



# Low Ropes Course

Leaders Notes Last Review: 25 January 2026

## Ropes Course Objective

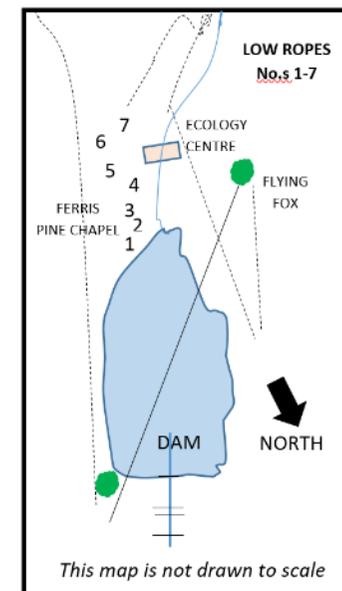
The low ropes course challenges groups and individuals both mentally, physically and socially to work together to successfully complete the elements encountered, developing skills and strategies that will help them in real life.

The course is based on experiential, adventure-based learning where education occurs from direct participation in the events of life. It consists of three stages:

1. **Do** – go and have an experience
2. **Review** – what happened and what can be learned
3. **Plan** – a way to tackle the next round of experience

## Before You Start

1. **Sanitise participants hands and check the 3 E's** at each activity. Remember one person at a time on the low ropes with participants spotting.
  - **Equipment** – Are individuals equipped with appropriate clothing, is footwear sturdy and enclosed, is hair secured, and no jewellery or watches or things are in pockets that could fall out. Sunscreen or insect repellent has been applied if needed.
  - **Environment** – Is the area free of debris – sticks, stones, pine cones, tree roots that a participant could fall on. Is area free of animals including snakes, ants, spiders, and bees on, under or around the structure and check the weather - Is it safe to continue?
  - **Element** – are they ok? Check wires, bolts, ropes etc.
2. **Teach S.O.S.** to ensure participants move in a deliberate manner when negotiating an activity, **with one and a maximum of two people on an element at a time.** Reinforce often to keep aware of trip hazards and to slow down movements when transitioning.
  - Step ON Safely
  - Step OVER Safely
  - Step OFF Safely
3. **Teach the Spotting ABCD.** Spotting (a human safety net) is defined as breaking a person's fall to prevent injury either to the person falling or to the spotter. The focus is on supporting and protecting the upper body and head and moving with the participant as they traverse the element. It is an important safety aspect that is shared by the whole group
  - **A – Attitude** – check yours and the attitude of each other. Focus is on the participant, don't be distracted by anything while spotting
  - **B – Body posture** – knees and elbows bent, feet apart, both side-to-side and front-to-back, fingers together, palms slightly cupped, stay alert and entirely focused on participant being spotted, review the verbal commands
  - **C – Communication** between participant and spotters. Each person involved must invoke verbal contract that is encouraging.
  - **D – Decision Making** – each person must decide to be consistently safety conscious and deliberately focus on the participant throughout the activity.



Participant	Spotters	Meaning
'Spotters ready!'		I am ready to start
	"Ready name"	I am ready to protect you
'Trusting'		I am ready to proceed with this action as soon as spotters give the go-ahead
	"Go-ahead"	Start

**4. Develop your groups set of values or rules of conduct.**

These are established and agreed to as a group to use for their time together on the low ropes course. This empowers each group member and helps the group to work toward attaining their goals, regardless of setting or objectives. A suggested contract is outlined below.

**Hi Five Values Contract**

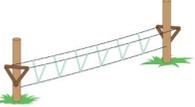
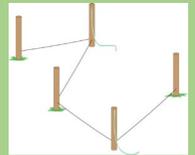
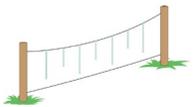


Source: Ropes Course Facilitator Training Manual (Level 1) New Mexico Military Institute Chapter 3 Ropes Course Philosophy Page 24 - 26, Chapter Six: Low Ropes Course Facilitation Page 51 - 53

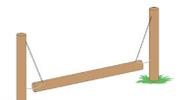
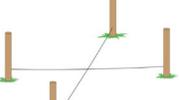
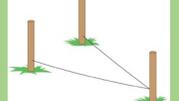
**Participant's Rights and Responsibilities**

	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
In the palm of your hand you hold - Courage to choose what is right and to do the Hi-Five	<b>Little Finger - Safety - Both group and personal</b>	
	To be safe and feel safe	To show self-control making sure your actions are sensible and safe while monitoring behaviours and safety violations of others in the group
	<b>Ring Finger - Commitment - made to yourself and the group</b>	
	To participate in program activities by my choice	To accept the choices of other group members
	To do my best	To support and encourage other group members to achieve their best
	Not to be exposed to undue pressure from other group members	Be willing to share myself with others
	<b>Middle Finger - Respect - Each person gives consideration to both personal and group goals by giving supportive and helpful suggestions.</b>	
	To be treated as a respected individual	To preserve the confidentiality of other group members
	<b>Pointer Finger - Critical Thinking/Goal Setting - individuals use rational thoughts and creative ideas to help others succeed. They are focused on developing a plan and accomplishing the task.</b>	
	To express my opinions, thoughts, creative ideas and feelings to help everyone succeed.	To help develop a plan and accomplish the task. To speak only for myself and <u>not</u> other group members.
<b>Thumb - Support and Fun - Individuals value all members and are considerate of their feelings.</b>		
To celebrate personal and team success	To ask for what I want and need	
To feel valued as an individual and team member	To be considerate of my team and their feelings	
To be myself (Thumbs up mentality)	To observe the rules especially safety	

**Ready to Roll – Enjoy the Activities** (You can do all of these or select ones best suited to your group. Allow 15 - 30 minutes per activity.)

Activity Name	Safety Considerations	Do	Review	Plan	Variations to Activities
<b>1. Burma Bridge</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs Ensure participants have one hand on each of the top wires to support them and spotters either side. One person at a time on the wire rope.	Each participant walks along the three wire bridge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What did you learn from this element?</li> <li>2. What advice would you give to someone about to complete this element?</li> </ol>	What did you learn from this element?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No one can talk – introduce non-verbal communication</li> <li>2. Designate a leader</li> <li>3. Group can talk for a set time limit then complete the activity in silence</li> <li>4. Only the girls can talk or do certain things</li> <li>5. Repeat activity or process to put into practice what was learned in a review or debriefing</li> </ol>
<b>2. Floppy Two Line</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs Minimum of 2 spotters for each participant – 1 inside and 1 outside preferably more Monitor falls in all directions. One person at a time on the wire rope.	A basic element where participants walk along the wire while using the rope for support and balance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was your first impression of this activity?</li> <li>2. What was the biggest challenge?</li> <li>3. Was your team supportive spotters?</li> <li>4. How did they show the Hi 5?</li> </ol>	Good things/Bad things SWOT  How can we apply this to other situations?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Use Metaphors relating some aspect of the event to an issue which the group is dealing with.</li> <li>7. Use handicaps e.g. broken arm/leg, blind, can't talk, can only ask questions.</li> <li>8. If a member falls off, have the whole group return to the beginning.</li> <li>9. Set a predetermined number of falls before restarting.</li> </ol>
<b>3. Tired Two Wire</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs. Spotting is essential or have a partners hand to hold onto to start with. One person at a time on the wire rope.	Each participant walks along the two wires. This station requires good balance and controlled movement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was your biggest challenge with this activity?</li> <li>2. For those that fell off, did you feel supported by your group?</li> <li>3. How could they have been more helpful?</li> </ol>	Could we do this activity better now we have had the experience?	
<b>4. Mohawk Traverse</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs If participant is going to fall, step off cable and don't pull off other participants. Communication vital. One person at a time on each section of the wire rope.	For the whole group or individuals to traverse the entire length of the series of cables together without falling or stepping off. If you do, that person, or persons returns to the starting point or end of the line	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could you as an individual walk around the Mohawk Traverse?</li> <li>2. For those who fell off, did you feel team support?</li> <li>3. Was there a leader in the group?</li> <li>4. Did we follow the Hi Five as a group?</li> <li>5. How good was the team's communication?</li> </ol>	How?  What could we do better as a team?  What could you do better as an individual?  What will you try to do next time?	
<b>5. Multi-line Traverse</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs No wrapping rope around arms or body No lunging/running Minimum of 2 spotters for each participant – 1 inside and 1 outside preferably more Monitor falls in all directions. One person at a time on the wire rope.	Each member of the team walks the wire rope using the swinging ropes for support.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How much trust did you have in your spotters?</li> <li>2. Did you have anyone fall?</li> <li>3. Could you have accomplished the problem by yourself?</li> </ol>	Set Goals - Individual - Group	

## Activities Continued

Activity Name	Safety Considerations	Do	Review Suggestions	Plan	Variations to Activities
<b>6. Heebie Jeebie</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs Minimum of 2 spotters for each participant – 1 inside and 1 outside preferably more Monitor falls in all directions. One person at a time on the wire rope.	A great test of balance. The wire walk starts easy but becomes very unstable and shaky when you reach the crux (centre) becoming easy again at the end	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did your team demonstrate the Hi 5 at this element?</li> <li>Was there good communication during this activity?</li> <li>Second time round, what would you do differently?</li> </ol>	What did you learn from this element?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No one can talk – introduce non-verbal communication</li> <li>Designate a leader</li> <li>Group can talk for a set time limit then complete the activity in silence</li> <li>Only the girls/boys can talk or do certain things</li> <li>Repeat activity or process to put into practice what was learned in a review or debriefing</li> <li>Use Metaphors relating some aspect of the event to an issue which the group is dealing with.</li> <li>Use handicaps e.g. broken arm/leg, blind, can't talk, can only ask questions</li> <li>If a member falls off, have the whole group return to the beginning.</li> <li>Set a predetermined number of falls before restarting or joining the back of the group.</li> </ol>
<b>7. Swinging Log</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs. Spotting either side of each participant Monitor falls in all directions Four spotters in position to stop swinging log if participant falls. Need to know how to protect themselves also. One person on the log at a time.	Individual or team element. Try surfing the log or walking the log or having as many in the team stand on the log at once.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did you learn from this element?</li> <li>What advice would you give a group about to do this activity?</li> <li>How did your team support you to achieve?</li> <li>Was everyone committed to it?</li> </ol>	Good things/Bad things SWOT How can we apply this to other situations?	
<b>8. Burma Loops</b> <b>Coming Soon</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs Ensure participants have one hand on each of the top wires to support them and spotters either side as they move along the loops.	Each participant walks the bridge holding onto the wires and using the loops to walk across	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much harder was this than the Burma Bridge activity?</li> <li>What was your biggest challenge doing this activity?</li> <li>How was your team supportive during this activity?</li> </ol>	Could we do this activity better now we have had the experience? How?	
<b>9. Criss Cross</b> <b>Coming Soon</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and Spotting ABCDs. Spotting is essential on both sides. They may like to have a partners hand to hold onto to start with.	Multiple team members can be up at once on this element, depending on the number of spotters. Team members must balance on the wire switching sides/partners in the middle.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did your team demonstrate the Hi 5 at this element?</li> <li>Was there good communication during this element?</li> <li>Second time round, what would you do differently?</li> </ol>	What could we do better as a team? What could you do better as an individual? What will you try to do next time?	
<b>10. Wild Woozy</b> <b>Coming Soon</b> 	Check 3 E's, Review SOS and spotting ABCDs No interlocking of fingers or elbows No lunging. Minimum of 2 spotters for each participant – one inside one outside, inside spotters keep hands clasped on knees and add more spotters as they progress outwards from the starting point. Monitor falls that can happen in all directions.	Two participants (one on each cable) walk the diverging cables while maintaining physical contact, to a point where they can no longer continue or they reach the far support trees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was there good communication between pairs?</li> <li>Would you have gone as far without the spotters?</li> <li>Were you happy with your own personal distance? Did the rest of the team give much support?</li> </ol>	Set Goals - Individual - Group	

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