

Tasmanian Climbing Instructors Association

2013 Newsletter



Important Changes

The 2013 AGM was held on 16 September and a significant change was made to add a new qualification to the already existing;

- Indoor Climbing Guide (ICG),
- Basic Abseil Instructor (BAI),
- Top Rope Abseil Instructor (TRA) and;
- Multi Pitch Guide (MPG).

• The new qualification Single Pitch Guide (SPG), will replace the TRA;
It enables instructors to:

- Instruct basic abseil sessions
- Instruct Top Rope sessions
- Lead and guide single pitch routes, with easy access to top and bottom with maximum of two clients.

Assessment will remain the same as per the Abseil session, and the Top rope session. Further assessment will occur during the lead climbing module which will include:

- Bringing clients to base of routes,
- Briefing
- Teaching lead belaying

- Leading a route
- Rigging a guiding standard rig
- Belaying with and without use of guide type belay plates
- Lowering rescues, hauling (3:1)
- Escaping from the route
- Abseiling with clients from single pitch cliff top.

The TCIA will maintain the TRA qualification for those that already hold it, but recommends that existing TRA's upgrade to SPG.

TRA to SPG Workshop:

This will be done by attending a workshop that will demonstrate lead belaying, belay techniques relevant to belaying from above and rescues. In order to upgrade to SPG, the TRA will have to demonstrate competence. This workshop will be provided by the TCIA independent of TAFE.

The date of this workshop will be decided shortly and notified to TRA's. All other TCIA members are welcome to attend the workshop, which will probably be held at Blackman's Bay Blowhole. Contact Nick Hancock TCIA Secretary on 6245 0825 or 0438 368657 or at nickhancockphotography@hotmail.com if you have any questions.

There have been some Candidates who have completed their SPG assessment, but on the day were not assessed on their rescue. These Members will be changed to TRA, until they upgrade to SPG via a free workshop.

The transition process:

There are two members that have already sat an SPG assessment, these two will be contacted shortly and requested that they attend the nearest workshop as moderation.

This now means that the SPG qualification clarifies a grey area. Which was "Can a TRA lead with students/clients?" The simple answer is no. TRA instructors are only qualified to take groups Abseiling and Top Roping. SPG qualified instructors can also guide Single pitch routes with up to two clients, adhering to professional judgement in venue specific areas;

Some examples of appropriate sites include:

- easy access
- with good rock
- less than fifty metres in height
- have good visual and vocal communication.

A TRA instructor may lead a route to set up a top rope, but must be lead belayed by staff; not students. This qualification does not allow you to teach lead belaying, or take clients single pitch climbing.

Hillwood is an example where a TRA instructor may lead a route prior to group arriving, utilising staff to belay and bolted anchors at the top.

The SPG qualification would allow the Member to lead a pitch to the top of the cliff and bring clients up to them. It would not be appropriate to bring clients up to a stance anywhere on a cliff face.

Accidents and New Techniques

Outside of Tasmania there have been several accidents where rated climbing equipment (i.e. 22kN) has broken. Breakage has been largely due to shock loading Spectra/Dyneema lanyards, slings and Personal Attachment Systems (PAS). It must be remembered that the only piece of equipment that can be at all relied on to absorb shock loading, is a dynamic climbing rope. All other equipment can be broken surprisingly easily with shock loading. The impact force generated by even a tiny fall, can exceed the 22kN of rated climbing gear, for a millisecond, and lead to its failure.

The TCIA recommends attachment by dynamic climbing rope, preferably by tie in, rather than clipped, wherever practical. A particular danger is stepping up a bit, when attached to the anchor by anything other than a dynamic climbing rope. The waist attachment in these instances must be kept tight and below the anchor.

There have also been accidents abseiling with Figure 8 Descenders. This is because the Figure 8 Descender can misalign itself over the gate of a screwgate carabiner and break the sleeve open in an inwards direction. This is because the inward breaking strength of a carabiner is very low (possibly as low as 100-200kg) and the leverage from the Figure 8 Descender can exceed the carabiner's inward strength. The Figure 8 Descender and rope is then unattached to the carabiner and abseiler. As a result it is only safe to use a Figure 8 Descender when a separate safety rope is used to belay the abseiler. This means that an Instructor should use an alternative device, such as an ATC belay plate, of course always with a prussic back up.

When belaying from above there are failings in using a standard ATC type belay plate. When pulling through the slack rope as the climber ascends, the rope must be moved to the unlocked position for a short time. If the climber falls at this moment it is easy to drop him or her, as unlike when belaying upwards the brake hand has to be manually moved back to the locked position. When belaying upwards the belayer's body is pulled forwards and the belay hand is kept still by inertia, thereby helping to lock the rope.

Therefore the TCIA recommends using either, a Munter Hitch, a Guide Device or a GriGri, when top belaying. However, Members will need to know how to use these devices before using them. This is particularly relevant to Guide Type Devices which are very hard to release if weighted. Contact Nick Hancock on 6245 0825 or 0438 368657 or at nickhancockphotography@hotmail.com if you have any questions.

Equipment

Climbing equipment manufacturers generally state that metal equipment can be used indefinitely if it is regularly inspected and is free from defects. Nylon equipment should be retired ten years from the date of its manufacture, or earlier if it is defective. Nylon is particularly weakened by solvents and acids, especially car battery acid. Therefore all climbing equipment should be stored in a bag whilst in a vehicle and should never be placed unprotected in a road, car park or garage.

Membership

With the addition of the ICG to its instructor base the TCIA is now a much larger Association with a healthy bank balance. It is widely recognised as having the most professional standards in

Australia, and has been made more viable with its long association with TAFE Tasmania. TAFE covers most of the costs incurred in Training and Assessment which are considerably higher than the fees charged to Candidates. Membership fees maintain the TCIA account at a fairly constant level. Outgoings from this account go to shared equipment purchases with TAFE. This equipment is available for use during Training and Assessment Weekends. Other payments are made for special work done by the Committee and special expenses. Contact Alex Wilson the Treasurer for details.

New Guidebook

Gerry Narcowicz is shortly bringing out a new guidebook to Tasmania that covers several new areas, which are not currently covered by any guidebooks. (See photos). Of course thesarvo.com is still an excellent resource for cliff information, as well as general information, including lost and found.

Hobart Climbing Wall Reopening

The climbing gym on Bathurst Street is due to reopen in October 2013.

