

Horizontal Cave and Ladder Leader Checklist

This list describes all the tasks which a member must be able to perform before they are able to be checked off as a Horizontal Cave Leader for the RMIT Outdoors club (ROC). Each square on the right must be filled in by a currently accredited Horizontal Cave Instructor. The Horizontal Cave Instructor should indicate whether the assessment was practical (P) or oral (O) in the first column; and in the second mark if they are competent (C) or Not yet competent (NYC). Where only one letter (O or P) appears in the first column, it indicates that assessment must be by that method.

1) General requirements

A. Prerequisites

- I. Has lead or assisted on 4 days of caving with ROC
- II. Has sufficient sense of responsibility and discipline to conduct the activities of a trip in a safe manner

O/P	C/NYC
P	
P	

B. Basic cave skills

- I. Is sufficiently experienced in the practical aspects of caving to lead a party capably, under the variety of conditions likely to be encountered.
- II. Can select the appropriate equipment for a trip and advise others on suitability of personal and group equipment. Knows uses, limitations and performance characteristics of the following equipment:

- Helmets
 - Lights (rechargeable, battery powered)
 - Clothing (cotton vs cordura etc)
 - Thermal clothing
 - Footwear
 - Packs
 - Emergency equipment
 - Food/water
- Equipment is fitted to party members correctly

Is able to check adequacy of equipment for purpose required (including examining for damage)

P	
O/P	
P	
P	

III. Knows how to navigate through a cave using a map

- Recognises common cave map symbols
- Is able to locate party's position on a map of a cave
- Can determine possible advantages and disadvantages of alternative routes by examining a map

O/P	
P	
P	
P	

- IV. Knows techniques for navigating hazards such as climbs and squeezes, and can explain these techniques to other party members
- Demonstrates a range of climbing techniques (including chimneying, bridging)
 - Negotiates squeezes
 - Negotiates rockpiles/unstable areas
 - Is aware of the dangers of, and safe techniques for negotiating, water obstacles
 - Is aware of the dangers of, and safe techniques for negotiating, areas of high CO₂ concentration
 - Handles a cave pack
 - Assists others with negotiating obstacles

O/P	C/NYC
P	
P	
P	
O	
O	
P	
P	

C. Risk management, accident and emergency procedures

- I. Can analyse likely risks in a visit to a particular cave
- Identifies potential health risks from the cave environment, such as histoplasmosis, hypothermia, hyperthermia, exhaustion
 - Information about cave is reviewed to determine any history of risks from objective dangers (such as liability to flooding, unstable rockpiles, foul air)
- II. Can conduct a trip in a way designed to minimise risks to the party, taking into account the cave environment and party abilities.
- Details for an emergency callout are left with an appropriate person (eg route taken, proposed activities)
 - Previous experience and skills of party members are identified
 - Any known medical history, fitness and phobias of the group are considered
 - Cave and route are selected to match to group's capabilities
 - Food, water, light and clothing are adequate for the duration, climate and other conditions of the trip
 - Any safety precautions that the group must observe are described
 - Needs of group are balanced with needs of individuals
 - Participants who are unable to perform required activities are advised sensitively and courteously of any need to withdraw

O/P	
O/P	
P	
P	
P	
P	
P	
O/P	
P	
P	

- Ability of each participant to perform activities is monitored
- Trip activities are conducted at a pace and level which match the abilities of the group
- Objectives of trip are modified where appropriate to take into account circumstances such as objective hazards and individual performance
- Group co-operation is encouraged and maintained
- Encouragement is given where appropriate
- Objective dangers are continually monitored
- Resolves conflicts between group members

O/P	C/NYC
P	
P	
O/P	
P	
P	
P	
P	

III. Can perform the necessary procedures associated with caving emergencies under the variety of conditions likely to be encountered

- Emergency and potential emergency situations are promptly recognised and assessed
- Procedure for resolving/containing emergency is developed Appropriate use is made of available resources (including improvising equipment)
- Participants are removed from danger, and further potential hazards to the group are evaluated
- Actions are allocated the appropriate priority
- Emergency procedures and policies are carried out
- Basic first aid is administered according to established guidelines
- Condition of group members is constantly monitored
- Procedure adopted is regularly reviewed and revised if appropriate
- Outside assistance is sought where necessary
- Appropriate emergency authority is notified
- Procedure for locating a lost party member is outlined
- Some methods of extracting an injured party member are outlined

O/P	

D. Conservation

- Is aware of and upholds the ASF Code of Conservation and Ethics and Minimal Impact Caving Code
- Ensures party applies appropriate conservation/minimal impact techniques
- Explains to party the need for any conservation/minimal impact techniques

O/P	
P	
P	

O/P	C/NYC
-----	-------

2) Technical requirements

A. General

- I. Basic knots including the following:
 - Figure of eight knot
 - Inline eight
 - Double fisherman's knot
 - Prusik knot
 - Tape knot
 - Bowline
 - Alpine Butterfly Knot
 - Bunny Ears

Appropriate situation for use of each knot is described

Performance under load of each knot is described

Each knot is tied correctly and safely

O	
O	
P	

- II. Assessment of the security of natural and artificial anchors
 - Identify anchors (eg trees, rocks, bolts, bollards, formations, jugs, eyelets, climbing protection)
 - Demonstrate an appreciation of factors which may affect the security of an anchor (eg health of tree or branch, root system of tree or branch, abrasion points around or on an anchor, footing of bollards, mud, friability of rock, depth of bolt placement, likely performance under shock load)
 - Anchors are selected with regard to safety of access to pitchhead, minimising risk of failure of anchors and rope, and minimising environmental impact

P	
O/P	
OP	

- III. Rigging in such a manner as to minimise the possibility of anchor or equipment failure

 - Uses multiple anchors effectively and safely
 - Uses appropriate knots to secure rope
 - Tape, traces, karabiners and maillons rapides are used effectively
 - Knot is tied in bottom of rope
 - Need for rebelays and redirections is assessed
 - Rope is retrievable
 - Rope is rigged to minimise shock loading in event of anchor failure

B. Laddering, climbing and belaying

- I. Setting up and operating a ladder and belay/climb and belay
 - Ladder is rigged correctly
 - Hazards are removed or minimised
 - Laddering skills are demonstrated
 - Belay is rigged to permit extraction of belayer from system
 - Belay is rigged to minimise risk to any party member
 - A climber fall is satisfactorily arrested
 - Ladder is derigged/stowed correctly
 - II. Setting up an effective communications system (for example, using whistle or voice calls) to indicate:
 - On belay
 - climber ready
 - up or down rope
 - safe
 - a signal of acknowledgement
 - III. belay methods
 - Belay in a safe and effective manner using appropriate methods (eg stitch plate, italian hitch, rack, ascender)
 - Advantages and disadvantages of various belay methods are outlined
 - V. Self belay techniques
 - Self-belays in a safe and effective manner