strongly discouraged. TBUS (Take Brake Under Slide) is the best practice belay method, is the only method taught in the gym and is strongly encouraged for all belayers.
- Lead belayers are required to maintain minimal slack. At no time should the slack loop hang lower than the belayer's knees. Standing back too far from the wall puts unnecessary rope into the system and should be avoided.
- All lead belayers must make every effort to remain directly under the first clip after their climber has cleared the space. At no time should any lead belayer be positioned more than 10 ft. from the point directly below the first clip. If the belayer has stepped back a few feet to provide rope tension they should step back into the wall as soon as they release the tension.
- Dynamic belays are strongly encouraged. Wearing shoes while lead belaying is also strongly encouraged.
- Belaying a climber weighing significantly more than you is challenging. Belayers at a significant weight disadvantage will be pulled very hard during a fall; they will likely leave their feet and could be pulled all the way to the first clip.
- Newer, less experienced belayers will not be permitted to belay a climber outweighing them by more than 50 pounds. If you intend to belay someone substantially heavier than you are, consult an inSPIRE Rock Staff Member. They will need to observe you belaying again to ensure that your skill level and experience are adequate for this more challenging situation. inSPIRE Rock staff decisions on these matter are final.

Standards – Route Finding, Selection and Wall Sharing:

- Leaders are asked to maintain a safe distance from other climbers. Lead falls can be long and unpredictable. Always assume a fall is likely and leave enough space to avoid hitting any other climber, belayer or spectator. Be aware of the entire path of the route you are trying as well as those of the other climbers near you.
- Routes sometimes meander. Selecting the appropriate clips to make is not always obvious. Deciding which clips will be clipped before attempting a route is strongly encouraged; confer with your belay partner and consult inSPIRE Rock staff if you are unsure which clips are best for a route.
- Top roping on the monster is only permitted if the third clip from the ground is clipped to the top rope side of the rope. Without this crucial clip, any fall low on the route will result in a long unsafe swing.
- **Climbing the Monster as an arch traverse is not permitted.** Doing so dominates too much wall real estate and the gym is too busy to allow it.