



## MCSA NAMIBIA SECTION

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### Bolting Policy in Namibia

Invariably in Namibia the land on which popular crags lie is privately or state owned. Therefore it is incumbent on persons wishing to initiate bolting to first of all direct their enquiries to the relevant landowners or custodians of the land. However, the ethics of mountaineering and traditional climbing, which are widely held within the climbing community, require the MCSA to take a stand on bolting and make recommendations in this regard. In addition, the **MCSA Namibia Section** is the "custodian" of certain crags and has a vested interest in them, for example, in the form of rights of access.

Notwithstanding its interests, the **MCSA Namibia Section** does not wish to act as the official "watchdog" or responsible authority for bolting in Namibia, nor to be held responsible for bolting in the region. **MCSA Namibia Section** therefore offers the following policy for consideration:

#### 1. General principles for bolting

1.1 Bolts should be placed so as to minimise the impact on the character of a route.

1.2 Bolts should be placed by competent individuals.

1.3 The materials and techniques used should enable the greatest strength and longest possible lifespan of the bolts, based on technical information available at the time and approved by **UIAA safety standard**.

1.4 Safety factors being equal, bolts should be placed in such a way to minimise any negative aesthetic impact.

1.5 In cases where there is any doubt as to whether or not to place bolts, consensus should be obtained within the climbing community before the bolts are placed.

#### 2. Replacing Bolts

2.1 The re-placing of old bolts which are no longer safe is an established and accepted practice which should continue as safety dictates.

#### 3. Retro-Bolting

3.1 Retro-bolting of traditional routes should not be tolerated. The sanctity of Namibia's traditional routes must be protected since they are a valuable part of our climbing heritage which should not be lost to our own and future generations.

3.2 The retro-bolting of sport routes should similarly be discouraged except under exceptional circumstances, and then only with the consent of the first ascensionist ,if contactable, or after consensus has been obtained within the climbing community and the **MCSA Namibia section**.

3.3 The replacement of old pegs with bolts at traditional climbing venues is appropriate only under the following conditions:

- 3.3.1 There is no alternative point of natural protection nearby.
- 3.3.2 The pegs being replaced are critical to the safety of the route.
- 3.3.4 The bolts are placed as close as possible to the old pegs so as retain the original character of the route (preferably within 30cm).
- 3.3.5 Consensus is obtained within the climbing community before the bolts are placed.

#### **4. New Routes**

4.1 In respect of new routes, it should be at the discretion of the first ascensionist to decide whether or not to bolt a route.

4.2 Where the new route is at a traditional climbing venue:

4.2.1 Any bolts placed should not affect the character of adjacent routes in any way. If there is any uncertainty, consensus should first be obtained within the climbing community.

4.2.2 Notwithstanding the above, we suggest that a route only be made a sport route where there is insufficient traditional protection.