The Practical COAG

I realize many of us refer to the Camping/Outdoor Activity Guide (COAG) in last minute desperation to find a form to fill out. I'd like to remind all Leaders that the COAG also contains some useful information regarding to content of Program Activities. The following is a list of the Activities specifically defined by the COAG. If your program plan includes one of these activities, the first step in developing a program plan would be to ensure the suggestions and guidelines in Section 4 are incorporated. Three activities common in Langley Scouting are included as examples.

The List

Hiking and Backpacking
River Crossings
Camping
Snowshoeing
Initiative Games and Problem-Solving Exercises
Cross Country Skiing and Back Country Skiing
Orienteering
Expeditions and Remote Wilderness Travel
Bicycle Touring
Flat Water Canoeing and Kayaking
Mountain Biking
White Water Canoeing and Kayaking
Artificial Wall Climbing
Sea Kayaking
Top Rope Rock Climbing
Sailing.
Rappelling
Power Boating
Caving
Power or Sail Cruising

Example 1

1. HIKING AND BACKPACKING
General - Hiking and backpacking activities may combine a number of other skills found in other sections so those will apply accordingly.
C. Planning And Research:
1.C.10 Leaders have contingency plans for emergency campsites in the event that an emergency or
change of route plan requires them.
E. Environment:
1.E.03 Campsites, shelters, tarps, and hammocks are utilized in a manner so as to limit impact on the environment.
Explanation: In most circumstances, the use of tents, tarps, or hammocks rather than constructing shelters from surrounding resources are the least invasive methods of providing shelter. There are exceptions, including: a) snow igloos or quinzhees in winter settings, and b) emergency situations. When there is a choice, tents and tarps are set up on sand, duff, or mineral soil and not vegetated
areas. Hammocks are hung from trees sturdy enough not to be pulled down or scarred. When the shelter is taken down, the area appears to be in its natural state.

Example 2

15. FLAT WATER CANOEING AND KAYAKING
This section includes operations in Tandem Canoe, Solo Canoe, and Kayaks. Flat water canoeing and kayaking may combine a number of standards found in other sections, so those will apply accordingly.
B. Leadership
15.B.04 Leaders are aware of and comply with legal statutes as well as rules and regulations for PFD's
15.B.11 Adequate supervision is provided for flat water canoeing and kayaking.
Explanation: Visual supervision is done for beginners and individuals unfamiliar with the activity area, or when participants could inappropriately deviate from the intended route.
C. Planning And Research
15.C.06 Adequate instruction is provided for flat water canoeing and kayaking.
Explanation: Some of the strokes include, but may not be limited to: a) power strokes; b) turning; c) corrective strokes; d) braces. Some of the manoeuvres may include, but may not be limited to: a) spins; b) forward straight; c) reverse straight; d) sideslips or shifts; e) eddy turns or peelout; f) bracing; g) ferries; h) rolling.
D. Equipment, Nutrition And Hygiene
15.D.01 Participants have, or are provided with, a list of appropriate items required for the activity and conditions to be encountered.
Explanation: Factors that determine these items include, but may not be limited to: a) temperature of the water and air; b) the length of time participants may spend in the water; c) the degree of difficulty of the rapid; d) the experience level of the participant.
15.D.02 Leaders and participants have, or are provided with, and use appropriate Personal Floatation Devices (PFD's) for each water activity.
Explanation: Leaders are aware that the leading cause of any boating fatality stems from not wearing an appropriate, properly fitted PFD. Requirements for the PFD's include but are not limited to: a) there are
appropriate numbers of PFD's available; b) PFD's meet the standards set by the Canadian Coast Guard; c) PFD's are the appropriate type (e.g. Type I, II, III, or IV PFD's), size, and fit for each user based on the type of activity, conditions and water craft used; d) buoyancy is sufficient to support the particular
participant's weight; e) a safety check is conducted immediately prior to use; f) PFD's are in serviceable condition, including working clasps and zippers. PFD's are cared for in an appropriate manner.
Explanation: This includes but may not be limited to: a) wet PFD's are allowed to dry thoroughly before storing; b) storage is in a well-ventilated area. The program follows an appropriate inspection schedule for PFD's.
Explanation: This includes, but may not be limited to a) inspections are conducted prior to participant use; b) all PFD's are tested annually for buoyancy. The purchase or rental, maintenance and replacement of PFD's is properly conducted and recorded.
Explanation: This includes, but may not be limited to: a) purchaser/renter is aware of the type of PFD's required for the various water activities; b) maintenance is conducted according to manufacturer's recommendations; c) PFD's are replaced when they no longer perform as intended.
D.03 Leaders teach the appropriate use and fit of PFD's.
Explanation: This includes, but may not be limited to: a) participants are taught how to fit and fasten PFD's properly; b) participants are informed as to how their PFD works in the water under the conditions they are likely to experience; c) participants are taught to check PFD's prior to each use; d) participants are taught to bring any damaged PFD's to the instructor's attention; e) PFD's are not altered

or used in a manner for which they are not intended; f) participants are informed of and, when appropriate, practise the methods of swimming while wearing PFD's. Leaders keep up-to-date on changes in technology for PFD's.
15.D.06 Leaders have checked the participants to ensure that they are adequately equipped and prepared for the activity and the group has appropriate emergency and repair kits.
Explanation: Available rescue equipment includes: throw lines/throw bags, painter lines, grab loops, pulley and rope systems, repair kits.
F. Conducting The Activity
15.F.03 Appropriate safety procedures are followed for flat water canoeing and kayaking.
Explanation: This includes, but may not be limited to considering the water temperature in relation to the clothing, skills, and abilities of the participants to determine whether to enter the program area or not.

Example 3

7. ARTIFICIAL WALL CLIMBING
Artificial wall climbing may combine a number of other skills found in other sections, so those will apply accordingly.
General - The program uses or has constructed an artificial climbing wall with hard and soft materials which meet accepted standards.
Explanation: The program uses or has built an artificial climbing wall that meets accepted standards. Considerations include but are not limited to: a) the site or existing structure can accommodate the additional loads of an artificial climbing structure; b) the climbing structure conforms to local zoning requirements and building codes; c) the design of the climbing structure is appropriate for the site; d) the climbing structure is designed and constructed to withstand the loads and forces acting on all components; e) the structure was constructed using appropriate construction materials and techniques; f) the structure incorporates an appropriate impact-absorbing surface at the base; and g) all soft materials conform to appropriate standards and are of the appropriate type and strength for their intended use.

B. Leadership
7.B.05 Leaders are familiar with the activity areas and the type of terrain where the activities are to be
conducted, and can adapt to changing conditions.
Explanation: Even though many programs have relied upon outside contractors to construct their artificial walls, leaders should have an appropriate working knowledge of the accepted standards for the construction and conduct of activities on artificial walls. Appropriate staff need to know the following terminology and accepted usage and standards associated therewith: a) safe working load (SWL); b) minimum breaking strength (MBS); c) carabineers (kinds, materials, strengths); d) pulleys (kinds, sizes, strengths); e) belay devices (kinds, materials, strengths); f) static and dynamic belay methods; g) belay anchors; and h) harnesses (kinds, materials, strength).
7.B.10 The climbs selected are appropriate for the level of participant skills.
Explanation: The training area and routes selected are within the physical and psychological capabilities of participants. Participants are not put on routes that are beyond their level of physical and psychological readiness.
C. Planning And Research
7.C.01 Appropriate inspection of the climbing wall is conducted prior to programming, and adjustments are made accordingly.
7.C.06 Adequate instruction is provided for artificial wall climbing.
Explanation: This includes, but is not limited to:a) belaying techniques; b) belay signals; c) lowering technique; d) protection. Participants are instructed how to spot for each other when appropriate. Explanation: Because learning how to support and protect someone's head and upper body when he/she is falling can prevent serious injury, this technique is taught before any

climbing is done unroped and, therefore, unbelayed. The maximum height for climbing above the spotter is at the spotter's shoulder
height. Participants are also taught the difference between spotting and catching.
Appropriate knots are used for all tie-in situations.
Explanation: Climbing knots appropriate for the ends, middle, and tying two ends together are used. The knots used are appropriate for the application and the material being tied. Participants are tied in correctly.
Explanation: Rope is tied in directly to a properly fastened harness. The climbing rope is properly threaded through the harness and tied with a figure eight follow through and back- up knot or other appropriate knot and back-up. In certain situations, a bowline or bowline on a coil may be used to tie directly into the rope.

F. Conducting The Activity

7.F.01 Participants climb at an appropriate level ofcontrol and speed.
Explanation: This includes but may not be limited to ensuring that participants climb no faster than the belayer can take in rope.

7.F.02 If programming is conducted in diminished conditions, it is limited to appropriate times and appropriate safety precautions are in place.
Explanation: Appropriate precautions are taken for the use of outdoor climbing structures in diminished conditions.

7.F.03 Appropriate safety procedures are followed for artificial wall climbing.
Explanation: Safety procedures include, but may not be limited to; a) attention to falling objects or climbers; b) spotting techniques; c) assessment of competency with rope and belay systems; d) helmet use; e) assessment of effective harness use; f) harness tie in. Leaders are aware that helmets are not a requirement for artificial climbing walls. Helmets are constructed to protect one's head from falling
objects rather than from actually falling.