

# British Caving Association

## How to book onto a course

### Register with scheme

All candidates wishing to book onto a training or assessment course must be registered with the LCMLA & CIC award scheme. Candidates need only register once, for which there is a one-off fee for both the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award and Cave Instructor Certificate schemes. To register;

- Click here: <https://britishcaving.justgo.com/> and sign up
- Click on "Membership" and purchase LCMLA/CIC Scheme Membership
- A video which walks candidates through the sign-up process available here: <https://youtu.be/jo9IuUmx5FY>

### Register for a course

Courses are delivered by Trainer/Assessors following the award scheme syllabus. Trainer/Assessors must register all courses with the Qualification Management System (QMS), however in some cases may choose not to advertise the course publicly on the system.

Candidates can only book onto a course if the pre-requisites are met.

### Book onto a course through the Qualification Management System

- Log onto the QMS: <https://britishcaving.justgo.com/>
- Find a course
  - Click on Events & Courses
  - Select course type then region
  - Select a course
  - Click "Add to cart" (note in most cases candidates are unable to book onto a course if they do not meet the pre-requisites)
  - **Follow the payment method, even though the payment will be zero, and complete the order**

### Book onto a course direct with a Trainer/Assessor

If booking directly with a Trainer/Assessor, or for courses not advertised on the system, candidates will need to provide the following details (in the same format registered with the QMS) to the Trainer/Assessor so that they can add candidates to the course:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Membership Number (note this starts with ME)
- Date of Birth

In both cases, once booked onto a course the Trainer/Assessor will contact candidates with joining instructions, booking conditions and invoicing details.

**Please be aware that Trainer/Assessors may remove candidates from a course if the Trainer/Assessors bookings terms and conditions are not met.**

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## Vertical Cave and/or Mine Leader Training

Training course for those wishing to lead groups in vertical terrain within the Caves/Mines listed under their Cave and/or Mine Leader award. The Vertical Leader is limited to simple vertical pitches of no more than 18m in length, including more technical traverses.

### Update Cave/Mine Leader via Training

Cave and/or Mine Leaders may update their current qualifications if attending a Vertical Leader Training course provided the appropriate pre-requisites are met and evidenced prior to the course. Candidates who wish to update their award via this route need to complete an [experience summary](#) and submit it to the Trainer/ Assessor delivering the Vertical Leader Training course at least 2 weeks before your course.

### Pre-requisites

Candidates must have completed their Cave and/or Mine Leader training course prior to attending this course. A degree of SRT competence is also required. A minimum of 12 vertical trips although at the discretion of the Trainer a candidate can be accepted with less experience.

### Course Overview

This largely practical training course would take place over a minimum of 2 days involving both surface and underground sessions. At least 6hrs of the training course should be spent underground. Up to 4 candidates may attend this course with one Trainer/Assessor. The course is recognized nationally, and so can be attended in any region. Candidates are expected to be comfortable exploring vertical caves and/ or mines and have some competence in SRT, although an element of SRT training will be included in the course.

Training courses will focus on some personal skill development however will primarily focus on the specific skills required by a leader to manage a group in vertical terrain through both abseil and ladder, including an understanding of incident prevention and management.

The training course will cover the key areas of the assessment syllabus listed below, with a tailored focus on areas candidates typically have difficulty with or identify with the Trainer/Assessor as requiring further input. QMC have prepared some resources that may support a candidate, these are available on the BCA website.

Trainer/Assessors may offer resources and guidance for a candidate to help further their knowledge however candidates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the syllabus prior to attending a training course so they can identify areas they are unfamiliar with and address these with their trainer.

### Resource Links

- [Vertical Leader: Ropework](#)

## Syllabus

The assessment criteria for the core skills, SRT module and group day is available here, the training course should cover the key areas of the assessment criteria although candidates will be required to further their understanding prior to assessment

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## Vertical Leader Core Skills Assessment Assessors Checklist

**Candidates**

**Name:**

**Assessment**

**Date:**

**ME**

**Number:**

**Assessment**

**Venue:**

<b>Vertical equipment</b>	
Leader's personal equipment – suitability / care	
Choice and suitability of equipment for group members' use – harness / cowstails / descender etc	
Ropes – types / construction / longevity / usage / storage / care etc	
Karabiner / maillons – types / usage / limitations etc	
Knowledge of PPE regulations and equipment standards e.g. 6 monthly inspections by competent person	
Anchors, bolt hangers – types / usage / limitations	
Ladders / spreaders / tethers – types / construction / linkage / limitations / coiling / storage etc	
Descenders/ ascenders/ pulleys/ belay devices etc – types/usage / limitations	

<b>Knots</b>	
Demonstrate appropriate range of knots including knowledge of suitability / limitations	

<b>Rigging</b>	
Equipment preparation/packing	
Rigger Protection-methods and their advantages/limitations	
Natural anchors-suitability and use	
Artificial anchors- pre-use checks	
Knowledge of Fall Factors	
Traverse Lines	
Belay systems- construction using	

<b>Emergency Vertical Techniques (continued...)</b>	
to hoist	

<b>Rigging (continued...)</b>	
rope/slings- alignment and forces- sharing loads	
Pitch head- approach/ease of access/position of leader etc	
Ladders-use of spreaders etc deployment	
Group abseil rope	
Lifeline including double lifeline	

<b>Lifeline methods</b>	
Belay methods and devices - use and limitations	
Safety of group members – waiting / to & from pitch head	
Position of Leader	
Safety of group members- waiting /to and from pitch head	
Efficiency/fluidity of lifeline technique	
Double Lifelining	
Communication	
Lowering – pros and cons / hazards	
Leader personal safety- ladder/abseil/pull through	
Train/ assess competent seconds' belaying technique – correct rope handling/ ability to lower/ consistent and attentive belaying	

<b>Emergency Vertical Techniques</b>	
Chosen belay method or device- ability to lock off/ ability to lower/ ability to convert to hoist / convert hoist to lower and lower	

<b>Emergency Vertical Techniques (continued...)</b>	
Ladder Problems and Solutions	

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Lowering Problems and Solutions	
Traverse Problems and Solutions	
Assistance to Exhausted ladder climber	

Hoist of exhausted/ injured group member-with assistance	
Hoist of exhausted/ injured group member-without assistance	

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## Vertical Leader Group Day Assessment Assessors Checklist

**Candidates**  
**Name:**

**ME**  
**Number:**

**Assessment**  
**Date:**

**Assessment**  
**Venue:**

<b>Suitability of Venue And Trip For Group</b>	
Pre trip checks eg insurance, AALS, aims, medicals, Destination notes	
Weather Conditions / Water Levels / Flood Awareness	
Compliance with Access Procedures	
Surface Navigation / Care of Groups en-route to Venue	
Suitability of Clothing & Personal Vertical Equipment of the Group	

<b>Leadership Style/Rapport/ Sensitivity to Group</b>	
Effectiveness of Party Management / Group Control & Safety	
Education of Conservation / History etc	
Suitability of Group Briefings (Technical, Educational, Information, Hazards)	
Use of Assistant Leader(s) if appropriate	
Appropriate Emergency Kit & Rescue	
Call-Out	
Organization & Running of Day	
Duty of care	

<b>Vertical Aspects</b>	
Appropriateness of technical equipment	
Protection of group on steep ground with and without a rope	
Protection of group at pitch head / foot	
Suitability and effectiveness of technique for descent / ascent	
Own progression	

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## SRT For Leader Assessment Assessors Checklist

<b>Candidates</b>		<b>ME</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Number:</b>	
<b>Assessment</b>		<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Venue:</b>	

Due consideration of accident to leader	
Personal SRT equipment – suitability and use	
SRT personal skills – pitch head / descent / ascent / deviations / rebelayes etc	
Self-Rescue – improvisation in case of equipment failure or loss etc	
Ropes and Knots for SRT	
Use of Rigging Guides / Topos	
Rigging for SRT – principles / personal safety / traverse lines / pitch head / rebelayes / deviations	
Conversion of SRT Rigging for lifeline / group abseil / group lower	
Use and suitability of Personal SRT equipment for lifelining / lowering / rescue	
Consideration and use of Travelling Ladders	

### Your next steps

Following the training course candidate's pathway to assessment may vary depending on their current qualification. Those with a valid Cave and/or Mine Leader Award may present for a Vertical Leader Assessment, followed by a Vertical Group Day Assessment. Vertical Group Assessment must be completed within a year of gaining their Vertical Leader Assessment.

Candidates who have only completed their Cave and/or Mine Leader Core Skills Assessment will be required to complete a Vertical Leader Core Skills Assessment, however, may choose to combine their Cave and/or Mine Group Day Assessment with their Vertical Leader Group day assessment. In such cases candidates would be expected to exceed the minimum pre-requisite experience, with combined assessments at the discretion of the Trainer/Assessor.