

28 February 2003

(Expires 28 February 2005)

Safety  
**OBSTACLE COURSES**

**Summary.** This circular establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities for construction, maintenance, and use of obstacle courses.

**Applicability.** This circular is applicable to all U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) units, activities, and organizations.

**Suggested improvements.** The proponent for this circular is the TRADOC Safety Office. Send comments and suggested improvements on DA

Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) through channels to Commander, TRADOC, 5 North Gate Road, ATTN: ATCS-S, Fort Monroe, VA 23651-1048. Suggested improvements may also be submitted using DA Form 1045 (Army Ideas for Excellence Program (AIEP) Proposal).

**Availability.** This publication is distributed solely through the TRADOC Homepage at <http://www-tradoc.army.mil>.

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**1. Purpose.** This circular prescribes the responsibilities, policies, and procedures for the construction, maintenance, and use of obstacle courses by units, activities, or organizations assigned to TRADOC.

**2. References.** Required publications are listed in appendix A.

**3. Explanation of abbreviations and terms.** The glossary contains abbreviations and special terms used in this regulation.

**4. Responsibilities.** Commanders will ensure any obstacle course used by TRADOC activities, organizations, or units meets the requirements of this circular.

**5. Overview.**

a. All obstacle courses used by TRADOC activities, organizations, or units will meet the requirements listed in references found in appendix A. Additionally, commanders will:

(1) Publish a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for obstacle course training. Commanders

will incorporate local installation requirements and include user specific details, such as the number of instructors required, the training or certification for instructors, an inspection requirement that includes review of the latest obstacle course inspection done by a qualified safety professional, and a physical inspection of the obstacle course.

(2) Complete a risk assessment before conducting training on obstacle courses. Risk assessments will address the current condition of the obstacle course and the individual obstacles, weather conditions, level of conditioning or phase of training of the soldiers, and availability of qualified instructors, support personnel, and equipment. This risk assessment will be approved at the level of command commensurate with the residual risk in accordance with (IAW) the TRADOC Risk Acceptance policy (see [TRADOC Reg 385-2, para 1-5c](#)).

b. The addition of fall protection requirements and modifications to obstacles listed in [TRADOC Reg 350-6, appendix K](#), are the minimum acceptable standards.

c. Due to the incidence of lower extremity injuries experienced on the “Swinger” (TRADOC Reg 350-6, fig K-23) and the “Jump and Land” (TRADOC Reg 350-6, fig K-24), these obstacles will not be used.

d. Obstacles not listed, or obstacles that deviate substantively from those in TRADOC Reg 350-6, are nonstandard obstacles and will not be used by TRADOC activities, organizations, or units, unless a waiver is approved. Waivers to use nonstandard obstacles will:

(1) Be approved by the first commander in the chain of command with the authority to accept the residual risk associated with the use of the nonstandard obstacle involved (see TRADOC Reg 350-6, para 1-5c).

(2) Include specific information on how the subject obstacle differs from the standard, why it is essential for use, and an assessment of the risk to be accepted with use of this obstacle.

(3) Be maintained by the using activity, organization, or unit, and will be available at the training site.

## Appendix A References

FM 21-20  
Physical Fitness Training

TRADOC Reg 350-6  
Enlisted Initial Entry Training (IET) Policies and Administration

TRADOC Reg 385-2  
TRADOC Safety Program

Folio No. 1, “Training Facilities,” Corps of Engineers Drawing Number 28-13-95  
(This publication may be obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, 700 Federal Building, 601 East 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64106-2896)

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

/signed/  
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## Glossary

### Section I Abbreviations

IAW	in accordance with
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

### Section II Terms

#### fall protection

Padding, nets, or other material sufficient to absorb or dissipate the impact of a fall.

#### obstacle course

A collection of approved obstacles selected from FM 21-20 used to develop and test the motor skills required for a soldier’s success in combat.

#### risk assessment

Identification and assessment of hazards (first two steps of the first management process); an identified hazard is assessed to determine the associated risk based upon probability and resultant severity of a hazardous incident.

#### risk decision

The decision to accept or not accept the risk associated with an associated action.

#### risk decision authority

The individual authorized to accept or not accept the risk associated with an associated action. TRADOC risk decision authority is defined in TRADOC Reg 385-2, paragraph 1-5c.

#### risk management

The process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks arising from operational factors, and making decisions that balance risk cost with mission benefits.

#### nonstandard obstacle

Any obstacle not specifically listed in appendix K, TRADOC Reg 350-6; any obstacle that is not constructed IAW the specifications of Folio No. 1, “Training Facilities,” Corps of Engineer Drawing Number 28-13-95; or any obstacle that has not been modified IAW appendix K, TRADOC Reg 350-6.

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