



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

BRC Student Handbook

The BOEALPS Basic Rock Class (BRC) is meant for individuals who have completed the Basic Mountaineering Class (BMC), or other similarly qualified individuals, to gain more experience climbing rock in preparation for the Alpine Climbing Class (ACC), instructing the BMC, or just honing their skills on rock. It was designed to bridge the gap between the Basic Mountaineering and Alpine Climbing Classes. It introduces students to principles of technical rock and basic alpine climbing, allows them to establish mentorship relationships with more experienced climbers through a 1:1 student-to-instructor ratio, and gives them experience in following a traditional (trad) lead climber who will lay the groundwork for learning to lead after the class.

Course Objectives

- Teach the students how to follow on moderate rock climbing routes that are naturally protected (trad)
- Improve climbing technique
- Teach students the mechanics of trad gear, including gear placement and anchor building
- Teach the students the skills needed to begin the ACC that are not covered in the BMC
- Give club members the necessary skills to set top-ropes at local climbing areas
- Expose students to multi-pitch climbing in the alpine environment
- Encourage students to become more independent in trip planning

The class will consist of up to six classroom lectures; one weekday skills review prior to a skills outing at Leavenworth, four climbing outings, and a climbing / stewardship outing.

The best way to learn to climb is to climb a lot! This course can be a very worthwhile and memorable experience for those who have the desire and willingness to put forth the kind of energy needed to push mental and physical limits and expand personal horizons. Ultimately, what each student gets out of the class is a result of their effort, commitment, and attitude towards the class.

What to Expect

This class is organized and administered by volunteers who love to share their joy of climbing with others. We strive to do our best, but we are learning too. We are not professional instructors, so please be patient and don't hesitate to ask questions.

Students must spend time preparing for outings and doing research on the goals for each weekend. Evening class sessions begin with a discussion of the previous outing, followed by an informal presentation, followed by time for questions and answers. These discussions allow many different viewpoints to be heard and help students to gain a more personal insight into the topic being covered.

Our instruction focuses on you as an individual and your personal abilities and goals. Students will be assigned climbs, partners, and instructors for all except the alpine climb with a focus on having you climb with as many different students and instructors as possible. While couples or climbing partners may take this class together, please be aware that close personal relationships infuse complexities into the learning environment that, as volunteers, we don't necessarily have the awareness of or skills to deal with them.



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

For those reasons, we generally don't assign couples to climb together during skill outings or on the alpine outings.



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

Class Lectures

Class lectures last from 6:30 to 9:00 PM, typically on the Monday or Tuesday night before an outing (see calendar for official dates). They start with a discussion of the previous outing. Next, a seminar topic will be presented by one or more instructors and/or guests, and the topic is discussed in depth. Finally, there is time for making plans for upcoming climbs, carpools formed, and routes discussed. Students are expected to have done some research and have read class handouts concerning the topic prior to the class so that meaningful discussions can take place during the session.

Weekend Outings

Students should help plan weekend outings lasting from Friday night until late Sunday night. This will not always be the case, but it should be planned for. When on an outing it is always all participants' responsibility to state if they believe it is unsafe to proceed and to work as a team through the situation.

Upon completion of each outing, instructors will provide constructive student evaluations that will be shared with their student(s). This feedback is important as it allows students to 1) review their progression through the BRC, 2) learn from their experiences, 3) expand their knowledge of rock climbing, and 4) allow follow-on outings to concentrate on aspects that will enhance the students climbing skills.

Equipment

Students will be expected to provide all of the following equipment when required for the outing. Following is a list of the typical items needed for the course. Supplies are needed by the first outing. Please feel free to check in with the instructors prior to purchasing if you have any questions.

- Rock shoes
- UIAA Approved Climbing helmet
- Climbing harness
- Belay/rappel device with teeth (such as Black Diamond *ATC-Guide, ATC-XP, Petzl *Reverso, Petzl Verso). *with guide mode recommended if buying new but not required
- Nut tool
- Personal anchor: pre-fabricated "personal anchor" (such as Metolius PAS or Petzl Connect Adjust)
- Cordelette (16-20 ft, 7mm cord)
- 3 Locking carabiners
- 3 Non-locking carabiners
- Pulley
- Small knife
- 2 short prusiks
- 10 Essentials
- Chalk bag
- Tape for crack gloves or hand jammies



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

Class Size and Acceptance Criteria

The BRC is limited to 12 students in order to keep the student-to-instructor ratio low providing the highest quality of the course. This class size also keeps the class safe and enjoyable. The BRC advisory board will determine the acceptance criteria. Priority is given to Boeing employees and those who plan to help instruct BRC or BMC, or take ACC.

Course Attendance and Completion

To successfully complete the course, a student must show proficiency in all the skills taught, usually by conducting a graduation climb. The class is structured such that each class session and outing builds on those before it, therefore: attending the scheduled evening sessions and weekend outings is vital. In the case of the first three skill outings, student attendance is mandatory and nonnegotiable. For all other outings, exceptions may be allowed at the discretion of the chief instructor for cases of family crisis, medical concerns, business travel, etc. In cases of exceptions, it will be the student's responsibility to schedule a make-up with a qualified instructor.

Course Fees and Refund Policy

The course fee is as follows and is due with your application:

- \$300 Members
- \$330 Non-members

Refund Amounts:

- Before Leavenworth Outing: 100%
- After Leavenworth Outing: 0% (No refund)



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

Course Rules

1. Only currently registered students and instructors of the BOEALPS Basic Rock Class may participate in class sessions and field trips. All participants must have signed a current BOEALPS Liability Release Form. Friends, relatives, climbing buddies, and pets CAN NOT participate. On car camping field trips, friends, family, and pets are welcome to join us in the camping area after climbing activities are finished for the day.
2. Students and instructors will be prepared physically and mentally, and will have researched the plan by the designated meeting time. Do your homework!
3. Alcohol, illegal and recreational drugs are not allowed during class sessions and field trips. Do not show up or participate in any outing under the influences of mind-altering substances. On car camping outings, there will be two designated non-drinking instructors. Except for these individuals, students and instructors may consume alcohol at the camping area after climbing activity is complete.
4. Proper clothing and equipment are required for students to participate in outings.
5. To participate in a scheduled field trip, students need to be on time and present when the class leaves the parking area.
6. Students should plan on each weekend outing lasting from Friday afternoon until late Sunday night. Students should not make evening plans following field trips. Parties are not overdue until noon Monday. In the event a party is overdue, students must inform their families and friends not to call Mountain Rescue, the County Sheriff, the National Park, Boeing or Instructors. There will be a designated "call in" instructor, which all parties need to call when they return from their outing. Be sure to give family the "call in" instructor's number to contact if concerned.
7. Harassment in any form (sexual, ethnical, or other) will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from the course.
8. Anyone violating the foregoing or acting in a manner that may endanger themselves or others is subject to immediate dismissal from the course.
9. Students MUST adequately complete the skills field trip, or get equivalent experience with a BRC instructor.
10. The course is dependent on traveling to Canada for Squamish outings. All participants must be able to enter Canada, and individuals with past convictions or driving offenses could be prohibited from entering.
11. Everybody participating in the BOEALPS Basic Rock Course must wear a climbing helmet approved by the International Union of Alpine Associates (UIAA) during outings.



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

Skills Night

Mountaineers Building

Knots:

- BMC knots
- Clove hitch
- Butterfly knot
- Munter hitch
- EDK

Belay:

- Lead belay with ATC
- Lead belay with GriGri
- Escaping the belay

Rappel:

- ATC rappel
- Munter rappel

Other:

- Ascending the rope
- Z-pulley

Bolted anchors

- Setting up
- Clean and rappel
- Clean and lower

Outings

Leavenworth - Skills and Intro. to Crack Climbing

This will be a full weekend outing with basic skills covered on Saturday and climbing practice on Sunday.

Saturday morning (Mountaineers Dome)

Knots:

- BMC knots
- Clove hitch
- Butterfly knot
- Munter hitch

Belay:

- Lead belay with ATC
- Lead belay with GriGri
- Escaping the belay



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

Rappel:

- ATC rappel
- Munter rappel

Other:

- Ascending the rope
- Z-pulley

Saturday Afternoon

- Discuss setting bolted anchors for top roping
- Students will demonstrate and instructors will critique
- Discuss setting natural anchors (trees, slung rocks) for top roping
- Students will demonstrate and instructors will critique
- Introduce traditional climbing protection (names, uses, etc.)
- Discuss setting traditional climbing protection (nuts, cams, etc.)
- Students will demonstrate and instructors will critique
- Discuss building gear anchors and what makes a gear anchor safe/unsafe
- Discuss cleaning gear anchors
- Students will demonstrate and instructors will critique
- Discuss cleaning a bolted top rope anchor
- Instructors will demonstrate multi-pitch

-Climb-

- Top rope climbing, focusing on technique, foot placement, body position
- Have the students clean the top rope anchors

Sunday Morning

- Discuss racking gear
- Discuss lead belaying
- Discuss managing a belay station
- Discuss transferring the belay
- Instructors will demonstrate these skills on a route
- Students will demonstrate these skills on a route with an instructor climbing
- Discuss gear removal (basics and tricks)
- Discuss racking while cleaning
- Review skills as needed from previous day and/or skills night

-Climb-

- Single-pitch trad, instructors leading, students following
- If possible, simulate a belay station midway through to practice transferring the belay. Hanging belays ok.



Boeing Employees Alpine Society

Basic Rock Class ("BRC") Student Handbook

Squamish 1 - Single-Pitch Climbing

The purpose of this outing is to expose the students to another climbing area, to gain more experience climbing in a single-pitch environment, and to have fun!

Skills Covered

Sport and traditional climbing, instructors leading, students following

Squamish 2 - Single- and Multi-Pitch Climbing

The purpose of this outing is to expose the students to another climbing area, to gain more experience climbing in an environment with multi-pitch possibilities, and to have the students climb as a group.

Skills Covered

Traditional single and multi-pitch climbing

Washington Pass - Alpine Climbing

The purpose of this climb is to expose the students to multi-pitch trad climbing in an alpine environment. This is an experience outing, so no specific skills are scheduled to be taught. Instructors are to emphasize the importance of packing light and may want to review the contents of the student's pack.

Format

This climb will pair students and instructors in a 1:1 ratio, and typically will be grouped with another student/instructor pair, resulting in 4 climbers per route.

Climb Selection/Preparation

Climb selection is at the discretion of the lead instructors. Preparation is the responsibility of the instructors who will be going on the climb. All mountains and routes are to be approved by the class lead instructor.

The students and instructors should meet to discuss the specifics of a climb prior to going out on a weekend. Students and instructors are encouraged to climb together prior to the outing at an indoor climbing gym or similar previous to the weekend outing. Students are expected to take the lead in research and trip planning, including filling out a climb plan, beta sheet, and expected timeline.

Types of Climbs

The climbs should be easily led by the instructor; they are not to be leading at their limit. Climbs will be single-day alpine climbs.

Tieton - Stewardship & Climbing

The addition of this new fifth outing in the 2022 class is to promote good stewardship of crags and climbing areas and to help promote Boealps by giving back to the community. As climbing becomes more popular, it is important that we have a positive impact on the land and resources we are using.



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This outing was updated in the 2024 class to include anchor building, and intro to trad placements via mock leading. Students will also have an opportunity to mock lead (i.e., with backup top-rope belay) with trad gear, allowing them to experience placing protection while climbing and with instructor supervision.

Saturday Morning

Half day stewardship activity with Yakima Climbing Scene

Saturday Afternoon

Skills Covered:

- Anchor building with trad gear
- Setting up bolted anchors

Sunday

Goals

- Climbing mileage on top rope
- Optional: Mock trad leading while on top rope

Squamish 3 - Mock leading

The addition of this new sixth outing in the 2026 class is to provide trad gear placement and leading instruction through mock trad leading (students will place gear and clip a mock lead rope, while on a top rope). Students also have the option to actually lead a climb that they have mock led with if they are feeling ready and if they have demonstrated the requisite skills, at instructors' discretion.