



Outdoor Council of Australia

National
Outdoor
Leaders
Registration
Scheme

CAVING REGISTRATION LEVELS AND ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

NOLRS VERSION 2.2

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Outdoor Council of Australia

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Introduction

This document contains information on the minimum skills required to achieve Registration within the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS) at specific levels within the activity of CAVING.

Additional documents are available at www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au that provides information about the Scheme and the registration process includes:

- **NOLRS Registration Guide** - information about the registration requirements and process
- **NOLRS Re-registration Guide** - information about the re-registration requirements and process
- **Application for Registration**
- **Application for Subsequent Registration**
- **Application for Re-registration**
- **NOLRS Partnered Assessment Providers** - a guide for organisations that conduct assessment of outdoor leaders, detailing how to have their course outcomes recognised as equivalent to the skill and knowledge requirements of the NOLRS.

What is CAVING?

The activity of CAVING involves exploration of underground passages and caverns (created by natural processes over time) for pleasure, challenge, research, experience and / or educational outcomes.

Caves vary in size, depth and fragility, and can be found in diverse environments including metropolitan suburbs, coastal and remote regions. Typically CAVING is described as either:

Horizontal CAVING – involves crawling through openings, scrambling up and down rock faces with / without fixed ladders; OR

Vertical CAVING – involves using ropes, CAVING ladders and other descending / ascending equipment to enter, explore and exit caves.

This Standard EXCLUDES *artificial CAVING, CAVING in unexplored caves recently discovered, tourist or show caves, and cave diving.*

Registration Levels and Description

CAVING registration levels apply to Guides and Instructors who conduct CAVING activities in underground passages and caverns for pleasure, challenge, research, experience and/or educational outcomes.

The following registration levels are available within the NOLRS within the activity of CAVING

- CAVING Guide (Horizontal)
- CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch)
- CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch)
- CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch)
- CAVING Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch)

CAVING Guide (Horizontal):

A person designated as a CAVING Guide (Horizontal) has the skills, knowledge and experience to work autonomously within a closely defined range of skilled operations involving known routines, methods and procedures, where a small amount of discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures. This person may conduct activities independently only within clearly defined contexts where there are clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and relevant documented guidelines for the activity, they are familiar with those SOPs, and where assistance is readily available should a non-routine situation arise.

A CAVING Guide (Horizontal) leads or guides dependent participants in CAVING activities. There is no intention of imparting skills or knowledge to participants beyond that which is necessary to enable their safe participation in the CAVING activity. At the end of a session or program with a Guide, the intent is not for the participant to have acquired the skills to independently participate in the activity.

A CAVING Guide (Horizontal) may conduct activities only at sites which have documentation which defines the key safety features, and risk management procedures for the activity. They may only work at sites which:

- Provide the opportunity for Horizontal CAVING only
- May have sections of swimming, small vertical drops (which do not require abseils) and slippery rocks
- Have been deemed as appropriate Horizontal CAVING sites by a person with the skills, knowledge and experience equivalent to a Horizontal CAVING Instructor. (This analysis of suitability may result in the establishment of a recognised local and established Cave route, or sites assessed and used by specific organisations).

A CAVING Guide (Horizontal) may conduct activities only at sites which have documentation that defines the key safety features and risk management procedures for the activity.

A CAVING Guide (Horizontal) does not have the ability to adequately assess the suitability of a new cave, access and egress, route plans or to independently develop procedures for the conduct of CAVING activities. They may work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs (e.g. in vertical CAVING activities).

A CAVING Guide (Horizontal) does not have the ability to adequately assess the suitability of a new facility / site and its characteristics or to independently develop procedures for the conduct of CAVING activities. They may work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs.

A CAVING Guide (Horizontal) has the knowledge, skills and experience that enable them to:

- Plan for minimal environmental impact
- Undertake risk analysis of activities
- Guide outdoor recreation sessions
- Follow defined Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures
- Facilitate groups and deal with conflict
- Respond to emergency situations
- Navigate in caves
- Move through a cave with minimal impact

CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch)

A person designated as a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to work autonomously within a closely defined range of skilled operations involving known routines, methods and procedures, where a small amount of discretion and judgment is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures. This person may conduct activities independently only within clearly defined contexts where there are clearly defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and relevant documented guidelines for the activity, they are familiar with those SOPs, and where assistance is available should a non-routine situation arise.

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) leads or guides dependant participants in vertical CAVING activities. There is no intention of imparting skills or knowledge to participants beyond that which is necessary to enable their safe participation in the CAVING activity. At the end of a session or program with a guide, the intent is not for the participant to have acquired the skills to independently participate in the activity

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) must possess all the skills, knowledge and experience required of a CAVING Guide (Horizontal) PLUS those that enable them to:

- Guide CAVING trips (Vertical Single Pitch)
- Apply single pitch abseiling skills in caves
- Rig a ladder pitch
- Use CAVING specific single ropes techniques
- Rig ropes and establish belays in caves
- Perform vertical rescues

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) may conduct activities only at sites, which have documentation, which define the key safety features, and risk management procedures for the activity. They may only work at sites which:

- Provide the opportunity for CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch);
- Have natural, artificial and/or fixed anchors;
- Includes sections of swimming, single pitch abseils and negotiating waterfalls.
- Have been deemed as appropriate CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch) sites by a person with the skills, knowledge and experience equivalent to a CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch) or CAVING Guide/Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch). (This analysis of suitability may result in the establishment of a recognised local CAVING site, or sites assessed and used by specific organisations).

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) does not have the ability to adequately assess the suitability of a new cave, its anchors, access and egress, route plans or to independently develop procedures for the conduct of CAVING activities. They may work as an assistant with a more experienced leader in potentially non-routine or more complex activities and programs (e.g. CAVING Vertical Multi-Pitch)

CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch)

A person designated as a CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to instruct participants in order that they may acquire horizontal or vertical CAVING skills to enable independent participation. This requires the instructor to be able to transfer required skills and knowledge, apply a variety of appropriate instructional strategies, and assess a participant's skill and knowledge acquisition during and at the end of a program or session.

A person designated as a CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to operate independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different participant groups and within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. A CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch) has the knowledge, skills and experience of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) as well as additional skills and experience in teaching and assessment.

A CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch) must possess all the skills, knowledge and experience required of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) PLUS those that enable them to:

- Train small groups
- Instruct CAVING skills (Vertical Single Pitch)

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of four (4) single-pitch CAVING sessions (at least three sessions must be instructing) in the last 12 months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external single-pitch vertical rescue training within the past 12 months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants in single-pitch situations.

A person with this level of competence may therefore instruct participants to achieve the following outcomes:

- CAVING (Horizontal) Participant
- CAVING (Horizontal) Guide
- CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch) Participant
- CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch) Guide

CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch)

A person designated as a CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to operate independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different participant groups and within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. A person with this level of competence may perform a broad range of skilled applications. These may include the evaluation and analysis of current practices, development of new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the ability to deal with complex, unpredictable and non-routine situations and may work at sites which:

- Provide the opportunity for CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch);
- Have natural, artificial and/or fixed anchors;
- Includes multi pitch abseils
- Have the potential to provide non-routine situations (e.g. adverse weather conditions, complex rescue situations).

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the knowledge, skills and experience of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) as well as additional skills and experience on multi-

pitch caves, enhanced leadership, emergency response and risk management knowledge and skills.

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) must possess all the skills, knowledge and experience required of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) PLUS those that enable them to:

- Rig ladders in complex situations
- Rig a complex pitch using specific CAVING techniques
- Demonstrate vertical CAVING skills
- Rig multi pitches in complex vertical cave systems
- Navigate in untroged caves
- Guide CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch) trips
- Perform complex vertical rescues

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of four (4) multi-pitch CAVING sessions in the last 12 months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external multi-pitch vertical rescue training within the past 12 months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants in multi-pitch CAVING situations.

A person designated as a CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to operate independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different participant groups and within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. A person with this level of competence may perform a broad range of skilled applications. These may include the evaluation and analysis of current practices, development of new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the ability to deal with complex, unpredictable and non-routine situations and may work at sites which:

- Provide the opportunity for CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch);
- Have natural, artificial and/or fixed anchors;
- Includes sections of swimming, multi pitch abseils and negotiating waterfalls.
- Have the potential to provide non-routine situations (e.g. adverse weather conditions, complex rescue situations).

A CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the knowledge, skills and experience of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) as well as additional skills and experience on multi-pitch caves, enhanced leadership, emergency response and risk management knowledge and skills.

CAVING Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch)

A person designated as a CAVING Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to instruct participants in order that they may acquire horizontal or vertical CAVING skills to enable independent participation. This requires the Instructor to be able to transfer required skills and knowledge, apply a variety of appropriate instructional strategies, and assess a participant's skill and knowledge acquisition during and at the end of a program or session.

A person designated as a CAVING Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the skills, knowledge and experience to operate independently at a broad range of venues with a variety of different participant groups and within a broad range of varied contexts that may be complex and non-routine. A CAVING Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch) has the knowledge, skills and experience of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) as well as additional skills and experience in teaching and assessment.

A person with this level of competence may therefore instruct participants to achieve the following outcomes:

- Caving (Horizontal) Participant
- Caving (Horizontal) Guide
- Caving (Vertical Single Pitch) Participant
- Caving (Vertical Single Pitch) Guide
- Caving (Vertical Multi Pitch) Participant
- Caving (Vertical Multi Pitch) Guide

CAVING Skill, Knowledge and Experience Requirements

CAVING Guide (Horizontal):

Critical aspects of a CAVING Guide (Horizontal) experience, knowledge and skills include:

- Facilitation of a group including conflict resolution strategies
- Knowledge of first aid procedures relevant to CAVING environment
- Identify and implement conflict resolution strategies, using effective interpersonal skills
- Ability to demonstrate a variety of leadership styles, select styles appropriate for a variety of situations and facilitate group decision making where appropriate
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant laws and legal requirements
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant Occupational Health and Safety requirements
- Application of risk analysis principles in a CAVING context
- Ability to identify, and plan for, basic requirements of a CAVING activity (i.e. equipment, food, water, clothing)
- Maintenance of a participant's physical and emotional safety during CAVING sessions in a diversity of situations (eg, different participant groups, different learning outcomes)
- Ability to plan, guide and evaluate CAVING sessions at a number of different locations to suit available resources, environmental limitations and different types of participant groups with differing needs and activity aims
- Establish and maintain positive group dynamics
- Initiate and carry out search and rescue, and assist in the rescue operation as required
- Knowledge of the following
 - CAVING techniques
 - navigation in tracked and easy untracked areas
 - Australian speleological cave safety guidelines and code of ethics
 - appropriate clothing for CAVING
 - appropriate equipment types and use thereof
 - appropriate access and egress of caves
 - permit requirements relevant to CAVING
 - map types, scales and sources of error
 - communication techniques suitable for a CAVING environment
- Interpretation of maps and relevant symbols
- Features of a compass, their use and factors that affect their accuracy
- Route planning, features and factors that should be considered
- Techniques for estimating distance travelled within a cave
- CAVING techniques (to move through a cave)
- Observation (of cave features and CAVING parties actions)
- Communication (of procedures and CAVING party)
- Problem solving to locate a position on a map
- Literacy and numeracy to calculate bearings and complete route plans

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of four (4) CAVING sessions (minimum of two) hours per session) in the past twelve (12) months.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of six (6) CAVING sessions (minimum of two hours per session) at least two (2) different locations.

CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch):

Critical aspects of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) experience, knowledge and skills include:

- Facilitation of a group including conflict resolution strategies
- Knowledge of first aid procedures relevant to CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch)
- Identify and implement conflict resolution strategies, using effective interpersonal skills
- Ability to demonstrate a variety of leadership styles, select styles appropriate for a variety of situations and facilitate group decision making where appropriate
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant laws and legal requirements
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant Occupational Health and Safety requirements
- Application of risk analysis principles in a CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch) context
- Ability to identify, and plan for, basic requirements of a CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch) activity (i.e. equipment, food, water, clothing)
- Maintenance of a participant's physical and emotional safety during challenge ropes course sessions in a diversity of situations (eg, different participant groups, different learning outcomes)
- Ability to plan, guide and evaluate CAVING (Vertical Single Pitch) sessions at a number of different locations to suit available resources, environmental limitations and different types of participant groups with differing needs and activity aims
- Establish and maintain positive group dynamics
- Initiate and carry out search and rescue, and assist in the rescue operation as required
- Ability to establish effective communication and operation of communications equipment to transmit and receive messages
- Knowledge of the implications of the relevant Australian and international standards (eg European committee for Standardisation (CEN) on equipment use and performance
- Relevant state legislation impacting on roping and CAVING activities
- Accepted industry best practice or recommendations (as specified in operating procedures, risk management guidelines, professional association's recommendations or current texts)
- Manufacturer's design specifications and recommendations for equipment use
- Minimum impact code
- Principles of anchor systems (equally shared load, single component failure and effect, redundancy, angle of separation)
- Principles of belay systems and devices
- Different types of belay system (e.g. top and bottom belay, self and instructor/other participant belays, dynamic and static belays)
- Technical activity/equipment knowledge
- Advantages and disadvantages of various knots in a variety of situations
- Technical abseiling ability
- Decision making (to select anchor and belay systems)
- Problem solving (to overcome hazards)
- Observation (to assess anchors)

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of four (4) CAVING sessions (minimum of three hours per session) in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external vertical rescue training within the past 12 months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants in vertical CAVING situations.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of six (6) CAVING sessions (minimum of three hours per session) at least two (2) different locations.

CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch):

Critical aspects of a CAVING Instructor (Vertical Single Pitch) skills and knowledge include those of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Single Pitch) **PLUS** the following:

Skills to:

- Rescue competencies to effectively deal with emergencies whilst instructing abseiling on natural surfaces
- Instructional techniques to adapt sessions to meet a variety of learning abilities
- Skills to demonstrate correct CAVING technique
- Skills to correct incorrect CAVING technique
- Observation and interpretation skills to select appropriate site and aid in hazard identification

Ability to demonstrate and / or teach the following:

- Required knowledge that applies to a CAVING activity
- Safety and rescue procedures appropriate to a CAVING activity

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of four (4) CAVING sessions (minimum of three hours per session; at least three sessions must be instructing in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external vertical rescue training within the past 12 months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants in vertical CAVING situations.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of six (6) CAVING sessions (minimum of three (3) hours per session; at least three (3) sessions must be instructing) at different locations.

CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch):

Critical aspects of a CAVING Guide (Vertical Multi Pitch) experience, knowledge and skills include:

- Facilitation of a group including conflict resolution strategies
- Knowledge of first aid procedures relevant to CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch)
- Identify and implement conflict resolution strategies, using effective interpersonal skills
- Ability to demonstrate a variety of leadership styles, select styles appropriate for a variety of situations and facilitate group decision making where appropriate
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant laws and legal requirements
- Knowledge of, and compliance with, relevant Occupational Health and Safety requirements
- Application of risk analysis principles in a CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch) context
- Ability to identify, and plan for, basic requirements of a CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch) activity (i.e. equipment, food, water, clothing)
- Maintenance of a participant's physical and emotional safety during CAVING sessions in a diversity of situations (eg, different participant groups, different learning outcomes)
- Ability to plan, guide and evaluate CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch) sessions at a number of different locations to suit available resources, environmental limitations and different types of participant groups with differing needs and activity aims
- Establish and maintain positive group dynamics
- Initiate and carry out search and rescue, and assist in the rescue operation as required
- Ability to establish effective communication and operation of communications equipment to transmit and receive messages

- Multi Pitch abseiling skills
- Ability to tailor activities to match group skill level and minimise risk
- Use of rescue equipment

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of four (4) CAVING sessions (minimum of three hours per session) in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external vertical rescue training within the past 12 months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' participants in vertical CAVING situations.

Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of guiding a minimum of six (6) CAVING sessions (minimum of three hours per session) at least two (2) different locations.

CAVING Instructor (Vertical Multi Pitch):

Critical Aspects of a CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch) Instructor skills and knowledge include those of a CAVING (Vertical Multi Pitch) Guide **PLUS** the following:

Skills to:

- Rescue competencies to effectively deal with emergencies whilst instructing abseiling on natural surfaces
- Instructional techniques to adapt sessions to meet a variety of learning abilities
- CAVING skills to demonstrate and correct technique
- Observation and interpretation skills to select appropriate site and aid in hazard identification

In order to demonstrate currency, an applicant seeking registration must have verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of four (4) multi-pitch abseiling sessions (at least three sessions must be instructing) in the past twelve (12) months. In addition, evidence must be supplied of 'in-house' or external multi-pitch vertical rescue training within the past twelve (12) months, or participation in vertical rescue of 'real' clients in multi-pitch situations. Newly trained outdoor leaders require verifiable evidence of instructing or guiding a minimum of six (6) multi-pitch abseiling sessions (minimum of three (3) hours per session; at least three (3) sessions must be guiding) at different locations.