

Mountain Club of Kenya
Bolting Policy for Kenya
(Revised Feb 2006)

The Bolting Policy of the Mountain Club of Kenya (MCK) attempts to balance respect for the natural environment, the safety of climbers, maintaining the ethics and adventurous character of Kenya climbing and the development of new routes for which there is no natural protection.

Underlying ethics

The underlying ethics of Kenyan climbing stipulate that bolts (or any other fixed protection) should not be placed where natural protection is available. In recognition of the fact that exploration and establishment of new climbs may require the use of bolts, MCK requests that anyone intending to place bolts for the purpose of protecting climbs in Kenya familiarize themselves with the following:

Established routes

Established routes are not to be altered without permission of first ascensionist. If the first ascensionist can-not be contacted, redevelopment must not take place.

Variations on an established route must not detract from the original route. An average climber should not be able to reach a bolt on a variation if he/she is climbing the original route. If bolts on an established route are deemed inadequate (poor quality, in disrepair, dangerous), they can be replaced by new bolts, preferably using the same holes as the original bolts.

Belay anchors

Placement of anchor bolts follows the same ethics and regulation as placement of bolts for protection- when natural protection is unavailable or where several "sport" routes are near each other. Anchors should have 2 bolts and hangars, never single bolt anchors.

First ascents

First ascensionists set the standard of protection on their route(s). However, bolts should only be used if natural protection is unavailable. First ascents may be done on lead (ground up) or after fixing protection from above. There should be no detraction from the independent character of adjacent routes. **(Please record new routes in the "New Routes Book" located in the MCK clubhouse).**

Visiting climbers

As a courtesy to the MCK, visiting climbers are requested to contact the MCK before placing bolts on new routes anywhere in Kenya. The MCK has members with broad knowledge of the climbing history of Kenyan crags. Further, the MCK maintains a "New Routes Book" which all climbers should consult. These sources of information will assist visitors in determining if the route(s) they are attempting or have climbed are, in fact, "new".

Placing bolts at the MCK's climbing crag at Lukenya requires authorization (see below).

National Parks

Placing bolts on routes in National Parks (e.g.,) Hells Gate, Mt. Kenya, Tsavo West is not allowed. Routes will be developed and maintained in their natural, 'free' character.

Use of MCK bolt gun and safety

The bolt gun will be checked out by the 'Stores officer' upon receipt of a Ksh 2,000 refundable deposit. This officer has 'right of refusal' if he/she questions the intentions of the proposed borrower or his/her ability to use the gun safely and responsibly. The bolt gun will be checked out only to MCK members. Non-member guests may use it only under the direct supervision of the member to whom the gun was checked out.

In all cases, stainless steel or non-corrosive bolts will be used. The MCK has a small store of these type of bolts for sale, so climbers do not have to resort to the local variety. The price of bolts will be set by the MCK Committee. The member who checked out the gun will record the number of bolts used and pay the required fee to the MCK Committee. If an unsafe bolt is found or noticed at Lukenya, the MCK will replace it.

Aesthetics

We recommend that painted or camouflaged bolt hangers are used whenever possible.

Lukenya

The MCK owns this climbing area, and will determine how it is bolted. The Committee notes the words of Philip Winter – *“There are now a number of hard, new routes which use one or more bolts for protection, since natural protection is lacking or insufficient. Whilst this trend can be deplored, it is consistent with developments elsewhere, which encompass a split between old-fashioned climbers, and rock gymnasts... .. I hope a balance is maintained between adventure and gymnastics”* – and will strive to maintain this balance.

First ascensionists intending to bolt any route at Lukenya must obtain the written approval of the Committee before doing so.