# 9 Traverse Belay Overview and Test

## How to Get a Manager Check-Off

This is an overview of Traverse Belay. This check off is currently noted on the Apprentice Task List under Belay Multi Line. If an employee is checked off on the Multi Line, they are checked off to Traverse Belay.

## Procedure Details

### Understanding Traverse Belay

A traverse belay is used whenever a climber “traverses” side to side across a high element. A traverse belay encompasses all basic belay techniques plus the added difficulty of “safe siding”. “Safe siding” is a technique used to position oneself (the belayer) in order to reduce the risk of the “pendulum effect” if the climber takes a fall.

The “pendulum effect” occurs when the belayer is not perpendicular to the belay point causing the climber to fall further and with more force than necessary with a higher risk of hitting something. The pendulum will usually swing toward the center of the cable due to many factors.

The belayer starts by instructing the climber to stand behind the start of the element. This is done to allow the belayer to position the SRD as close to the start of the element as possible. Once this has been done the belayer should be in position behind the start of the element (safe siding) to prevent the pendulum effect.

The belayer will direct the climber to start to climb and belay from this position until the climber begins to move across the element (traverse). The belayer will move with the climber as they traverse the element, staying behind the climber. The closer toward the center of the element the climber gets, the belayer should be more in line with the climber. Once the climber is past the midpoint the belayer should be in front of the climber. The belayer will continue to traverse with the climber until the other end of the element is reached or the climber decides to come down.

When lowering a climber, ensure that you are a safe distance from any pole or platform that a climber could strike during the lowering process. This will usually amount to having the climber move ten to fifteen feet away from the end of the element, back towards the middle. Before lowering the climber, make sure you, the climber, and the SRD are all lined up and all of the slack has been taken out of the system. The climber should also be instructed to keep his/her feet on the element for as long as possible while being lowered to reduce the chance of striking the element on the way down. Be sure to scan and clear the landing area well before the climber approaches the ground, lowering in a crouched belay stance so as to maintain control at all times.

The following high elements require familiarity with traversing belay technique:

* Catwalk
* 3/2
* Multiline
* Burma Bridge
* Zump (Has different lowering technique)

### Traverse Belaying Tips

* Fast/Tall people might climb poles very quickly. Be ready for some fast belaying or asking your climber to slow down.
* Once your climber is walking no the element, don’t belay so tightly that you are pulling them. This will feel counter intuitive after all of the training you have had on the Tower.
  + Once the climber starts to walk you’re mostly in the break position, taking in/letting our slack as needed.
* While traversing, you will need to do some “rope management”. Walk with the rope in front of you and off to your left side and “flick” the rope to bring it closer to you.
* If they want to come down while still on the pole, it’s preferred they climb down.
* When in doubt, practice “athletic stance” belaying and get an anchor.

### Traverse Belay Test

* Demonstrate proper belay/system check throughout traverse (good knot, harnesses doubled back, carabiners locked, brake hand on rope).
* Demonstrate a comprehensive and flowing pre-climb participant briefing on any traverse belay element.
* Demonstrate proper starting position consistent with safe siding.
* Demonstrate proper traverse belay (specifically positioning during traversing of element, i.e. when to be behind or in front of the participant).
* Demonstrate proper lowering position specific to traverse belay elements.
* Articulate proper instructions to participant when lowering (i.e. keeping feet on element for as long as possible)
* Explain extra precautions you can take with heavier participants (anchor, move under, stance)
* Demonstrate an awareness of different facilitators involved in lowering a participant from the element under unusual circumstances (pole down climb, parachute bag, pole lower).
* Demonstrate a good understanding of traverse belay (safe siding, pendulum effect, positioning…)
* Demonstrate appropriate awareness and attention to safety (safety is the #1 priority; look out for yourself and everyone else…)
* Articulate the added risks associated with a traverse belay element (rope burn, cable burn)