

Delivery Plan and Risk Assessment for Caving in England and Scotland



This draft plan does not supersede any local 'lock down' instructions or restrictions. Government Guidelines, the Regional Caving Council and/or local authority of the caving area in question, should be referred to for more detailed requirements.

The law in England and Scotland permit parties of more than six to undertake sporting activities where this is organised e.g. by a Club. A Delivery Plan including a Risk Assessment is required for each trip of more than six organised by a Club. The document is not necessary for groups of six or less but the control measures advocated may be relevant. It takes into account the introduction of the "Rule of Six" on 14 September 2020 and in risk assessment terms, minimising the hazard of Covid-19 infection through the adoption of control measures outlined below. The organiser of the caving event should treat this document as a template and amend it accordingly to account for any Covid site-specific matters (if any). The organiser of the trip should record in the final column, points of detail to achieve a comprehensive Delivery Plan. References are explained in the Annex.

Control measures to Action	Comments	Added Points of Detail
Decide on cave or mine for trip taking into account ability to maintain social distancing or if not, how to avoid close interactions. Assess whether planned trip can cope with meeting another party. Also identify a second (and possibly a third) location as an alternative location if the first choice has already got a party in it. If appropriate, book the cave or mine. Decide on group size limit for location choices.	Consult the Regional Caving Council web sites to check if access conditions for the chosen location have changed. Check local information on special considerations to be given to the rural community. Assess car parking availability. Party size maximum of 30 in Scotland.	
Identify tackle required for all locations. Assess whether a stream is available near by entrance for hand washing with soap or else organise sufficient water to wash hands using soap or use 'once use' hand cleaning material before then using hand sanitiser	Make arrangements for tackle to be quarantined for at least 72 hours before the day of the trip. See Ref 1 re use of hand sanitiser.	

<p>Issue invitation to attend with clear statements on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed locations and any limitations on travel arrangement to ensure group members arrive and disperse either separately or in groups complying with 'the rule of six'; • Personal and trip kit requirements and what can be supplied by club and what required from individuals for trip kit; • Self pre attendance check on not displaying any symptoms and not in quarantine or self-isolation; • Request details if appropriate of any medical condition including exemption from wearing a face covering; • That each attendee has a face covering for use in case of emergency / rescue; • Need to provide name, mobile phone number and address; • Name and details of club contact point in case someone subsequently becomes ill; • Food and drink, plus if needed self-medication to be supplied by and only consumed by each attendee. 		
<p>Confirm attendees and final details prior to trip.</p>	<p>Produce list record of the names, mobile phone number and addresses.</p>	
<p>On arrival check if cave or mine is already occupied and if so, transfer to back up location.</p>		
<p>At location, first confirm that all attendees are on list and all have no symptoms.</p>	<p>Add date and time of trip to list.</p>	
<p>Ensure changing before and after the trip is undertaken following the 2m rule.</p>	<p>Share out of club kit in a manner to minimise potential cross contamination.</p>	
<p>Sort out who carries which piece of trip kit and who rigs and derigs which pitch.</p>		
<p>Brief party on any special points to minimise close</p>	<p>Cover rigging and climbing pitches, passing</p>	

interactions.	down narrow passages and meeting other groups.	
Walk to and from the entrance maintaining following the 2m rule.	Minimise contact with stiles and having a single person using gloves to hold open gates etc where reasonably practicable.	
If need be, using gloves, open gate to cave or mine and relock it after all the party have entered or exited.		
Within cave or mine maintain the 2m rule where possible. Minimise time when in closer proximity to another person and avoid face to face situations.	See Ref 2 re not wearing face coverings. 2m rule applies vertically as well as horizontally.	
If feasible, rinse hands before and after using kit used by others. Clean hands if feasible before consuming any food or drink.	See Ref 3 re cross contamination.	
After changing at end of trip, ensure all attendees either wash hands using soap and water or else clean hands and then use hand sanitiser.		
Arrange for trip kit to be cleaned and placed in quarantine under the control of the owner or club for at least 72 hours prior to subsequent use.		
Keep records for 21 days following the trip and then destroy them.	Keep in compliance with GDPR requirements (i.e. don't share unless asked by an authorised person).	
In an emergency situation, don a face mask and gloves if reasonably practicable before responding, else as soon as possible after the initial response if a continued response is needed.	In the event of a cardiac arrest, cardiopulmonary resuscitation may be attempted. Current COVID guidance recommends covering the face of the casualty and only doing chest compression (i.e. without rescue breaths) to minimise the risk of catching the covid virus.	

Name and Signature of Club Official organising the trip

Annex

Ref 1 Hand Sanitisers

Most caves and mines are sufficiently wet that the use of alcohol based hand sanitiser will not be effective due to dilution of the main active ingredient, alcohol. Whilst a proportion of cavers and mine explorers wear gloves, their use does not stop the transfer of the virus from surface to mouth. Therefore one is either reliant on washing hands with soap and water or else cleaning and drying hands with once use material before then using a hand sanitiser. As a less efficient back up rinsing ones hand or gloves will reduce the risk of transmission.

Ref 2 Face Coverings

Caves and mines have high humidity levels, the frequent presence of water in streams, sprays and drips and muddy or damp walls which have to be touched. Cave and mine exploration often requires exertion leading to heavy breathing. It has been stated that 'dust masks' are "not considered a practicable means of reducing exposure" [to radon], see para 11, Annex B in Radon Underground, https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=publications_information:radon_underground_3rd_edition.pdf . In addition, HSE do state in <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg53.pdf> at page 16 that wearing of respirators (bar powered hoods) should be for under 1 hour. It is therefore considered that face coverings are not usable to make progression underground. Thus minimisation of the risk of spread of the virus by airborne transmission must be based on social distancing and the 2m rule where possible or minimising time spent at shorter distances. It may prove reassuring to others where close proximity is required e.g. to help someone at a pitch head, to wear a neck warmer (buff) which may be pulled up over the face.

Ref 3 Cross Contamination

The risk of cross contamination from one person to another by touching surfaces and then transferring the virus to a mouth is considered low because of the nature of the surfaces as explained above. Whilst individuals can keep their own personal kit under their own control and carry trip kit (such as SRT rope or a ladder and lifeline) and rig as well as derig it, all the attendees will have to touch the rigged trip kit on a pitch or hand holds in passage or on a climb.

Approved for issue by:
The Executive Committee
British Caving Association
Dated: 14/10/20