

# CSCA Technical Training News Sheet

No 4

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## RUN YOUR OWN CAVE PROFICIENCY COURSE

*Cave Leaders are now permitted to run CVP courses.*

Approval has now been given for Joint Service Cave Leaders to run their own Cave Proficiency courses (CVP), at unit level, as Distributed Training. This brings caving into line with mountaineering, where Summer Mountain Leaders (MLs) are able to run Summer Mountain Proficiency courses. Leaders who run intend to run formal CVP courses must first gain authorization from JSMTW (Ripon).

In addition to teaching caving skills leaders have to be able to assess a CVP student's ability to safely cave, as part of a group with other CVP holders with out a qualified leader. It may therefore be necessary for leader to attend Ripon for a couple of days to be brought up to-date on current assessment criteria.

[This change in policy was in response to a request by Cpl. Tony Brown (JSCVL) who runs caving courses from Blanford Camp ]

## SAFETY RATIOS and GROUP SIZE

The problem of group size and the leader to student safety ratios has caused a few problems over the last couple of years. The main concern is the temptation for EL Wings and Cadet Units to take large groups underground. Big groups are hard to supervise and when the group comprises of young novice cavers or cadets there is an increased possibility that damage to the fragile cave environment may occur.

Unfortunately there is still conflicting advice between the Joint Service Caving Handbook, JSP432 (revised 98) and other service regulations regarding group size and Safety Ratios.

*The Safety Ratio is the number of personnel under the charge of one leader/instructor.*

AGAI's Vol 1 Ch 11 contain misleading information about Safety Ratios. AGAI's is soon to be withdrawn and the Safety Ratios for all AT scheme activities will be published in issue 5 of JSP 419. Unfortunately the CSCA Technical Advisers was not consulted before the new issue of JSP 419 was printed and there will still be a number of errors carried over from the previous issue.

The CSCA Technical Training Committee is currently producing amendment proposals to JSP 419 and to JSP 432 to clarify the rules and a DCI may also be issued in advance of these amendments.

## How big is your group?

### *Current Regulations*

- Each group to have a qualified leader. (except for groups of CVP holders in grade 1 or grade 2 caves).
- Each group to have a nominated deputy leader. (Who needs to be suitably experienced but need hold a formally leadership qualified.)
- Maximum group size 8. (L+DL+6)
- Minimum group size 4. (L+DL+2)

The maximum group size of 8 should be reduced when using vertical techniques, and when the group is under instruction or if conditions demand. This also includes environmental conditions. When running a formal caving course the group size is controlled by the relevant Course Training Plan (CTP)

### *CSCA Recommendation*

The CSCA Committee recommends that whenever possible group size should be limited to a **maximum of 6**. This enables easy group management and supervision and is also in line

with the NCAs “minimum impact “policy for cave conservation.

## Introductory Caving Experience.

When taking a group underground on an “Introductory Caving Experience” the Joint Service Caving Handbook, (JSP432) currently permits “10 participants under the control of a qualified leader, and deputy leader”. This could result in groups of 12 which is far too large and could result in adverse publicity in the caving press, about military groups abusing caves.

The initial thought was to remove all reference to *Introductory Caving* from service caving documentation, however there are occasions such as Cadet camps when it may be acceptable to take groups larger than 8 underground.

What constitutes an introductory trip is not defined in JSP 432 and it will need to be amended to clarify this. The absolute maximum number of people on any such a trip will be limited to 10.

### *What constitutes an introductory trip*

- Purpose of the trip is purely to introduce personnel to the underground environment.
- Party consists entirely of willing participants.
- Trip is not part of “Leadership” Training
- Cave to be horizontal grade 1 or 2.
- Cave used is not an environmentally sensitive site or SSSI.

## SUCCESS for SRT Endorsement

Over the last year there have been a number of Cave Leaders who have been awarded an SRT endorsement. All Cave Leaders are encouraged to get this award which enables them to lead the following activities:

- SRT trips.
- Pull Through trips.
- Gorge descents.

## How to gain an endorsement

### *A. During a JSCVL assessment course*

A JSCVL Candidate, who is suitably SRT experienced and who has attended a CVR course or has gained the necessary rescue skills, can request that an SRT Endorsement assessment is conducted at the same time as their Cave Leader assessment. ***A request must be made before the start of the course.***

The Candidates ability to lead underground will be assessed during the first 4 days and time is set aside on the final day for an SRT rescue assessment.

### ***B. Previously qualified Cave Leaders***

The easiest and best way to gain an SRT Endorsement is to attend an Advanced SRT and Self Rescue course (CVR) See DCIs or contact Ripon for details of the next course. This is an excellent course not only for leaders but also for any caver who regularly uses SRT.

If it is difficult to be released from duty to attend a 5-day course it is possible that, arraignments can be made to conduct an assessment at a CSCA Meet or other suitable venue. However this would require prior approval from Ripon and an authorized instructor. Contact the Technical Adviser for information.

## What is required for an SRT endorsement?

The SRT endorsement assessment is covered in two parts. Firstly underground where the Candidate has to demonstrate their SRT rigging and personal progression skills and also the group management skills required to safely and effectively lead an SRT trip. Secondly above ground where they have to demonstrate their ability to conduct simple SRT rescues:

Candidates will be have to conduct the following rescues:

- Pitchhead lower** (with spare rope long enough to reach bottom of pitch).
- Pitchhead hoist**
- Mid Rope** (with casualty on Jammers).

Leaders or Potential Leaders will also be expected to bring their own rescue equipment with them to the assessment.

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