

The Swedish Climbing Association – official standards for
ADVANCED ICE CLIMBING COURSE

Valid from 2012



Svenska
Klätterförbundet

Utbildning

The Swedish Climbing Association – official standards for **ADVANCED ICE CLIMBING COURSE**

Herein are described the Swedish Climbing Association's official standards for Advanced Ice Climbing Course. The standards have been established by the Training Committee of the Swedish Climbing Association. The standards prescribe the minimum level that climbing clubs affiliated to the Swedish Climbing Association and others arranging ice climbing courses are encouraged to adhere to. Naturally, the courses may live up to higher, more stringent standards than those stated below. Courses at a lower level can only be described as trial activities or similar, and may not give the impression of being a complete advanced ice climbing course.

Goals

- The course should, in an inspirational manner, clearly raise the pupil's level of skills at using climbing equipment to climb safely and effectively on steep ice in a sub alpine environment.
- The course should be adaptable to the needs of the pupils, but should aim at providing the skills the pupil will need after the course to be able to:
 - Climb with a top rope at beginners' level on their own
 - Lead climb on easy terrain and climb in a team on longer routes
 - Use several different belaying and abseiling/rappelling techniques and perform multiple consecutive abseils/rappells
 - Use goal-directed training to increase their physical and mental climbing capacity
- The course should convey a responsible and humble attitude towards other people and the environment.
- The course should consolidate previous skills and knowledge, deepen and widen these, and provide the basis and encouragement for further acquisition of knowledge and skills after completion of the course.
- The pupil should have knowledge and understanding of clothing and changes in temperature.

General requirements

NAME: Advanced Ice Climbing Course

LENGTH: 2 days with at least 6 hours of practical, climbing related work every day.

PUPIL/INSTRUCTOR RATIO: Preferably 2, maximum 4 pupils per instructor. This is in order to provide a good pedagogical situation for the pupils and to enable the instructor to have an overview at all times with respect to safety.

SAFETY: The instructor must by anticipation and attention prioritise the safety of the pupils, of themselves, and of third party. The instructor must lead by example and must therefore, as must the pupils, wear a helmet during the entire course. All equipment used during the course must be in good condition and CE-approved where applicable.

INSTRUCTORS' CERTIFICATES: All instructors must be members of the Swedish Climbing Association. At least one of the instructors must be a Swedish Climbing Association Certified Ice Climbing Instructor, regardless of whether the course is arranged by a club affiliated to the Swedish Climbing Association or by another climbing course provider.

PREREQUISITES: Pupils must have participated in a basic ice climbing course according to the standards of the Swedish Climbing Association or have acquired similar skills and knowledge elsewhere.

Items

The guidelines below presuppose the pupil previously has acquired the skills and knowledge corresponding to basic ice climbing course and advanced rock climbing course. The instructor must check, and if necessary provide reinforcement of such knowledge and skill.

Equipment

Rope and equipment for modern ice climbing must be presented, as well as how ice and snow may affect the functioning of the equipment. Information on drying and equipment care before and after winter climbing.

Movement techniques

The item movement techniques should be characterized by the instructors' receptiveness to the specific needs of each pupil. Emphasis should primarily be placed on the ability to apply special techniques, and to develop the pupil's sense of strategical and creative thinking in difficult and lean ice conditions.

Knots

The pupil should be able to tie and use the following knots: figure of eight for tying into a sit harness, HMS (Italian Hitch) for belaying and abseiling/rappelling, clove hitch, overhand knot, bowline, water knot, double and triple fisherman's knot for joining ropes and webbing, and the friction knots prussik and French prussik. The characteristics of the knots and how they affect the belay chain must be discussed. After the course, the pupils must be able to coil the rope for transporting and uncoil and preparing the rope for climbing.

Belay

The pupil should learn to set up a belay mid way up an ice fall, and to choose a suitable location considering overview and safety during the continuation of the climb. The pupils should (taking into consideration the basic criteria of a good anchor) be able to connect themselves to the anchor/belay points using only the climbing rope, but also using a combination of rope and slings, where the distance to the anchor can be adjusted from the harness.

Belaying

The pupil should master the use of HMS (Italian Hitch), as well as a guide type slot device (e.g. Reverso). The pros and cons of the various methods should be discussed, and in conjunction herewith, the concepts of dynamic and static belaying methods should also be discussed. Fall dampeners should be used for lead climbing, and explanations given as to how these affect the running belays, the falling lead climber, and the second.

Team work

The pupil should be given the opportunity to, under safe circumstances, work as both lead climber and second. If the pupil is deemed ready for it, the emphasis should be placed on lead climbing, and the exercises should be targeted at increasing the pupil's efficiency, stability and choices of action rather than increasing the difficulty. The instructor should pay particular attention to the pupil's mental capacity, ability to locate good ice screw placements, and stimulate the pupil's ability at route finding and energy saving climbing.

Long abseils/rappells

The pupil should learn to perform multiple consecutive abseils/rappells on joined ropes, and in conjunction with this construct Abalakov anchors with correct back-up independent of the anchor. Safe and effective switches at anchors and pulling the rope at an anchor mid way up a face should be taught, along with a suitable method to prevent the ropes from intertwining. The complications of strong winds, as well as countermeasures, should be addressed.

Rock anchors

The pupils must be informed of how rock anchors differ in strength between summer and winter climbing. The course should include different types of pitons, e.g. knife blades, angles, etc. Piton placement and removal should be tried hands on. The difference between soft iron and chrome molybdenum steel pitons should be addressed. Bolts, e.g. glue-in types and stainless expansion bolts, should be addressed briefly, as well as how these are placed, either by hand drilling or a power drill. Environmental and ethical aspects of bolt placements should be emphasized.

Ice formations

The pupil should be given a thorough orientation regarding ice quality and ice formations, how these can be utilized for climbing, and likely strengths of different formations. E.g. icesicles, rotten thawed ice, ice mixed with snow, chandelier ice, icy cracks, etc.

Training and diet

Theoretical basis and practical exercises for training targeted at injury prevention and increasing capacity may be taught. Suitable warm-up exercises, stretching exercises and dietary advice should be included.

Hypothermia prevention

The pupil must be informed of the risks involved in outdoor cold weather activities and how equipment, food, and clothing are used to prevent hypothermia. The pupil should also learn how to treat lighter frost bite injuries and understand the seriousness of hypothermia.

Climbing areas

The pupil should be stimulated and encouraged to develop their climbing. Information about suitable climbing areas may help in this, and the instructor is expected to provide information about interesting areas, and in conjunction with this also emphasize the importance of adhering to local rules and customs.

Access

The instructor should make sure that the pupils have the information about access issues and do's and don't's in nature that is conveyed during a basic climbing course. If knowledge gaps concerning access issues are discovered, these should be addressed.

Ratings

For the hands-on climbing exercises during the course, routes should be selected that provide the pupil with a suitable balance of challenge and mental margin for proper learning.

General information

The instructor must provide information on alternatives for further training/information. The pupil must be informed of the function of a climbing log, and should be given the opportunity to acquire such a log book. At the pupil's request, the instructor must give a written certification of the pupil's participation in the course in the log book.