# NUCC Trip Leader Checklist

This list describes all the skills and capabilities that a member must possess before they may be appointed as a Trip Leader for the Australian National University Caving Club (NUCC).

Each square on the right must be filled in by a currently accredited Trip Leader. The Trip Leader should indicate whether the assessment was practical (P) or oral (O) in the first column; and print the date of the assessment and his/her initials in the second column. Where only one letter (O or P) appears in the first column, it indicates that assessment must be by that method.

**Name of prospective Trip Leader: .....**

**Names of assessor Trip Leaders: .....**

**Date checklist initiated: .....**

| | | O/P | Date | Initials |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **Prerequisites** | | | |
| a) | Has attended a NUCC trip | P | | |
| b) | Has sufficient sense of responsibility and discipline to conduct the activities of a trip in a safe manner. | P | | |
| **2.** | **Basic cave skills** | | | |
| a) | Is sufficiently experienced in the practical aspects of caving to lead a party capably, under conditions likely to be encountered. | P | | |
| b) | Can select the appropriate equipment for a trip and advise others on suitability of personal and group equipment. | P | | |
| c) | Knows uses, limitations and characteristics of the following equipment: | | | |
| | • Helmets | O/P | | |
| | • Lights | | | |
| | • Clothing | O/P | | |
| | • Thermal clothing | | | |
| | • Footwear | O/P | | |
| | • Packs | | | |
| | • Emergency equipment | O/P | | |
| | • Food and water | | | |
| d) | Club equipment is fitted to party members correctly | P | | |
| e) | Is able to check adequacy of equipment for purpose required (including examining for damage) | P | | |
| f) | Knows how to navigate through a cave using a map | P | | |
| g) | Recognises common cave map symbols | O/P | | |
| h) | Is able to locate party's position on a map of a cave | P | | |
| i) | Can determine possible advantages and disadvantages of alternative routes by examining a map | P | | |

| **2. Basic cave skills continued** | **O/P** | **Date** | **Initials** |
|---|---|---|---|
| j) Knows techniques for navigating hazards such as climbs and squeezes, and can explain these techniques to other party members | P | | |
| k) Demonstrates a range of climbing techniques (eg. chimneying, bridging) | P | | |
| l) Negotiates squeezes | P | | |
| m) Negotiates rockpiles/unstable areas | P | | |
| n) Is aware of the dangers of, and safe techniques for negotiating, water obstacles | O | | |
| o) Is aware of the dangers of areas of high $CO_2$ concentration, and can demonstrate safe techniques for identifying and negotiating foul air | P | | |
| p) Handles a cave pack | P | | |
| q) Assists others with negotiating obstacles | P | | |
| r) Can provide basic interpretation of the cave environment | | | |
| • Is aware of basic speleogenic processes and cave formation | O/P | | |
| • Imparts this knowledge to party members as required | O/P | | |

| **3. Risk management and hazards** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) Possesses a current First Aid Certificate: Provider and Number: ……... Expiry date: ……..... | | | |
| b) Can analyse likely risks in a visit to a particular cave | P | | |
| c) Identifies potential health risks from the cave environment (eg. histoplasmosis, hypothermia, hyperthermia, exhaustion) | O/P | | |
| d) Information about the cave is accessed and reviewed to determine any potential risks from objective dangers (eg. flood risk, unstable rockpiles, foul air) | O/P | | |
| e) Can conduct the trip in a way designed to minimise risks to the party, taking into account the cave environment, party abilities, transportation and access issues | P | | |
| f) Details for an emergency callout are left with an appropriate person (eg. route taken, proposed activities) | P | | |
| g) Previous experience and skills of party members are identified | P | | |
| h) Any known medical history, fitness and phobias of the group are considered | P | | |
| i) Cave and route are selected to match the group's capabilities | P | | |
| j) Food, water, lighting and clothing are appropriate for the trip | P | | |
| k) Any safety precautions that the group must observe are described | O/P | | |
| l) Participants who are unable to perform required activities are advised sensitively and courteously of any need to withdraw | P | | |
| m) Ability of each participant to perform activities is monitored | P | | |
| n) Trip activities are conducted at a pace and level which match the abilities of the group | P | | |

| **4. Accidents and emergency procedures** | **O/P** | **Date** | **Initials** |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) Objectives of the trip are modified where appropriate to take into account circumstances such as objective hazards and individual performance | O/P | | |
| b) Group co-operation is encouraged and maintained | P | | |
| c) Encouragement is given where appropriate | P | | |
| d) Objective dangers are continually monitored | P | | |
| e) Emergency and potential emergency situations are promptly recognised and assessed | O/P | | |
| f) Procedure for resolving/containing emergency is developed | O/P | | |
| g) Appropriate use is made of available resources (including improvising equipment where necessary) | O/P | | |
| h) Participants are removed from danger, and further potential hazards to the group are evaluated | O/P | | |
| i) Actions are allocated the appropriate priority | O/P | | |
| j) Emergency procedures and policies are carried out | O/P | | |
| k) Basic first aid is administered according to established guidelines | O/P | | |
| l) Condition of group members is constantly monitored | O/P | | |
| m) Procedure adopted is regularly reviewed and revised if appropriate | O/P | | |
| n) Outside assistance is sought where necessary | O/P | | |
| o) Appropriate emergency authority is notified | O/P | | |
| p) Procedure for locating a lost party member is outlined | O/P | | |
| q) Some methods of extracting an injured party member are outlined | O/P | | |

| **5. Conservation** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) Is aware of and upholds the ASF Code of Ethics, and the Minimal Impact Caving Code | O/P | | |
| b) Ensures the party applies appropriate minimal impact techniques | P | | |
| c) Explains to party the need for any minimal impact techniques | P | | |
| d) Understands the need for cave conservation, is aware of, and can explain the following cave conservation issues: | | | |
| • The nature of tracks in caves, and the requirement not to touch or damage cave formation (including non-calcite features and formation) | O/P | | |
| • The fragility of cave biota, and the impact that active caving can have upon it | O/P | | |
| • The impact of caver-bat interactions, and how to mitigate the impact that caving has upon bats | O/P | | |
| • The impact that both rigging and rescue can have on the integrity of a cave system | O/P | | |
| • The need for considerate cave exploration techniques, and methods used to protect vulnerable cave areas (eg. detrog sections, trackmarking, access restrictions) | O/P | | |
| • The relationship between surface conservation and the integrity of the cave environment | O/P | | |

| | | O/P | Date | Initials |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **6.** | **General technical requirements** | | | |
| a) | Can describe the properties of different types of rope, and their appropriateness for abseiling, ascending and belaying is described | O | | |
| b) | Basic knots are demonstrated, including the following: | | | |
| | REQUIRED- | | | |
| | • Figure of nine knot | P | | |
| | • Double fisherman's knot | P | | |
| | • Tape knot | P | | |
| | • Munter hitch | P | | |
| | • Alpine butterfly knot | P | | |
| | • Bunny ears hitch | P | | |
| | ADDITIONAL- | | | |
| | • Figure of eight knot on the bight | P | | |
| | • Rethreaded figure of eight knot | P | | |
| | • Prusik knot | P | | |
| | • Stone knot | P | | |
| c) | Appropriate situation for the use of each knot is described | O | | |
| d) | Performance under load of each knot is described | O | | |
| e) | Each knot is tied and dressed correctly, efficiently and safely | P | | |
| f) | Can assess the security of natural and artificial anchors | P | | |
| g) | Identifies anchors (eg. trees, rocks, bolts, bollards, formations, jugs, eyelets) | P | | |
| h) | Demonstrates an appreciation of the factors which may affect the security of an anchor (eg. tree/branch health, tree root system, anchor abrasion point, performance under shock load) | O/P | | |
| i) | Anchors are selected with regard to the safety of access to the pitch, minimising risk of failure of anchors and rope, and minimise environmental impact | O/P | | |
| j) | Rigging minimises the possibility of anchor or equipment failure | P | | |
| k) | Rigging uses multiple anchors effectively and safely | P | | |
| l) | Rigging uses appropriate knots to secure the rope | P | | |
| m) | Tape, karabiners and maillon rapides are used effectively where appropriate | P | | |
| n) | Stopper knot is tied in bottom of the rope | P | | |
| o) | Need for rebelays and redirections is assessed | P | | |
| p) | Rope is retrievable | P | | |
| q) | Rope is rigged to minimise shock loading in the event of anchor failure | P | | |
| **7.** | **Laddering, climbing and belaying** | | | |
| a) | Can set up and operate a ladder and belay or climb and belay | P | | |
| b) | Ladder is rigged correctly | P | | |
| c) | Hazards are removed or minimised | P | | |
| d) | Laddering skills are demonstrated to participants | P | | |

| 7. Laddering, climbing and belaying continued | O/P | Date | Initials |
|---|---|---|---|
| e) Belay is rigged to allow extraction of belayer from the system | P | | |
| f) Belay is rigged to minimise risk to any party member | P | | |
| g) A climber's fall is arrested | P | | |
| h) Ladder is derigged and stowed correctly | P | | |
| i) Sets up an effective communication system to indicate:<br>• On belay<br>• Climber ready<br>• Up or down rope<br>• The presence of hazards<br>• A signal of acknowledgement | P | | |
| j) Belays in a safe and effective manner using appropriate methods (eg. stitch plate or similar, munter hitch, rack, ascender) | P | | |
| k) The advantages and disadvantages of a belay method are outlined | O | | |
| l) Can self-belay in a safe and effective manner | P | | |

**CONCLUSION OF HORIZONTAL LEADER PORTION**

| 8. Single Rope Technique | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ♦ Hazards are removed or minimised when rigging pitches | P | | |
| ♦ Pitches are abseiled safely using SRT | P | | |
| ♦ An abseiler is safely belayed where appropriate | P | | |
| ♦ An effective communications system for abseiling is established to indicate:<br>• On and off rope<br>• Belayer attending<br>• A signal of acknowledgement<br>• The presence of hazards | P | | |
| ♦ Pitches are ascended safely using SRT | P | | |
| ♦ Routes are traversed using 'pull-through' techniques, including double-rope techniques | P | | |
| ♦ Rope protectors are placed securely and correctly | P | | |
| ♦ Rope protectors are passed correctly on ascent and descent | P | | |
| ♦ Rebelays and redirects are rigged correctly | P | | |
| ♦ Suitable anchors are chosen for rebelays and redirects | P | | |
| ♦ Rebelays and redirects are safely negotiated | P | | |
| ♦ Pitches, including rebelays and redirects, are derigged correctly | P | | |
| ♦ Techniques are demonstrated for negotiating awkward rigging (eg. tight rope, short loop at rebelay, rope weight) | P | | |
| ♦ Can perform a changeover from ascending to descending and vice versa | P | | |
| ♦ Knows the uses and characteristics of the following equipment:<br>• Mechanical ascenders<br>• Three forms of descender<br>• Karabiners and maillon rapides (including D-maillons)<br>• Tape | O<br>O<br>O<br>O | | |

**8. Single Rope Technique continued**

| | O/P | Date | Initials |
|---|---|---|---|
| ♦ Assesses the safety of a particular SRT system, including the:<br>• Suitability of materials used for components<br>• Safety features<br>• Likely efficiency | P | | |
| ♦ Equipment is correctly fitted to party members | P | | |
| ♦ Can abseil down with an injured person after having ascended or descended to them on the same rope (conduct a pick-off) | P | | |
| ♦ ADDITIONAL: Can set up and operate a hauling system to give a mechanical advantage | P | | |
| ♦ An emergency situation involving a vertical element is managed appropriately | O/P | | |

..... has been approved as a Horizontal Trip Leader by the Club's Committee on .....

..... has been approved as a Vertical Trip Leader by the Club's Committee on .....

Your Trip Leader status will be suspended when your First Aid qualification lapses. For restoration of approval to lead trips, either take an accredited First Aid course, or apply to the Committee with evidence of intent to undertake a First Aid course for exemption.

Complete Trip Leader qualification allows for the undertaking of the following activities: caving, bushwalking and canyoning. Further activities (excluding social events) should be discussed with the Committee with reference to the current form of insurance possessed by the ASF.

This document was approved by the NUCC Committee on the 5-2-2019.