

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.azolve.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.azolve.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.

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.

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 mines with some SRT competence, 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 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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Core Skills Assessment

Vertical Cave and/or Mine Leader

Vertical equipment

Leader's personal equipment – suitability / care
Choice and suitability of equipment for group members' use – harness / cowstails / descender etc
Knowledge of ppe regulations and equipment standards
Ropes – types / construction / longevity / usage / storage / care etc
Karabiner / maillons – types / usage / limitations etc
Ladders / spreaders / tethers – types / construction / linkage / limitations / coiling / storage etc
Descenders / ascenders / pulleys / belay devices etc – types / usage / limitations
Bolt hangers – types / usage / limitations

Knots

Use of an appropriate range of knots
Knowledge of suitability / limitations

Rigging

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 rope / slings – alignment and forces – sharing loads
Pitch head – approach / ease of access / position of leader etc
Ladders – use of spreaders etc. / deployment etc
Group abseil rope
Lifeline – incl. Double lifelining

Lifelining methods

Belay methods and devices – use and limitations
Position of leader
Safety of group members – waiting / to & from pitch head
Efficiency / fluidity of lifeline technique
Double lifelining
Communication

Descent / ascent

Group ladder climbing- pros and cons / hazards / style
Group abseiling – pros and cons / hazards
Lowering – pros and cons / hazards
Leader personal safety – ladder / abseil

Emergency vertical techniques

Improvised harness – rope only / slings & krabs
Use & limitations of waist belay
Chosen belay method or device – ability to lock off / ability to lower off / ability to convert to hoist etc
Ladder problems and solutions
Abseil problems and solutions
Lowering problems and solutions
Traverse problems and solutions
Assistance to exhausted ladder climber
Hoist of exhausted / injured group member – with assistance / without assistance
Conversion of hoist to lower

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Group Assessment Checklist

<p>Suitability of Venue & Trip for group Weather Conditions / Water Levels / Flood Awareness Compliance with Access Procedures Surface Navigation / Care of Groups en-route to Venue Suitability of Clothing & Personal Equipment of Group</p> <p>Vertical aspects Appropriateness of technical equipment Protection of group on scrambles with and without a rope Protection of group at pitch head / foot Suitability and effectiveness of technique for descent / ascent Own progression</p>	<p>Leadership Style / Rapport / Sensitivity to Group Effectiveness of Party Management / Group Control & Safety Education / 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</p>
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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.

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.