



## **Technical Rock Climbing Regulations and Guidelines**

The towering rock formations in the Colorado Springs area have been a climbing destination for decades. Each year, over 7,500 technical climbers receive a **free** annual permit to ascend rocks that were formed millions of years ago. Technical climbing on these ancient rock formations is managed to help protect the resource while providing for the enjoyment and challenge of the sport.

**Climbing is an inherently dangerous activity. Technical Climbing is at your own risk. The City of Colorado Springs does not install, inspect, nor maintain the fixed protection devices. Your safety is your own responsibility.**

Rock Climbing is governed by City Code 9.9.104 as well as administrative regulations and guidelines set forth by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director. **Technical climbing is only permitted in the Garden of the Gods, Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Cheyenne Canyon, and Ute Valley Park.**

### **Section 1 – General Technical Climbing Rules**

(all approved sites)

- 1. Every technical climber must register annually in person at the Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center, 1805 North 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904. 719-219-0108.**
- 2. Rock Scrambling is prohibited.**
  - a. Rock Scrambling is defined as climbing on a rock formation more than ten feet above its base without using proper equipment.
- 3. Technical Climbing is permitted.**
  - a. Technical climbing is defined as climbing on a rock formation in parties of two or more, using proper equipment, which shall, as a minimum, consist of:
    - o A rope specifically designed for climbing which meets or exceeds the current minimum standards of the Union International Alpinist Association (UIAA).
    - o Carabiners to clip to the fixed protection (piton, expansion bolt, or eye bolt previously placed in the rock) and/or an assortment of removable chocks or camming devices to adequately protect the leader's ascent and to allow the climb to be safely seconded.
- 4. Sport Rappelling.**
  - a. Sport Rappelling is defined as hiking or walking to the top of or edge of any rock formation or structure and rappelling downward. Sport Rappelling is only allowed in Cheyenne Canon Park. Rappelling in the other parks shall only be performed in conjunction with ascents by technical climbers.
- 5. Bouldering is permitted except on Sentinel Rock, Red and White Twin Spires, Signature Rock, and on the South face of North Gateway Rocks in the Garden of the Gods.**
  - a. Bouldering is defined as climbing or traversing on smaller rocks or at the base of a larger rock formation to a maximum or height of ten feet (10') above the base of the rock.
- 6. Refrain from placing additional permanent protection (pitons, expansion bolts, etc.) in the rock unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons.**
- 7. The use of chalk (calcium carbonate) in conjunction with technical climbing and bouldering is prohibited. A chalk substitute that does not discolor the rock may be used.**
- 8. Climbing near raptor nesting sites is prohibited. Climbing near migrating white-throated swift roosting sites is also prohibited. Seasonal closures of routes near nesting sites will be posted at the trailhead leading to the climb.**
  - a. Seasonal closures will normally include, but are not limited to, sections of the east faces of Gray Rock and North Gateway Rock from April 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup> and the west face of the north end of North Gateway Rock (Tower of Babel) from September 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 9. Permanent slings may be left only at the belay points where necessary for safety reasons. Any webbing left on the rock surface must match the color of the rock.**

## Section 2 – Additional Red Rock Canyon Open Space Rules

1. All of the rules entitled "General Technical Climbing Rules" apply to RRCOS.
2. Technical climbing at Red Rock Canyon Open Space (RRCOS) is limited to the main section of Red Rock Canyon that leads south from the shelter. No technical climbing is permitted in the historic quarry.  
**Technical climbing is not permitted in other areas of RRCOS.**
3. RRCOS is a sandstone climbing area with approximately 80 established routes. Climbers shall utilize only these established routes to minimize the risks of environmental damage. As a sandstone climbing area, climbers should keep in mind that in addition to the typical climbing risks, there will be a greater-than-normal risk of holds breaking off, even on established routes. Use of a climbing helmet by both the climber and the belayer is recommended.
4. Established routes are set up with bolted rappel and lowering anchors below the cliff tops. Climbers must not leave colored slings on the walls except in case of an emergency.
5. New route development at RRCOS is a managed process. Therefore, **no new fixed protection is to be placed at RRCOS without going through an approval process.** At the climber's discretion, individual bolts may be replaced for safety reasons. For more information on establishing new routes, contact the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department at 719-385-5940. Ask for contact information regarding the Red Rock Canyon Climber's Committee. Any new routes will be reviewed through a climbing committee process. Final approval will be made by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Service Department.

## Section 3 – Guidelines for Voluntary Compliance

1. Climbers should schedule and conduct their climbs during the daylight hours. Though it is recognized that some climbs may not end until after nightfall due to unexpected difficulties, the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department strongly discourages climbers from deliberately planning and executing night climbs.
2. Although there are not age limitations for rock climbing, all climbers including children must register. Minors are strongly encouraged to be accompanied by a registered adult rock climber.
3. Use approved established trails to access technical climbs.
4. Temporary slings may be left in the event a climber must lower off a route unexpectedly due to weather or failure to reach an established ascent anchor. The subsequent removal of temporary slings is the responsibility of all technical climbers.
5. Climbing after rain, snow or freezing temperatures may unnaturally hasten the deterioration of rock surfaces. Climbers are asked to refrain from climbing on any formation that appears visually wet or in a frosted condition.

## Section 4 – Penalties

1. The failure of any climber to abide by the rules in Sections 1 and 2 above shall be subject, upon conviction, to a maximum five hundred dollar (\$500.00) fine, loss of climbing privileges for twelve (12) months, or both.