

parallel lines

A Resource for Challenge Course Professionals | Vol. 16 No. 2

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Welcome to Parallel Lines!

We are pleased to present this online and user-friendly newsletter to our members. Our goal is to provide our members with an easy-to-read periodical that reflects the more modernized world in which we live.

In this edition of Parallel Lines, there are great articles from our New Executive Director Shawn Tierney and Board Chair Micah Henderson discussing the future of the ACCT. There are informative articles from ACCT Director of Operations Bill Weaver and DPIS Chair Kathy Haras regarding the regulatory process and standards, as well as information about the upcoming 27th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo, and much more.

We encourage you to share Parallel Lines with your colleagues in your community. Remember that you can also view the publication on our website at www.acctinfo.org. As always, let us know if you have a program, member, or topic that you would like to have included. We can be reached at membership@acctinfo.org.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings ACCT Community!

by Shawn Tierney
ACCT Executive Director

For those of you who haven't yet heard, I've been hired as the new ACCT Executive Director. I've only been in the position for a few weeks now but already feel a growing sense of excitement and enthusiasm for the future of the organization. I share that sense of excitement, especially when surveying the "landscape" of ACCT and acknowledging our tremendous strengths and justifiably proud history of accomplishments.

When I reflect on our strengths, I see amongst them a highly dedicated Board, experienced staff, and an amazing group of passionate volunteers who form the lifeblood of the organization. We also have a membership base that is healthy and growing, increasing international participation, the most knowledgeable standards developers in the field, unparalleled professional development opportunities, and the largest and most enjoyable conference in the industry! We have all the pieces in place to continue building upon those strengths and I couldn't be more thrilled to be taking the helm at such a pivotal and exciting time in the organization's history.

Having worked in the outdoor industry for 25+ years, I am very familiar with ACCT and its well-deserved reputation as THE world's leading and largest American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

Accredited Standards Developer focused on the challenge course and aerial adventure course industries. Moreover, I've been to a number of ACCT conferences, known and/or worked with a number of influential individuals within the organization, been involved with standards development and accreditation programs, and have even worked as a challenge course instructor. I also bring a strong history of non-profit and association management along with a technical background in risk management for adventure programming.

In the months ahead, I'll be working closely with the Board, staff and volunteers on priorities established in three interrelated areas: organizational, fiscal, and strategic. On the organizational side I'll work to ensure that we have the most optimal systems, practices and resources in place to move the organization forward from a position of strength.

Regarding our fiscal priority, my sole objective will be to keep the organization on sound financial footing and to grow our revenue in order to provide greater professional development opportunities and member benefits. This means increasing access to online tools and resources, expanding the range of our trainings, conferences and publications, or strengthening

government relations to further our role as a strong and influential advocate for the industry.

Aligning and strengthening our resources places us in a greater position to advance our strategic plan. Our goals are to provide exceptional value and services to members; developing alliances that increase our global reach; strengthening our accreditation, certification and professional development programs to promote greater safety; and a policy governance structure built on transparent processes, data-driven decision making and strategy/budget alignment.

Your membership is vital to the success of the organization and I am truly grateful for your support! This community has the greatest collection of dedicated, passionate, fun and inspiring individuals on the planet. Let's work together to ensure that ACCT continues to grow and prosper in the months and years ahead. Toward that end, I look forward to hearing your thoughts, concerns, ideas, and suggestions so don't hesitate to reach out and let me know what's on your mind!

Here's to the future,

Shawn



26th Annual ACCT Conference & Expo

by Melissa Webb
ACCT Events Manager



On behalf of the ACCT Board of Directors, ACCT Staff, and the Conference Planning Committee I would like to thank each and every person that contributed to the success of our 26th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo! The event was a huge success with over 1100 attendees and nearly 100 vendor booths! Attendees had 7 pre-conference sessions, 5 post - conference sessions, and 4 certification courses to choose from in addition to the 100+ general session workshops. I'd be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge our friends at the Lower Colorado River Authority

(LCRA) and particularly McKinney Roughs Nature Park for partnering with us to host interactive sessions and certification courses at their facility. It was wonderful to be able to incorporate more interactive sessions into our event!

While there is not a challenge course located next to our venue this year we do have some other exciting things to talk about! The 27th Annual International ACCT Conference & Expo will be held in Savannah, GA February 2nd – 5th, 2017. The Westin Savannah Golf Resort & Spa will be our host hotel with the majority of our events held at the Savannah

International Trade & Convention Center just steps away from the Westin. This coming conference will be our first time in a convention center which was necessary due to the amount of growth our industry has experienced over the past few years. If you've participated in any of the conferences over the last several years you've probably noticed space was a little bit tight for us. We are excited to see what opportunities a larger venue will offer! The meeting rooms are slightly bigger and the expo will have more room for attendees to navigate through, not to mention allow for more elaborate booth setups and

demo sessions for vendors to display their products and services.

With all of this excitement about larger space you might be asking yourselves "how do I register for a booth?". As Micah indicates in her article, we have experienced a lot of transition with ACCT in the past several months and are excited about what lies ahead! We have partnered with HPN Global to manage our tradeshow and assist us with our Advertising, Exhibitor, and Sponsor Registration. We are currently reviewing our advertising and sponsorship packages to make sure that there is something for everyone! Meanwhile, HPN is working hard to secure all necessary contracts to get exhibitor registration live just as soon as possible. We will be sending out notifications when exhibitor

registration opens, as well as post a direct link on our conference website.

A sincere thank you to everyone that submitted a workshop proposal for the 2017 event! We had an overwhelming response to our call for presenters this year, receiving significantly more submissions than we have space for. I'm working closely with our Workshop Coordinators as well as a Workshop Review Task Force to review all submissions to not only ensure we have sessions for each of our tracks, but also to ensure we have sessions appropriate for all skill levels. If you have submitted a session please know that we hope to be following up with you by no later than the first week of August about the status of your submission. You are the experts in the industry and without these

submissions we wouldn't be able to offer the educational component that we do! In the future if you notice that there is something that might be beneficial for the industry I encourage you to submit your topic. I anticipate that the call for presenters for our 2018 event will be live as early as February (at the 2017 conference) and we look forward to seeing the submissions come rolling in!

Please check the ACCT conference website often for conference updates, deadlines, and information. If you have any ideas, feedback, or suggestions you would like to share with the Conference Committee for this event or upcoming events please forward that information to Melissa Webb: Events Manager for ACCT at melissa@acctinfo.org.





Getting Back on Track...

by Micah Henderson

ACCT Board Chair

I am so excited to be writing to you all through a Parallel Lines article again. I apologize on behalf of the association for the gap in publications that has occurred since our Fall 2015 issue. We have been navigating an incredible amount of transition within the ACCT and I am happy to be able to take this opportunity to reconnect and fill you in.

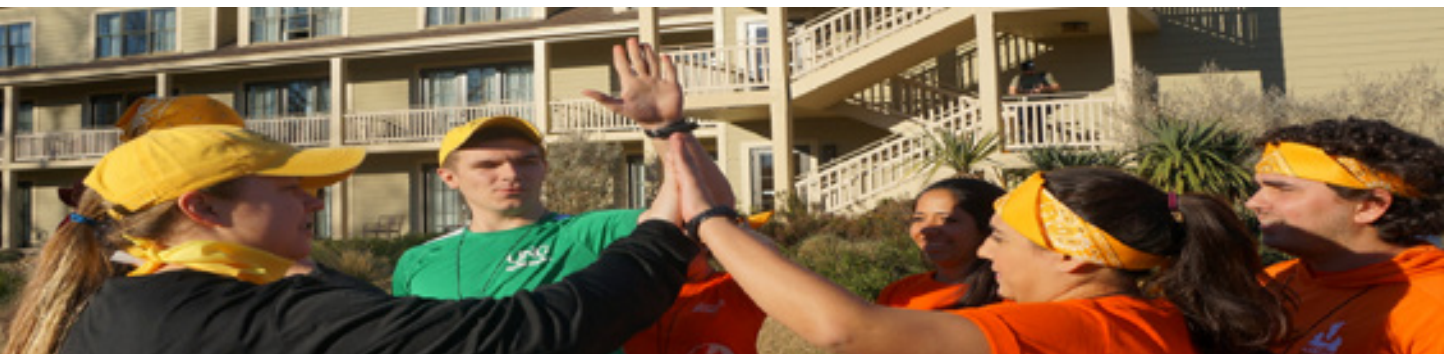
At the Annual General Meeting during the 2016 conference in Texas, I reported that our Executive Director was no longer with us, and that the ACCT had encountered several financial hurdles. While this news wasn't the best, the information that went along with it was hopeful. The Board of Directors and many ACCT volunteers had been dedicating their skills and countless hours to ensure that our association would come out ahead. The following is a breakdown of what happened.

We were forced to make some

difficult decisions in order to reduce expenses for the current fiscal year ending in June of 2016. We took a hard, honest look at where our association's money was going, and evaluated the value of every dollar being spent. I am happy to report that through that process our financial condition has improved dramatically and we are now projecting a small surplus of funds which will position us for a much healthier 2016/2017 fiscal year.

I'm hopeful that you have all heard the fantastic news that we have hired Shawn Tierney as our new Executive Director! His fresh perspective and energy are exactly what the ACCT needs to lead us forward into new adventures and growth. Please join me in welcoming him to our family. He has taken some time in this issue of Parallel Lines to speak directly with you all. If you don't get to work with him before, I hope you all get a chance to get to meet him at the upcoming 2017 conference in Savannah, Georgia.

You may have also noticed some new voices when you have called the ACCT office these past few months. Jenny Faucher and Lindsay Belanger, from Managing Matters, Inc. have recently joined our team. Managing Matters is an association management firm that provides daily operational services to associations such as the ACCT. They brought the infrastructure and expertise to help the ACCT reorganize after so much change. They are currently managing ACCT membership and general inquiries, as well as publications such as Clipboard and Parallel Lines. They have extensive experience with the technology we use on the back end of our website as well as our other office systems, and are currently helping us develop strategies to improve resources for all of our members. The staff and the Board of Directors are very pleased with their services and encourage you all to reach out to them when you get an opportunity.



Our remaining full time staff members Bill and Joyce Weaver, and Melissa Webb have been integral to the success of this transitional time. On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to thank them for the extra effort they put forward these past eight months to help the ACCT continue to be successful. I would also like to thank our part time staff members Charles Peterson, Jeff Boeke, and Dan Pervorse. Each of these guys were willing to step in and take on some additional responsibilities to help the ACCT navigate this challenging transition. We look forward to continued years of service from all of our dedicated staff and cannot thank them enough for what they

bring to the ACCT family.

The volunteers within the ACCT have always been incredible, but these past eight months many of them have stepped up their volunteer efforts so much they are starting to resemble staff for the association! The number of hours these individuals have donated to the ACCT this past year is staggering. The industry expertise and skill sets of so many of these volunteers have allowed us to maintain the high standard of excellence that the ACCT is proud to provide. I especially want to acknowledge members of the Board of Directors and the Interim Management Team who met multiple times

each week to continue to steer the ACCT ship. I wish I could name all of the people individually that took on extra responsibilities during this transition. Please know that we could not do what we do without your efforts. I am excited that we will be continuing to grow our volunteer group as we move forward into the future.

This article may seem to be way too many "thank you"s, but my current feelings about the ACCT include pride for all we have accomplished, gratitude for those who have gotten us here, and excitement for what comes next!





ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 Impact on the Regulatory Process

by Bill Weaver

ACCT Director of Operations

The Association for Challenge Course Technology, (ACCT) has been recognized as a standards developer by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) since 2006 and was responsible for the development of the first Challenge Course Technology standards originally published in 1994. On January 11th, 2016 we received national recognition when our standard (ANSI/ACCT 03-2016) was approved as an American National Standard by ANSI.

During the January 2016 opening ceremonies of ACCT's international conference in Austin, Texas, it was announced that the digital version of ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 would be started to be circulated to members. The buzz and excitement generated by this news created an electric atmosphere throughout the entire conference.

Since the release of ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 on January 28th, ACCT membership and standard sales have been brisk. ACCT staff and volunteers have been working to insure all members receive the appropriate number of licensed copies of the standard. If you have been experiencing difficulty acquiring or accessing your copy, please contact our office today. Digital Copies are available online <https://acctinfo.site-ym.com/page/MemberOnlyStandards> and

a hard copy, print on demand option was recently made available and is available online.

In addition to increased membership and standard sales, requests for Professional Vendor Member Applications are on the rise as is interest from numerous State regulatory bodies requesting copies of the ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 standard.

ACCT has served as the leading trade association for the Challenge Course industry, (including Aerial/Adventure Parks, Zip Lines, Canopy Tours, Team Challenge Courses, and Climbing Structures) worldwide since its inception in 1993. Currently ACCT has more than 3,000 Individual & Organizational members, 40 accredited Professional Vendor Members and has certified more than 100 Professional/Third Party Inspectors.

ACCT has over 22 years of experience in the development of standards for the design, installation, inspection, training and operation of environments that utilize Challenge Course Technology. We have an intimate understanding of what is required to reasonably manage the risks of these environments. Because of the unique nature of this technology, it is this systematic approach to risk management which has and will

continue to be the key to protecting the public from unreasonable risk of harm.

Since the recent proliferation of commercial Aerial/Adventure Park and Zip line/Canopy Tour facilities around the world, state and provincial regulators have become more aware of the presence of our technology. As this awareness has grown, the desire to regulate and inspect these facilities has also increased. ACCT has been collaborating and harmonizing with ASTM since 2009 and actively involved with the population of ASTM 2959, which is specifically designed for commercial applications and exempts non-commercial (educational and therapeutic) applications. It should also be noted that ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 is applicable to both commercial and non-commercial applications. ACCT strongly supports and recommends the incorporation of the ACCT or equivalent Standards into regulatory policies which seek to include this type of technology.

The use of the ACCT standards relies on an existing, robust system of qualified third-party inspectors and trainers, which, while often allowed for, is not typically emphasized as part of the state amusement regulation system. An example of the difference would be the level of scrutiny required under the ACCT

Standards for a facility inspection. An inspector using ACCT Standards, must be a minimum of 21 years of age, have a minimum of 150 days of installation experience, and have performed a minimum of 12 inspections under the supervision of a qualified inspector as well as other rigorous criteria. In addition, they must access every course component to provide a tactile inspection and ascertain the current condition of the components as well as its overall functionality. Since 2013, ACCT has provided Professional and In-House Inspector Certification testing services to qualified individuals in the industry.

In addition, due to the increased level of competency required to operate Challenge Course Technology safely, ACCT also advocates for and provides a system of third-party training and operator certification. ACCT certification standards are very specific to the industry and its technology and offer a level of scrutiny that is essential to public safety risk management. ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 is the only current standard containing comprehensive competency based operational training and testing.

Currently ACCT is working with ASTM and many states throughout the

country to implement regulation of Challenge Course Technology. ACCT stands ready to offer our expertise and materials to any state or province that is currently or planning on developing a regulatory system for Challenge Course Technologies. This includes Aerial/Adventure Parks, Zip Lines, Canopy Tours, Team Challenge Courses, and Climbing Structures. For additional information, questions or assistance, please contact Bill Weaver at bill@acctinfo.org, or phone our office at 800-991-0286, extension 2.





Facilitator's Toolbox

by Jen Stanchfield

jen@experientialtools.com

Sequencing: A Key Ingredient in Effective Group Facilitation

Excerpt from Tips & Tools for the Art of Experiential Group Facilitation

In past articles, I've compared the role of the facilitator to that of a chef. As with cooking, facilitation is an art that involves a combination of practice, observation, knowledge of theory and creativity. Effective group facilitators act as a good chef does, adding together the essential elements in the right amounts at the right time to create a palatable and hopefully meaningful experience. Through careful observation of all the elements involved in a group's personality and setting, the facilitator can intentionally choose and order activities to maximize learning opportunities. Many educators call this important aspect of facilitation and teaching "sequencing."

Sequencing involves consciously and thoughtfully presenting activities in a specific order to maximize learning outcomes and maintain the emotional and physical safety of the group. Being thoughtful, observant and intentional in your planning, presentation, and evaluation of activities is an essential aspect of effective group facilitation, teaching, and team building.

Sequencing: the careful ordering of group activities based on the group's needs, goals, and setting.

There is no one specific "recipe" for sequencing programs. There are as many variations as there are groups. In cooking, there is a lot of room for creativity, style and adaptation but there are key rules and fundamental ingredients needed for a cake to rise or sauce to thicken. The same is true for group facilitation. Approach sequencing as a dynamic process that takes into careful consideration the personality and dynamics of the group, your strengths, and style as an educator, participant's emotional and physical safety, the group's goals and agenda, available activities and materials, allotted time, and the physical environment.

The timing and ordering of ingredients are the key to the success of many dishes. Ingredients often need to be added in a certain amount, a specific order, and then cooked for just the right duration for best results. Effective facilitators are in tune to the importance of activity choices, and the ordering and timing of experiences. They pay attention to the group development process and allow time for trust building.

It is important to balance the level of the activity and or challenge presented and the participant's ability to meet the challenge or activity. Educators need to continually observe their group in order to be sure the selected

activities fit the needs and goals of the group and the specific situation, at the same time staying aware of and sensitive to individual group members' needs for support. The time needed for participants to create relationships and build trust is different for every group. When interpersonal connections and a sense of community are developed, groups will take learning further and get more benefit out of the activities in which they engage. Allow time for this to happen by choosing activities that build upon each other. When sequencing learning experiences be sensitive to the time of day and the physical comfort and attention span of group members. Flexibility in dealing with the unexpected is key.

Listen to your group and be prepared to change your plan midstream to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the group, and take advantage of new opportunities for learning that emerge as a group works together. Careful sequencing maximizes participation by allowing people to engage at a pace that works for them. Experiential group work can be very powerful. If groups are ready to engage in the process, great things can occur. Conversely, if a group is not emotionally or physically ready to encounter certain learning adventures, the experience could be damaging or inhibit growth and learning.

Sequencing Suggestions

- Be prepared with a continuum of activities that build upon each other. Having activities in your "back pocket" allows you to be ready to deal with changes in direction and create learning opportunities that arise in an ever-changing group.
- Be flexible enough to throw out or let go of that well-developed plan if the group's needs are different than expected.
- Indicator activities are helpful. Know some activities that help you read and evaluate the group and introduce challenges incrementally. For example, before going to a challenge course and teaching safety systems, facilitate a series of partner tag activities that involve moving around in a small space, appropriate physical contact, and the need for being aware of those around you. This introduces the idea of appropriate touch and close personal space important to the spotting techniques the group will learn. It also helps in evaluating whether the group is engaged and ready to take the responsibility of balancing fun with safe, focused behavior.
- Let participants know what is expected of them and the type of activities in which they will be participating. Informed

consent is critical. It doesn't have to give away the novelty of your approach. Think of it as empowering participants with needed information. For some settings, informed consent is a responsibility of the facilitator in liability situations.

- If reluctant learners make a choice not to participate, they will at least know what opportunities they might be missing.
- Continually observe your group and re-evaluate your plans to be sure the activities fit the needs and goals of the group and the specific situation.
- Be sensitive to the time of day and physical environment when presenting activities.
- Take time to build relationships and trust between group members.
- Pre-group communication is imperative. Take the time to talk with a group's program leader or previous facilitator about the group and its goals, expectations, and personalities. Keep in mind that you will always have to balance that information with your own perceptions and experience of the group.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.

- Take advantage of teachable moments. Ongoing processing or reflection is key to moving learning forward. Reflective practice is best when it is a continual and dynamic part of your lessons, not just something you facilitate as a follow-up.

Recognize that each group is unique and participates in activities in a different way. Even when working with groups with similar characteristics, in the same setting, with the same program goals, I have found that the actual lesson plan changes with each group in response to that group's particular personality and needs. Activities you carefully plan prior to a workshop or group session may be specifically relevant to one group's personality and needs and not another's. This is one of the exciting aspects of group facilitation.

There is great variety in group experience, and varying opportunities facilitate learning. With experience, facilitators develop the art of reading their group and adjusting activities in a creative way throughout group process to move learning and change forward. This is the beauty of experiential education, nurturing spontaneity of experience to take advantage of teachable moments. The art is in balancing this spontaneity and creativity with the key ingredients and timing to make it all come together successfully.





What's Up With All These Standards?

by Kathy Haras

ACCT Chair of Design, Performance and Inspection Standards Committee.

What's up with all these standards?

The ACCT often receives requests for a detailed comparison of standards within the challenge course, zip line, canopy tour and adventure park industry. People expect that a complete list of differences can easily be provided upon request and that comparing these differences will enable them to decide which standard is "better".

This article will attempt to explain some key differences among the ACCT standard (ANSI/ACCT 03-2016) and standards published by the PRCA (ANSI/PRCA 1.0-.3 -2014), ASTM (F2959), and EN (15567-1 & 2:2015). While examples will be used to highlight and explain differences, this article will not include a complete list of differences.

Standards vary in terms of their scope, definitions, context, approach, and content covered. There is no common framework. As a result, comparing standards is more complicated than simply identifying differences. Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) frequently research industry standards as part of their decision making process for regulating an activity. Our goal for this article is to provide readers with guidance on how to go about the process of determining which standard(s) might best meet their needs.

Scope

An industry standard is a document that describes generally accepted requirements, specifications, guidelines, characteristics, or other criteria that may be followed by members of an industry in carrying out their respective work. Standards are voluntary – people choose to follow them (although there may be incentives like marketing benefits or preferred insurance rates). There are also consequences to not following standards especially the legal implications of being found to operate outside peer practice in the aftermath of an adverse event. Finally, when AHJs choose to incorporate standards into their

“comparing standards is more complicated than simply identifying differences.”

regulations, the standard (or part of it) becomes mandatory in that jurisdiction.

The scope of standard describes the subject matter being addressed and the standard's intended use. Scope can vary dramatically. For example, EN 15567-1:2015 (Sports and recreational facilities – Ropes courses – Part 1: Construction

and safety requirements) has the force of law in 33 countries and these countries are bound to implement it. ASTM F2959-14 (Standard practice for special requirements for aerial adventure courses) states in its scope that it applies to zip lines, ropes courses, challenge courses, aerial trekking courses, and canopy tours when they are operated for concession or commercial recreation. ASTM goes on to clarify that it is not intended to apply to courses operated exclusively as part of an educational curriculum, for physical fitness purposes, in organized competitive events, in therapeutic programs, for training purposes, and for team and confidence building. ACCT's Design, Performance and Inspection Standards (Chapter 1, A.1) simply state that they establish requirements for elements and associated equipment for challenge courses, aerial adventure/trekking parks, canopy tours and zip line tours. The brevity of the scope makes it easy to overlook. Yet many of the substantive differences among standards can be traced back to this section. Indeed, one reason for developing challenge course standards is that this activity has not been adequately addressed in other standards. And some standards, particularly work at height, specifically excluded it along with other sports related activities.



Definitions

Like the scope, a standard's definitions are easy to overlook. They are often perceived to be boring, tedious reading and lacking in importance. Often, the definitions chapter isn't published as part of the standards document but is available as a separate document. In fact, many substantive differences between standards can be traced to varied definitions and the implications of these definitions are found throughout the document. Frequently, the same term may be used in different standards but with very different meanings.

A good example is the way PRCA defines self – belay: “a fall arrest system where the user is attached directly from the harness to a rated anchorage system (...) by means of a lanyard...”. The term static belay refers the reader to the definition for self-belay. Once we understand that PRCA considers self-belay as a type of fall arrest (defined in the United States as limiting maximum arresting force to 1,800 pounds (8 kN), free fall to less than 6 ft, and maximum deceleration distance to 3½ feet) then the

PRCA requirements for participant lanyards with a minimum breaking strength of 5,000 lbs (22.2 kN) and also “equipped with an impact absorbing (deceleration) system or attached to an engineered load limiting system that is equally efficient” may be seen as internally consistent and perfectly reasonable.

Reading that ACCT standards require that lanyards used for personal safety systems have a minimum rated breaking strength of 3,375 lbf (15.0 kN) (Chapter 1, I.3.3.1) seems radically different. Unless you read the definition of personal safety system which explains that the maximum allowable freefall is less than 2 ft and that this system is considered fall restrict – not fall arrest. Just as in the PRCA example above, this approach is consistent with US worker safety definitions and may be seen as internally consistent and perfectly reasonable. Additionally, it allows for the use of many interlocking lanyards and safety systems that have been designed and tested in Europe and meet European norms.

To summarize the importance of reading standards definitions, the

issue isn't that there are differences between the two standards. The issue that it is easy for the reader to assume the standards are describing essentially the same thing when they are in fact describing substantially different things.

Approach

Another dimension on which standards may vary is whether they take a prescriptive or outcome oriented approach. A prescriptive approach tells readers how to do something. For example, F.7.7. of the PRCA standard indicates that “general use flat or tubular synthetic webbing shall have a minimum breaking strength of at least 4,000 lbs (17.78kN) when new. Flat or tubular webbing intended for fall protection use shall have a minimum breaking strength of 5,000 pounds (22.2kN)”. In contrast, the ACCT standard (Chapter 1, I.3.11.1.3) requires that “webbing (tape) shall have a minimum rated breaking strength of five times the expected load as determined by a qualified person”. This outcome oriented approach describes what the system must achieve, and often allows for more creativity,

and more effectively deals with emerging approaches and new technologies.

Topics, Sections, Chapters

Not all standards cover the same content or organize it in identical (or even similar) ways. For example, EN 15567 comes in two parts – construction and safety requirements vs. operations requirements. These are considered separate standards and must be purchased separately. In contrast, the ACCT standard covers Design, Performance, and Inspection (Chapter 1) as well as Operation (Chapter 2) and Training (Chapter 3) in a single document. Additionally, not all information published by an organization is a standard – including some of the information within a standards document. Explanatory material including appendices may be designated as normative (part of the standard) or informative (helpful but not mandatory for compliance). A shorter, more concise standard is typically easier to read, understand, and apply.

Differences

The obvious criteria for comparing standards are simple differences. As we pointed out in the introduction (and as this article has hopefully demonstrated), numerous differences among standards are best explained by some other criteria. However, there are simple differences. Redundancy is one such example. The ACCT standard requires that a backup (redundant component or system) have the same safety factor as the primary system (Chapter 1, E.1.2.). PRCA requires critical termination points

have a redundancy system in place of at least 80% (C.1.2). In this case redundant means redundant. And 80% is different than 100%. Whether this is a difference that matters is for the reader to decide.

Context

A standards document reflects the setting in which it is meant to be used. This notion seems subtle (and it is) yet fully understanding and applying any standard requires recognition of the regulatory landscape, operating systems, normative references, and assumptions that are being made. For example, EN 15567 is a European norm and that means that maximum allowable arresting force is 6 kN (4.3.5.3.2 -- not 8 kN as in North America. Workers undertaking construction, inspection, or maintenance must use personal protective equipment in accordance with PPE Directive 89/686/EEC while sport climbing equipment may be used for operational purposes.

The PRCA, on the other hand, takes a strongly US-based perspective and references specific US laws, regulations, and standards throughout the document. Additionally, their standard applies to all employees. As a consequence, courses that choose to follow PRCA standards are required to use ANSI/ASEE Z359.1 2007 rated carabiners in life safety applications even when these items are not readily available in their geographic area and may not meet local requirements. As a result, operators need to replace the carabiners they use for attaching belay devices to harness belay/rappel loops even though ANSI/ASEE Z359.1 states that it is

not intend to be applied to sports-related activities.

In contrast to both of these standards, the ACCT standard strives for an international approach. As a result, the ANSI/ACCT 03-2016 publication has attempted to update standards clauses and definitions so that they do not refer to the specific regulations. Instead, readers are directed to follow the applicable laws and regulations of a particular jurisdiction and the term "or equivalent standard in the jurisdiction of use" appears frequently. Additionally, the equipment standards do not apply to installers, operators or other staff members thereby eliminating potential conflict with regulatory bodies. The intent is to make ACCT the standard of choice around the globe.

Conclusion

Standards strive to move the industry forward by building shared knowledge, understanding, and terminology. Published standards provide readers with access to expert opinion without having to pay directly for these services. When comparing standards, however, readers need to be prepared to do their homework and carefully assess not simply where standards differ but more importantly how they differ. Only then will they be able to select the standard that best meet their needs.

Kathy Haras is Vice-President at Adventureworks! Associates, Inc. in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. She is the Chair of ACCT's Design, Performance and Inspection Standards Committee.

ADVENTURE PARK INSIDER

To The Rescue by Adventure Park Insider

As pay-to-play adventure parks and zip lines have become more widespread, the need to plan for rescues and evacuations has grown as well. During the recent evolution of the adventure park industry, rescue and evacuation, while certainly not overlooked, have not been a major point of focus.

In order to address standards for rescue and evacuation regarding guests at adventure parks and zip line tours, it's up to operators to thoroughly analyze their needs, plan to address them, train staff, and house the proper equipment. That discretion, and how well it is exercised, is a big responsibility.

High rope, high angle rescue and

evacuation are not entirely new territory, of course. The procedures and gear used in adventure parks, challenge courses, and zip lines are much like other work-at-height situations, such as ski lift evacuation and industrial safety scenarios. Triage—the initial evaluation and assignment of degrees of urgency in an emergency—remains the same for all situations. Many in the adventure park and zip tour world are familiar with the concepts.

However, the rescue situations vary tremendously from one park or canopy tour to the next. The length and slope of the line, distance to a tower or platform, height off the ground, and the rescue system or systems in place are all factors that make each situation unique.

In addition, rescue and evacuation operations might be certified through, or fall under the standards or rules of, a number of different organizations: the Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians, the Association for Challenge Course Technology, the Professional Ropes Course Association, the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association, as well as OSHA and ANSI. Operators should check to know what rules or regulations may apply in their jurisdictions.

Many adventure park and zip line operators are not fully aware of the legal requirements to protect and train employees, says Cliff Kirk, president of TES, Inc., a company that trains employees in the use



of personal protection equipment while working at height. "It's not that operators don't care," he says. "It's because they don't know."

"We've been allowing this to evolve" in the adventure park world, says Jesse Williams, who manages training programs at the Technical Institute for Petzl America. "But at the same time, there are some big underlying principles that are going to guide your rescue." Williams says it's a matter of coming up with a system that works on your course, based on these general principles.

Start With A Plan

Having a well thought out plan that has been exhaustively practiced comes highly recommended.

"The most common mistake is simply failing to preplan," says PMI CEO Loui McCurley. "An operator who thinks that training advanced employees to retrieve a stuck guest on a zip line is the same as preparing for rescue is missing the entire point," he says. "People get stuck on zip lines relatively frequently, but when things happen like midair collisions, medical conditions, injuries, or even accidents involving employees, the response gets a whole lot more complicated."

Kirk, whose company is a Petzl Technical Partner, notes that OSHA requires operators to have a rescue and evacuation plan for employees, "and it's pretty specific. If something happens to an employee, OSHA will want to see the rescue plan. And it will be an OSHA investigation, not one done by ACCT or other regulators."

What to do? Plan ahead, says McCurley. "Preplanning for rescue isn't rocket science, but it also isn't something that just happens easily

or automatically in the heat of a rescue incident. I would encourage every operator to have a thorough hazard analysis performed for their site, by a third party if necessary, and to develop and train to a simple and thorough rescue plan that covers a range of hazards," he continues. This will be part of a site's hazard analysis document, which outlines every hazard that exists and the corresponding plan for dealing with any possible scenario that may occur.

"Employers have a regulatory responsibility to their employees, and arguably a moral/legal responsibility to guests," McCurley adds. While employees fall under OSHA regulations, which are extensive, guests may well fall under different rules, or no rules at all. But that doesn't remove the responsibility for those customers.

Williams concurs with McCurley. "Offentimes when we get into this, we see it from a work place point of view," he notes. "Every employer has a responsibility to train and protect their employees. But there's no less of a duty to paying customers. You've got systems in place to rescue an employee, and it's a similar situation to managing hazards for a guest." And that helps simplify a park's planning.

"The legal requirements are different, but you can use the same techniques to rescue both employees or guests," agrees Kirk.

Once you assess the risks and develop a plan to deal with them, it's time to equip and train staff for the potential tasks and emergencies they will face.

Training

Equipment manufacturers and zip line installation companies will have their own recommended training protocols, regimes and frequencies, and they can help operators establish appropriate training programs. But ultimately, it is up to each individual operator to set a training schedule and documentation process. Training provided by an Accredited ACCT PVM will meet OSHA and/or ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standards. Under OSHA laws, employers must provide the proper equipment and training to new employees.

"We [Petzl] manufacture our equipment to standards and we're clear about how it should be applied. We would rather push the training and the system than the individual product, like the JAG rescue kit, for example. We propose a solution, but it's up to the individual operator to decide if they want to introduce it," Williams says.

Whatever systems and equipment are put into use, "Operators should regularly practice different ways to rig things, so it should never be a hassle," says Williams. A lot of people in the industry have done it for a long time and they're aware of a lot of methods, he adds.

"A skilled operator will have a deep bag of tricks," Williams points out.

"Generally, staff, as employees, should have an authorized fall protection awareness suitable for their authorized user level. Then, for rescue, we train to the authorized rescuer level under the fall protection standard," says Kirk. Typically, that's a two-day course.

"I would encourage every operator to have at least their lead employees trained as rope access technicians,



and to have at least BLS medical capability [Editor's note: BLS stands for Basic Life Support, such as FA and CPR.],” McCurley suggests. “In addition, anytime an emergency response is initiated internally, local emergency services should be called. It is easy to stand down a response if it is not needed, but if the call is delayed and ends up being needed, the result can be catastrophic.”

The frequency and depth of training is a critical component of any plan, says ZipRescue inventor and owner Eric Cylvick. “Rescuers need to train consistently and it has to be documented,” he says. “They have to try and think of every scenario they may encounter, including the worst possible scenarios that could happen—heart attack, spinal injury, trolley seizes up on the cable—and train through those scenarios.” As someone who coordinated lift evacuation training at Park City Mountain Resort for 14 years as director of snow safety and the inventor of the ZipRider, Cylvick speaks from long experience.

Regardless of whom your operators are trained through, the most

important thing is to start with a plan and practice it often. Once an incident occurs, it's all about putting the plan you trained for into practice.

Assessing An Emergency

In the event of an emergency rescue situation, you have to ask two general questions, says Williams. First, determine if the stranded guest or employee is capable of assisting in his or her own evacuation. Is he or she injured, and what is his or her physical and mental capacity, “and how reliable is that capacity?” he says.

Second, rescuers must determine if the patient is “under tension.” If they are stranded on a line, they most likely are under the tension of their own body weight on a lanyard or pulley. If this is the case, they will have to be unweighted and transferred to a rescue system the rescuer puts in place; therefore, operators must have the ability—i.e., a hoist or other suitable equipment—to both raise and lower any guest.

In Williams' courses at the Petzl training facility, operators study how to negotiate a variety of evacuation scenarios. For example, what is the clearance—the vertical distance to the ground or a safe zone, or the horizontal distance between anchor and access points, such as a tower? The angle or pitch of the cable is often a limiting factor in whether a patient can be hauled, and affects the amount of security an operator needs to access them.

Is there a safe landing zone the patient can be lowered to? And lastly, how many patients are there? At what point does speed of evacuation start to become a factor? All of this evaluation is part of the decision-making, or triage, on the part of the rescuer.

No matter what gear you use, it should be pre-rigged to eliminate or reduce user error, as well as to speed your response time. Williams says you'll need, at the very minimum, the capability to do a short haul to unweight a victim, and the capacity to lower them. Or in the concise words of McCurley: reach, release, and evacuate a patient from any predicament.

Without adequate training, one conundrum that can occur, says McCurley, "is that local site operators are often not trained to perform rescue, but on the other hand, local emergency teams are often not trained in the park's elements. This can result in quite a knowledge gap during the rescue effort."

In addition, he notes, "Adventure parks are typically not designed for easy access, and are often remote. The elements are designed to be challenging, difficult, or sometimes even adrenaline-producing—all of which pose unique rescue challenges."

As a result, it's often not feasible to simply let the local emergency response teams handle a rescue by themselves. "We suggest that if there's a rescue scenario, at least have your in-house emergency response team there," says Cylvick. "They would assess and triage the situation and decide if further assistance is needed." And it's up to the operator if their policy includes always calling emergency rescue.

Accessing The Patient

Once it's been determined that a rescue is needed, you can determine your method of accessing the patient.

Approach a stranded person the way you would approach any patient: make eye contact, immediately evaluate for injury and consciousness level, and if any life-threatening injuries are present affecting consciousness, airway or bleeding, put your Emergency Response Plan into effect, including calling 911.

"As a first responder/rescuer, your job is to extricate a patient, and communicate to the rest of the rescue team what you're seeing," adds Cylvick. "It's difficult to multi-task in a high angle rescue situation. The rescuers will get them to the bottom of the tower, where there could be an EMS team, for example."

"You're generally very high off the ground and over rough terrain, so you're going to need a unique way of evacuating people. If your choice is to lower from the cable to the ground, it's going to be a long distance," says Cylvick. "Generally you have to use the cable that

"Rescuers need to train consistently and it has to be documented," he says. "They have to try and think of every scenario they may encounter,"

the [stranded customers] are on to evacuate them to the bottom."

With an assisted rescue, operators will get a system in position and secure, assist, and coach a patient through a rescue using a spectrum of belays or a combination of methods, says Williams, but a rescuer still has to get into a "work position," where he or she can be hands-free. The benefits of assisted access in this manner are that rescuers can directly communicate

with the patient, ensure that all rigging is correct, and maintain eye contact for reassurance. Once the patient has been accessed, in accordance with the rescue plan, the evacuation can begin.

The Evacuation

"Once that system is in place, then you focus on the evacuation side of it," says Williams. "In an adventure park setting, they're going to be most likely in suspension, hanging from a pulley in the middle of the zip line."

At that point, there are several options. It may be possible to progress the guest along the cable or tow the guest to the next tower. If not, the rescuer must install a system that has the capability to raise and unweight them from the attachment point, and then to lower them—with control—to a safe landing zone.

If the guest has to be lowered to the ground due to a medical emergency, a stuck trolley, or other failure, this may be done either by the rescuer who accesses and installs the system, or by a ground team.

However, none of these procedures matter if no plan is in place. So start with an assessment of all the things that could go wrong, develop a plan to address the possible emergencies, train to deal with them, and pray you'll never need to—but be ready when you must. That's an operator's responsibility to both employees and guests.

parallel lines

Presenters Wanted

Online Workshop Opportunities!

Are you an ACCT Member that would like to share your expertise with the international challenge course, zip line, and aerial adventure community? If you're interested in providing an online webinar or workshop that you feel would be valuable to our members, please contact us so we can talk! Contact: ACCT PR & Marketing Chair Mandy Stewart at mandy@experientialresources.net



ACCT has partnered with Business to Business Member Be A Better Guide to bring you a FREE online workshop!

This workshop focused on customer service and “soft skills” that can transform good guides into great guides! The workshop is not intended to provide technical skills instruction, but will offer tips and strategies that trainers and guides can use to consistently provide awesome experiences to guests. This workshop took place on Monday July 11th but we are offering a replay - see below for details!

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Here's what you will discover in this free online workshop:

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- Mentoring 101: How to use a 'Coaching Card' and inspiring excellence in your team

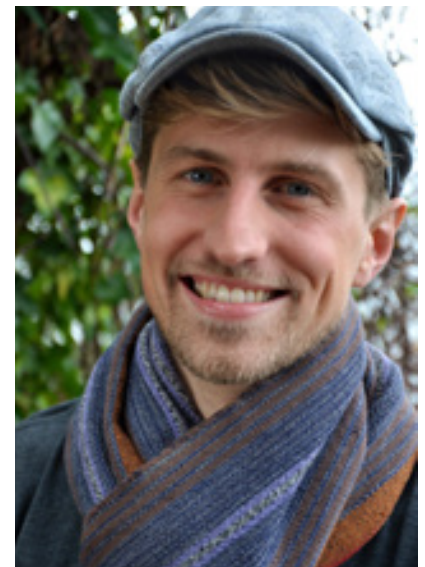
Register now to receive a copy of the workshop replay! All registrants will also receive a complimentary PDF of Be A Better Guide's simple and elegant Tour Leader Coaching Card.

In addition, we hosted a live Q & A at the end where participants asked questions related DIRECTLY to your individual hiring and training needs!

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About the Presenter

Kelsey Tonner is an experienced, global tour guide and founder of the [Be a Better Guide Project](#), a movement that brings together tour guides and tour operators from around the world to learn from one another. His mission is to help anyone, anywhere, create extraordinary experiences for travellers. With over ten years experience in the industry, he has led trips in over fifteen different countries from Europe to the Americas and from Asia to North Africa. He has been a wilderness trip leader, a dog-sledding guide, a volunteer coordinator in an Inuit community and spent four years leading hiking, biking and multi-sport trips with Backroads Canada. He has visited over sixty countries and set foot on all seven continents. In 2015, Kelsey was chosen from thousands as one of eight shortlisted guides for the Wanderlust World Guide Awards. With practical yet wisecracking advice, Kelsey inspires a global community of professional tour leaders and businesses to give people memories of a lifetime and helps them earn more money while doing it.



Read more: <http://www.beabetterguide.com/about/>

ACCT Mission Statement

The Association for Challenge Course Technology establishes and promotes the standard of care and measure of excellence that defines professional practice and effective challenge course programs. ACCT develops, refines, and publishes standards for Installing, maintaining, and managing challenge courses; provides forums for education and professional development; and advocates for the challenge course and adventure industry.

ACCT Vision Statement

The Association for Challenge Course Technology is the undisputed industry leader, advancing the industry and enabling members' on-going success.

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