USA Climbing Routesetting Clinic and Certification Program

This document is meant to clearly outline the path of progression in the USA Climbing Routesetting program by detailing the requisites for each level advancement as well as eligibility.

Level 1 Clinic

First come, first serve clinic. Participants must have a minimum of 6 months routesetting experience and be able to forerun a minimum of V5. Successful completion of this clinic will result in the participant being granted a Level 1 Certification.

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Level 2 Clinic

Application based selection process. Participants must hold a Level 1 Certification, assist at a minimum of 6 USAC Sanctioned events and be able to forerun a minimum of V6 and 5.12+. Successful completion of this clinic will result in the participant being granted a Level 2 Certification.

A Level 2 Certificate will allow the holder to act as Head Routesetter (HRS) at QE level events and apply for Divisional Championship internship. Level 2 Routesetters will need to act as HRS for 6 QE events and assist at 4 Regional or Divisional Championship events prior to internship eligibility.

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Level 3 Certification

Once accepted into the Divisional Internship program. Routesetters must hold a Level 2 Certification, have acted as HRS at 6 USAC Sanctioned QE events and be able to forerun a minimum of V7 and 5.13. Successful completion of 2 Divisional Internships, with favorable reviews will result in the participant being granted a Level 3 Certification.

A Level 3 Certificate will allow the holder to apply for Apprentice positions at National level events where that position is available. Upon completion of apprenticeships in each discipline, an endorsement will be granted. An endorsement will allow the holder to act as HRS at a Regional Championship. Level 3 Routesetters must complete one apprenticeship in each discipline and a third in either discipline to be eligible for Level 4.



Level 4 Certification

After working 3 successful apprentice positions, with favorable reviews, Level 4 Routesetters will be eligible to apply for National Championship Assistant positions at all events and act as HRS at all Regional Championship events. Level 4 setters are expected to forerun a minimum of V9 and 5.13+.

A Level 4 Certificate will allow the holder to apply for Assistant positions at all National level events. Upon completion of assisting in each discipline, an endorsement will be granted. An endorsement will allow the holder to act as HRS at a Divisional Championship. Level 4 Routesetters must act as an assistant in each discipline and an additional eight to be eligible for Level 5.



Level 5 Certification

National Head Routesetter

After working 10 National Level events and acting as HRS for 6 (4 must be outside home region) Regional and/or Divisional events, Level 4 Routesetters will be eligible to apply for National Head Routesetter Practical. If accepted, the applicant will work closely with the HRS for 2 National Championships to plan and run the setting. Must be able to forerun a minimum of V9 and 5.14.

A Level 5 Certificate will allow the holder to apply for Head Routesetter positions at all National level events and become eligible for World Climbing nominations.

** Beginning with the 2026 season, USA Climbing may, in rare cases, grant exceptions to certification requirements for individuals whose experience, expertise, and contributions advance the sport and support the organization's mission.*
