

# **Cave Instructor Certificate Considerations for Coaching SRT**



Supporting document for the CIC Scheme Coaching SRT

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# Cave Instructor Certificate: Coaching SRT

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# Cave Instructor Certificate: Coaching SRT

## Introduction

### **Some options to consider when coaching SRT rescues during CIC training/assessment courses.**

Rationale: By their nature SRT rescue techniques carry an element of risk beyond standard SRT progression. To learn and become fluent in rescue requires demonstration and practice. Therefore, they are an essential part of any CIC course, to meet syllabus requirements and to allow CICs to operate/potentially help clients/cavers in an emergency situation.

This document offers some options to consider when training/assessing candidates on CIC course/refresher days to reduce the risk to an acceptable level within the context in which they are taught/assessed.

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## **Acknowledgements**

Written by Phil Baker

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## Indoors/Surface venues

- Obviously easier to observe and also conduct rescues indoors/on surface so a good environment to teach/assess all aspects of SRT rescue.
- May have rubber matting if indoors.
- May have a ladder, tables or chairs indoors to assist taking the casualty load if the rescue doesn't go as planned.

## Cave venues

- Realistic for candidates to operate in a cave environment.
- Consider only practicing less complex rescues such as 'cut and lower', pitch head hoist or simple snatch (see additional principles below)
- Consider the environment – is it remote/involve significant caving to access? Is it dry or hostile? Is it easy to maintain good 'eyes on' and communication?

## Minimise height risk (if possible)

- For hoists can the casualty be on an abseil device and maintain a low position as the hoist operates?
- For 'cut and lower' can the casualty stay low to the ground as the main rope is cut?
- If you need to carry out a full hoist to a ledge, observe ledge protocols, can the pitch be short and the ledge accessible to the traverse line?

## As trainer/assessor adhere to CLAP principles

**C:** Communication

**L:** Line of sight

**A:** Awareness

**P:** Position of maximum usefulness

## Buddy check

- and ask candidates to also be aware of their own safety even as casualty – a healthy dose of self preservation at all times!

## Consider use of back up rope

- This is not always desirable as it can add complexity, confusion and is not realistic in a SRT setting.
- However if the trainer/assessor chooses to act a casualty, consider using a tag line for your own protection as it is harder to intervene when part of the system.

## Be aware of tiredness/information overload

- SRT rescues are physically and mentally tiring – take frequent breaks.

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## Use of knives

- Use safe cutting techniques such as a half open knife attached to a cowstail, away from main rope etc so it can be instantly closed and dropped after cutting, with no open knife being waved about....
- Be wary of closing it on fingers....

## Colour of ropes

- Consider different colour ropes esp. when cutting one of them!

## Emphasise rope diameters/suitability to device being used

- Be prepared to add extra friction with both rescuer and casualty on abseil.

## Captive pulley devices use/ledge protocols

- Captive pulley devices can damage ropes at relatively low shock loads (anecdotally lower than manufacturers state) and Petzl have produced a document about belaying with traxions.  
<https://www.petzl.com/US/en/Sport/Belaying-the-second-with-a-MICRO-TRAXION--beware-of-any-fall?ProductName=MICRO-TRAXION>  
which supports this.
- Emphasise that hoists on these devices should be restricted to totally prone casualties.
- Emphasise good ledge protocols – i.e.: clip cowstails to the Y hang or traverse line as casualty approaches the top AS SOON AS POSSIBLE – and while the full body weight is still on the device. Only then attempt to pull the casualty onto the ledge.