



INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL  
RESCUE ASSOCIATION

International Technical Rescue Association

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## Rope Rescue Sub-Charter

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# Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to administer an objective, impartial, and consistent framework for assessments of technicians, instructors, and evaluator candidates and discrepancies during assessments

## Rope Rescue Principles

- If an Evaluator is available in a region, they shall be used as an assessor instead of an Instructor for any level of assessment.
- Assessors shall not assess more than 8 candidates per day.
- Failure to complete a learning objective shall be recorded as a major discrepancy.
- Only assessments performed with the **independent assessment** model may be performed.
- Rope rescue systems shall have an appropriate number of attachment points as mandated in the learning objective. This does not supersede local requirements.
- Rope functions may be interchangeable. The function (belay, lower, raise, etc.) of the ropes may be inter-changeable during an evolution.
- Rope systems shall pass a “**hands-off**” test.
- Rope rescue systems shall have technical or procedural measures in place to inhibit human error or environmental influence when a hazard needs to be mitigated.
- Rope rescue systems must meet the guidance in the Rope Rescue Safety & Standards document.
- Steps must be taken to mitigate the potential to exacerbate patient injuries or create additional injuries.
- Instructors and evaluators are expected and required to create safe conditions for the participants in a course.

# Rope Rescue Discrepancies

## *RR1 Task Completeness*

Tasks must be completed by the candidate. Tasks will be explained to the candidate before commencing. The candidate is allowed to ask clarifying questions about the task.

Candidates need to ensure they understand the task before it is attempted. Tasks may be halted by the assessor if an unsafe condition develops. If a task is halted by an assessor, the assessor will provide a reason for the decision.

**Major:** Failure to complete a task either through the candidate giving up or by being stopped by the assessor.

**Minor:** No minor for this discrepancy

## *RR2 Reasonable Time*

Tasks are expected to be performed with continual progress. Candidates will be given reasonable time to perform tasks. A candidate is expected to show familiarity, refrain from excessive self-correcting, or take excessively longer than their peers to complete a task. If a candidate is found to be taking excessively longer than their peers, the evaluator may ask how much time the candidate needs to complete the task. The candidate must provide an answer.

**Major:** Excessive time taken over the entire assessment resulting from accumulating 2 or more minor time discrepancies.

**Minor:** Excessive time taken to perform an individual task including but not limited to:

- Excessive self-correcting
- Taking excessively longer than their peers to complete a task.

## *RR3 Appropriate PPE Selection and Use*

Appropriate PPE must be worn by the candidate. A helmet must be worn by the candidate if they are exposed to an overhead hazard or fall potential. Harnesses must be properly sized for the candidate and fit securely. Helmets and harnesses must be worn in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**Major:** Inappropriate PPE or PPE which is not used correctly.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Helmet not worn while at risk from an overhead hazard(s), falling object(s), fall potential, while suspended on a rope, and/or in designated pre-arranged areas.

- Excessive movement of a harness prevents the candidate from being able to safely perform a task.
- Harness not properly worn including buckles being unsecured.
- Personal protective equipment not used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Personal protective equipment not being worn resulting in a debilitating injury.

**Minor:** Inappropriate PPE or PPE that is not used correctly but does not cause a life safety risk. This includes but is not limited to:

- Incorrectly adjusted helmet.
- Twist in a leg loop of a harness.

## ***RR4 Appropriate Points of Attachment***

Candidates shall use an appropriate number of attachments to the rope system while performing tasks. If a two-rope system is being used, attachments to two separate ropes must be maintained at all times. If a single rope is to be used during the assessment, this must be coordinated in advance with the assessor. The candidate shall clarify the steps that will be taken to mitigate potential hazards to the assessor. The assessor shall make the final determination on the appropriateness of a backup safety line being required. A candidate may not change the technique to use a single-rope system from a two-rope system after the assessment of a task has begun.

**Major:** Failure to carry out the task with the agreed-upon points of attachment being maintained during the task.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Failure to maintain an attachment to two independent ropes when using a two-rope system.
- Failure to maintain two points of attachment with a rope system during a transfer operation.
- Failure to maintain an attachment point sufficient to support the candidate's weight, and any additional load, at all times while using the rope system.

**Minor:** No minor for this discrepancy

## ***RR5 Edge Restraint and Fall Prevention***

The candidate shall not be in a position where a fall might occur without appropriate fall prevention or edge restraint.

**Major:** Failure to use a restraint system or inappropriate use which could result in serious injury. This includes but is not limited to:

- Failure to use a restraint system near an edge without a fall protection barrier, such as a railing or half-wall
- A slip or fall past an edge resulting from a restraint system being used incorrectly.

**Minor:** Improperly set or sized edge restraint allowing movement past an edge that would not result in serious injury.

## ***RR6 Inappropriate Equipment Selection and Setup***

Initial equipment selection and setup shall be according to accepted industry best practices. Before performing a task the candidate shall perform a check of personal and system equipment ensuring it is rigged appropriately and securely.

**Major:** Inappropriate equipment selection which may compromise the safety of the candidate or system. This includes but is not limited to:

- Selection of incompatible equipment.
- Inappropriate selection and construction of an anchor system which may compromise system integrity.

**Minor:** Inappropriate equipment setup that does not compromise the safety of the candidate or system.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Once a task has begun, the candidate has to retrieve the missing or necessary equipment needed to complete the task.

## ***RR7 Inappropriate Equipment Use***

Equipment shall be used appropriately according to both industry best practices and the manufacturer's instructions.

**Major:** Use, or immediate intent, to use equipment in a manner that creates a life safety risk.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Use of equipment in a manner that causes the device to function incorrectly.
- Using a device in a manner that could result in forces that overload the device's capabilities.
- Misuse that could result in functional damage to a device.
- Unlocked connectors where a failure of the connector directly compromises system integrity.
- Attachment of the system to inappropriate non-load bearing points on a harness.

- Failure to take precautions to properly protect ropes from hazards that might result in the rope being cut.

**Minor:** Use of equipment that is not acceptable in best practices but does not create an immediate life safety risk.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Failure to lock off a **descent control device** when not in use.
- In-use unlocked connectors where a failure of the connector does not compromise system integrity.
- Cross-loading carabiners.
- Failure to take precautions to properly protect ropes from excessive abrasion.

## ***RR8 Poor Technique***

It is the candidate's responsibility to monitor personal and system equipment during a task to ensure that unsafe situations do not develop.

**Major:** Use, or immediate intent, to use a technique that creates a life safety risk. This includes but is not limited to:

- Uncontrolled descent.
- Allowing a greater than **fall factor** 1 fall potential to develop during a task.
- In use ropes tangled around an object which could result in personal injury.
- Incorrectly selected or tied knots which if loaded would compromise the integrity of the system.
- Use of equipment in a manner that could result in damage to ropes or other components.
- Careless treatment of a patient that could result in serious injury or exacerbate an existing injury

**Minor:** Use of a technique that is not acceptable in best practices but does not create an immediate life safety risk. This includes but is not limited to:

- Needing to remove knots or tangles in a rope to complete the task.
- Lack of extra friction when lowering/descending if needed.
- Inappropriate equipment used for a task.
- Incorrectly selected or tied knots that do not compromise the integrity of the system.
- Dropped equipment.

## ***RR9 Swinging or Uncontrolled Movement***

Care must be taken to minimize swinging or uncontrolled movement of either a candidate performing a maneuver on a rope or controlling a load suspended from a rope system. The

potential for uncontrolled movement must be monitored and corrected before it is allowed to develop.

**Major:** Use of a technique, or immediate intent to use a technique, that could result in uncontrolled movement that poses a serious risk of injury or damage to equipment including but not limited to:

- Actions or techniques that could result in losing control of equipment or a load connected to a rope system.
- Allowing more than 1 meter of slack to develop in an actively used rope system.

**Minor:** Excessive or unintentional movement that does not result in an immediate potential for injury or damage to equipment but displays poor technique.

## ***RR10 Inappropriate Conduct***

Candidates shall be tested on their ability to perform a task without assistance in a professional manner. All clarifying questions must be communicated with the assessor and only the assessor.

**Major:** Inappropriate conduct including but not limited to:

- Fraud, cheating, or coaching from other students or spectators.
- Failure to follow instructions given by the assessor.
- Disrespectful argumentative behavior.
- Utilizing any pictures, documents, or other reference material once the assessment has begun.

**Minor:** No minor for this discrepancy

# Instructor Guidance

ITRA Rope Rescue Instructors are recognized to provide rope rescue courses and conduct assessments according to the [rope rescue syllabus](#) for Levels 1, 2, & 3. Instructors must undergo an evaluation process that requires them to demonstrate competency in teaching the syllabus. Instructor candidates must be prepared to demonstrate their ability to instruct the complete syllabus on both knowledge and skills-based topics.

## *Application Process*

### **Application Process Overview**

1. Candidate Eligibility
2. Documentation of experience
3. Submit application form
4. Qualification approval by working group
5. Instructor candidate evaluation
6. Wait for final approval

### **Candidate Eligibility**

An applicant must:

- Hold a current ITRA Professional membership at the time of the application.
- Hold a current Level 3 ITRA Rope Rescue Qualification at the time of the application.
- Have a minimum of 2 years of documented instructor experience with rope rescue or similar.
- Submit evidence regarding continuing professional development, training, and operations.
- Have a current CPR qualification.

### **Documentation of experience**

- Instructor experience may be demonstrated through evidence of courses taught or internal records including but not limited to:
  - In-house instructor courses.
  - College or university-based programs.
  - Fire department or search and rescue teams.
  - Mentorship and co-instructor experience
  - Military qualifications that demonstrate a history of the candidate in an instructor role.



- Instructor training courses and certification
- Documented hours, students present, and course descriptions listed on the application form.

## Submit Application Form

- Submission of English translations of documents are preferred if possible in order to streamline the application process.
- The Rope working group will review each application: [Instructor Application form](mailto:ropewg@itra.international) to [ropewg@itra.international](mailto:ropewg@itra.international)
- Three professional references are recommended by the applicant. Examples may include:
  - From a current ITRA instructor or evaluator.
  - Other professionals in the rope rescue industry or similar with names and contacts.

## Qualification Approval By The Working Group

- The submitted application will be reviewed by the Rope Rescue Working Group.
- If the application is denied, cause will be given and the applicant can appeal the decision to the Rope Rescue Working Group.
- The Rope Rescue Working Group will have ultimate approval authority to approve an application.
- Application eligibility and approval by the working group does not guarantee instructor status.

## Instructor candidate evaluation

- Instructor evaluations focus on the candidates demonstrating their ability to teach.
- The evaluation includes knowledge-based topics and skills listed in the [rope rescue syllabus](#).
- ITRA instructor candidates must be formally evaluated by at least one but no more than two current ITRA evaluators.
- The ITRA evaluator must disclose any relationships with the candidate if one exists.
- A minimum of at least 3 students or candidates (or stand-in candidates) must be present while the instructor candidate is being evaluated.

## Learning Objective Evaluations

The evaluator shall determine and communicate the topics to be taught prior to the workshop.

Candidates will be expected to conduct a minimum of two knowledge-based lessons and two skill-based lessons from the rope rescue syllabus. At least one knowledge and one skill-based lesson must be a level 3 topic.

Candidates will be allocated between 20 and 30 minutes for each presentation.

## **Evaluation opportunities**

### **ITRA Instructor Workshop**

- During an official ITRA instructor workshop.
- The skill and knowledge topics presented at the workshop shall be picked on the day prior to delivery, from the previously chosen syllabus learning objectives.

### **Self-Hosted Course**

- During a course of instruction hosted by the instructor candidate.
  - Minimum 8 instructional hours by the instructor candidate.
  - Minimum 3 students present.
- The instructor candidate must provide these lessons during the scheduled evaluation day(s)/time(s).

## ***Evaluation result***

### **Instructor evaluation skill sheet**

[ITRA Rope Rescue Instructor Candidate evaluation form.](#)

Instructor candidates will be evaluated on a Pass or Fail criteria.

## **Pass/Fail of an evaluation**

### Pass

- The candidate will be awarded Rope Rescue Instructor status.

### Fail & Retests

- Instructor candidates must re-apply and submit their previous evaluation form with the new application.
- Evaluation retests are subject to evaluator availability.

## ***Appeals***

Candidates who wish to appeal the outcome of their evaluation should initially discuss their concerns with the Evaluator carrying out their evaluation. If the matter is not resolved, the candidate may initiate an appeal using the [ITRA Appeals and Complaint form](#).

Rope working group email: [ropewg@itra.international](mailto:ropewg@itra.international)

ITRA board: [info@itra.international](mailto:info@itra.international)

## ***Maintaining your instructor qualification***

All Instructors must meet the following currencies to maintain instructor qualifications.

- Hold a current ITRA level 3 qualification in their discipline (must be re-qualified every 3 years).
- Hold current ITRA professional membership.
- Instruct an ITRA course or attend an ITRA workshop (Rope, Tactical, Swiftwater, or Confined Space) within two years of your instructor qualification expiration date.
- Hold a current CPR.
- Attend a minimum of one online ITRA Rope Rescue instructor meeting per year.

## ***Instructor Ethics***

All Instructors must maintain the ITRA code of conduct and ethics.

- If an ITRA instructor has two or more appeals within a calendar year, they may be subject to an audit by an ITRA evaluator.
  - This determination will be reviewed and voted on by the working group.
- All ITRA courses are open to being audited by a rope rescue working group member or an ITRA evaluator at any time.

# Evaluator Guidance

ITRA rope rescue evaluators are those able to provide rope rescue courses in conjunction with the ITRA rope rescue syllabus, conduct instructor evaluations, host instructor workshops, and perform audits of instructors and their courses.

Evaluators have the utmost knowledge of the ITRA rope rescue discipline. They are expected to provide instruction to instructor candidates on the rope rescue syllabus, discrepancies, sub-charter, safety standards, terms & definitions, ITM, ITRA code of conduct, and other topics of the ITRA organization. They are also expected to provide feedback, mentorship, and guidance in the delivery of ITRA courses, and assessments of technician candidates as needed for instructor candidates.

## *Nomination process & eligibility*

The rope working group will publicly open up nominations for rope rescue evaluators, at a minimum once per calendar year, every December. The rope working group reserves the right to publicly open up nominations at additional periods based on the needs of the rope rescue discipline. Information will be sent by email, posted on social media, and listed on the <http://itra.international> website.

The nomination period will be open for 14 days.

### [Application form](#)

Candidates must:

- Hold a current Level 3 ITRA Rope Rescue Qualification.
- Hold a current ITRA Professional membership.
- Hold a current ITRA rope rescue instructor qualification.
  - Have a minimum of 2 years of documented instructor experience as an ITRA instructor.
- Support or nominated by a minimum of 2 ITRA professional members, one of which must be a current evaluator.
- Have a current CPR qualification.
- Exceptions and special circumstances may be examined and decided by the working group.

## **Documentation of eligibility**

- Documented hours, students present, and course descriptions are listed on the following [evaluator application form](#).
- The RR Working Group will have ultimate approval authority for any nominations.

## Nominations

- Nominations do not guarantee evaluator status.
- Nominations will be voted on by the rope working group within 14 working days after a nomination period closes.

Evaluator status shall be given to eligible ITRA instructors based on

- Needs of the rope rescue discipline
- Needs of the organization
- Needs of a region
- Experience in rope rescue
- Involvement, such as volunteered time and contributions, to the ITRA organization and rope rescue discipline.

## Evaluation opportunities

**Evaluators will be evaluated primarily on their ability to convey the documents put forth by the working group. They will also be tested on their ability to evaluate, mentor and provide feedback to instructor candidates.**

### **ITRA instructor workshop**

- During an official ITRA instructor workshop

### **Self-hosted course**

- During a course of instruction hosted by an instructor or instructor candidate.
  - Minimum 8 instructional hours
  - Minimum 4 students
- Time must be scheduled for the evaluator candidate to instruct on the following:
  - ITRA documents - Rope rescue syllabus, discrepancies, terms & definitions, safety standards, and ITM
  - Mentorship and guidance on ITRA courses and assessments
- A current ITRA Evaluator can test a candidate by evaluating a current ITRA instructor or instructor candidate.

\*if the assessment takes place while an instructor candidate is being evaluated, the instructor must meet instructor guidance listed in the sub-charter.

\*\*If an evaluator candidate is being assessed by evaluating a current and qualified ITRA instructor, level 2 or 3 skills and knowledge components are acceptable.

## *Appeals*

Appeals of decisions may inquire through the following form:

[ITRA Appeals and Complaint form.](#)

## *Maintaining your evaluator status*

All evaluators must meet the following criteria to maintain their status on an annual basis:

- Maintain their ITRA instructor qualification.

If the above criteria is not met every calendar year, an evaluator will no longer have their status and they must go through the nomination process again.