



Guidelines for BCA Member Clubs that take Members of the Public Underground¹

Background:

These guidelines concern member clubs of the British Caving Association who are involved in introducing members of the public to the underground environment in the form of tours of caves and mines. These can be free of charge, with an optional donation or with a set fee charged.

The BCA and its member clubs see many benefits from these tours including an increased interest and awareness of the underground world, the opportunity to promote conservation, and as a means of raising funds to preserve and maintain these sites for the future.

Therefore, it is important for the BCA and its member clubs that tours for members of the public into caves and mines are covered by the BCA's public liability insurance policy.

Guidelines:

BCA member clubs that run tours for members of the public must conform to the following guidelines:

- Be paid up member clubs of the BCA (N.B.: NOT associate clubs or access controlling bodies)
- Any money raised by tours/trips should be used to maintain/ preserve the cave or mine and its access route, provide safety equipment and/or pay for any necessary inspections. The aim should be to break even, and not to make profit.
- No person should be paid to lead tours/trips. Paying external agencies, such as the Mines Inspectorate, to inspect underground sites is acceptable (and may be offset against money raised) but club members should always be acting in a voluntary capacity.

¹ Please note taking 'prospective club members' underground before they formally join a caving club is not covered by this document. See the FAQs on the BCA website for more details on prospective members.

- A written risk assessment must be carried out and reviewed annually. This should be readily available to all participants prior to their trip and its existence advertised – we recommend it is either emailed out or available on the club website.
- There must be a clearly stated maximum number of people per trip.
- A safety briefing/demonstration should be provided on every trip, prior to going underground.
- Any safety critical equipment must be subject to regular inspections and these inspections recorded.
- Clubs must record details of the members of the public they take underground. This should include: name, address, age – if under 18 years of age, date and location of the tour. A list of these must be sent to the BCA membership administrator by the end of the year. Participants must be made aware that these details will be shared with the BCA.
- Clubs should consider recording for the duration of the trip the member of the public's emergency contact details and requesting that the members running the trip/tour be informed of any relevant medical conditions held by the public attending.
- Any incidents that occur on a tour/ trip should be reported to BCA immediately, even if it seems unlikely it will develop into an insurance claim.

Definitions

Prospective Members - are individuals who are being introduced to caving with the intention of learning the skills and techniques to become club members. Prospective members will have expressed an interest in joining your group.

Trips/Tours for Members of the Public - are supervised, recreational trips underground for interested persons with no expectation of skill development, independent participation, or future membership of the group.