



Risk Assessment and Method Statement for Caving Activities

Activities covered by this document:

- Level 1 (BCA definition) Caving with Simple Climbs and Scrambles
- Level 2 (BCA definition) Caving with Ladder Pitches, Abseils & Lowers
- Vertical Caving or Extended Caving Trips at any level including SRT
- Surface Skills Training

Caving is taken to mean “The exploration of caves and disused mines”.

All instructors must remain within the remit of their qualification and follow good practice as laid out by the British Caving Association LCMLA and CIC schemes.

Freelance staff are responsible for monitoring their own exposure to Radon gas.

All leading instructors must be 1st aid qualified on a course of no less than 16 hours. A first aid kit appropriate to the activity and group numbers should be present on all activities.

Level 1 Caving with Simple Climbs & Scrambles

Minimum Qualification for leading instructor: Level 1 LCMLA + 1st Aid Qualification.

Assistants must be a minimum of Level 1 LCMLA trained.

Technical Advisor: Peter Knight, SPA, MLS, CIC

Supervision ratio maximum: 1:8. Where an assistant is present the ratio rises to 2:16. A leading instructor can only have one assistant operating within the ratio.

Level 2 Caving with Ladder Pitches, Abseils & Lowers

Minimum Qualification for leading instructor: Level 2 LCMLA with SRT Leader

or

site specific competency statement for other high level qualifications (MIA)
+ 1st Aid Qualification.

Assistants must be a minimum of Level 1 LCMLA trained with some vertical experience.

Technical Advisor: Peter Knight, SPA, MLS, CIC

Supervision ratio maximum: 1:6. Where an assistant is present ratio rises to 2:12. A leading instructor can only have one assistant operating within the ratio.

Vertical Caving or Extended Caving Trips at any level including SRT

Minimum Qualification for leading instructor: CIC + 1st Aid Qualification.

Assistants must be a minimum of Level 1 LCMLA for predominantly horizontal trips & Level 2 LCMLA for other trips.

Technical Advisor: Peter Knight, SPA, MLS, CIC

A supervision ratio of 1:4 for SRT vertical caving and skills courses, where an assistant is present ratio rises to 2:8.



Surface SRT Training

Minimum Qualification for leading instructor: CIC + 1st Aid Qualification.

Assistants must be a minimum of Level 2 LCMLA trained.

Technical Advisor: Peter Knight, SPA, MLS, CIC

Supervision ratio: 1:4, where an assistant is present ratio rises to 2:8. A leading instructor can only have one assistant operating within the ratio.

Risk Assessments

The following risk assessment is to be used alongside a dynamic risk assessment performed by the staff running the activity. An instructor is required to work at all times within the remit of their qualifications and use good, sound judgement to back up a dynamic risk assessment. Participants are our responsibility from 'vehicle to vehicle' unless a formal goodbye or handover has taken place.

Hazards. <i>Injury</i>	To Whom	Control Measures	Notes
Rock fall <i>Head injury</i>	Participants 3 rd party	Participants to wear helmets at all times. A designated 'safe' area should be given where appropriate and groups should be briefed not to stand at base of pitches. 3 rd parties advised to remain a safe distance.	Group briefing
Falls, unroped climbing & scrambling <i>Various injuries</i>	Participants	All unroped climbing to take place under close supervision. Participants to be spotted where appropriate	Experienced, qualified staff to judge level of supervision and safeguarding required
Falling from height <i>Severe injury or Death</i>	All	All participants to be supervised or briefed before or at pitch heads. Participants close to edge must be attached to a belay system or traverse line. Instructors must be attached to belay system whilst belaying & safeguard themselves whilst rigging.	Group briefing
Slips, Trips <i>Various Injuries</i>	All	Equipment carried to deal with minor injuries underground and prevent them from becoming more serious. Correct footwear and appropriate lighting with spares available	Group briefing
Equipment failure <i>Various injuries</i>	All	Equipment checked before use and faulty/damaged equipment removed from service immediately. Spare lighting always carried. No smoking in PPE	Regular equipment checks carried out by Peter Knight. Staff to check equipment immediately before use.
Entrapment by flooding <i>Serious injury or Death</i>	All	Use of qualified staff. Good weather forecasts obtained and run off conditions checked before trip	Use of call out mandatory



Entrapment in rock <i>Panic, Minor Injury</i>	Participants	Use of appropriate venue and passages for the group	
Entrapment in rigging / client unable to negotiate pitches or traverses <i>Exhaustion</i>	Participants	Appropriate rescue techniques and equipment available. Releasable rigging where appropriate	
Exposure <i>Hypothermia</i>	All	Use of appropriate clothing Do not permit individuals to go underground if deemed underequipped	Emergency kit containing group shelter
Exhaustion	All	Use of appropriate venue and passages for group. Instructor vigilance and a dynamic plan for the group. Hauling gear present on vertical trips	Food carried on long trips Use of call out mandatory
Other users <i>Poor relations</i>	3 rd Party	Avoid busy areas and consider moving to different location. Not using some caves on conservation grounds	
<i>Other Minor Injuries</i>	Participants	1 st aid kit carried on all activities	Advise visit to GP/A+E where appropriate
Biological & Chemical agents. <i>Infection</i>	All	Remain vigilant and avoid known areas used as toilets or dumps. Brief group on Weils Disease	Encourage groups to collect litter from sites

Reviewed 31/5/2014