

Cave Leader



Photo: Neil Silverwood

Scope and Syllabus

With the support of:



NZOIA™ Cave Leader Scope

Cave Leader Profile

The NZOIA Cave Leader

- Plan and prepare introductory cave experiences
- Instruct groups in the cave skills required for a positive introductory experience
- Lead and manage groups on familiar routes in low flow streamway caves
- Demonstrate effective safety management
- Obtain weather forecasts and apply weather interpretation skills
- Provide interpretive information about natural and cultural history and about flora and fauna
- Role model and promote accepted environmental practices

The NZOIA Cave Leader can work independently without direct supervision. Leaders are qualified to operate within an activity specific risk management plan. The qualification does not define the skill set required to write or approve such a plan.

This is a foundation qualification and provides a stepping stone towards NZOIA Cave 1.

Scope

The holder of this qualification can organise and manage trips of up to three hours duration in horizontal caves where a maximum drop height of 3m is not exceeded. The cave must have easy access in and out for group management and in case of an emergency. The trips will be on well established routes. A low flow streamway may be encountered that does not require swimming or deep water management.

The cave leader can rig, instruct and manage simple handlines to assist clients on short vertical steps.

Prerequisites

Be a current Full Member or working under an Affiliated Membership of NZOIA

Be 18 years old or over

Hold a current First Aid Certificate

Have the following experience as evidence in a logbook:

Personal experience – at least 5 days experience (a cave day is considered to be at least 4 hours including approach and return) in caves (can include training)

Instructional experience – at least 5 days additional experience as a co-leader or assistant leader in caves.

The prerequisite experience requirements are minimums, extra days are recommended.

Registration and Revalidation

Registration and revalidation with NZOIA provide proof of currency for NZOIA qualification holders.

Progressing to NZOIA Cave 1

As the NZOIA Cave Leader gains more experience they may progress towards gaining the NZOIA Cave 1 qualification. The steps they would follow include:

- Gaining the experience outlined in the NZOIA Cave 1 prerequisites
- Attending an NZOIA Cave 1 training course
- Working with a NZOIA Cave 1 holder

Syllabus

Assessment Notes

The syllabus outlines what the content of the assessment will include and gives an idea of what assessment tasks the candidate will be asked to complete. All judgements on how the candidate meets the syllabus must be based on current good practice and industry standards.

Assessors can use three types of direct evidence to judge a candidate's competency:

- Workbook answers
- Observation of practical tasks
- Questioning and discussion

Candidates are expected to know and follow a system – they are not expected to be flexible in their set up

Candidates are required to provide participants with effective instruction and assistance when vertical heights between 1m and 3m are encountered

Technical Competence

1. Describe the structure of caving organisations in New Zealand

- 1.1** Be able to describe the role of the New Zealand Speleological Society (NZSS)
- 1.2** Be able to refer keen cavers to clubs that can further their experience

2. Demonstrate and/or describe the care and correct use of cave equipment and clothing

The candidate will:

- 2.1 Use equipment that is in good condition and is well maintained E.g. helmets, hand lines, torches
- 2.2 Complete a pre-activity check of equipment for damage
- 2.3 Choose clothing and footwear that is appropriate for the terrain, temperature and protection
- 2.4 Uses equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and current good practice
- 2.5 Correctly fit their helmet
- 2.6 For all equipment used demonstrate and/or be able to describe; the properties, common use, advantages, limitations, minimisation of wear, damage checking and storage

3. Demonstrate safe and efficient caving skills

The candidate will demonstrate the following while caving:

- 3.1 Safe, efficient and balanced movement
- 3.2 Route finding on formed tracks
- 3.3 Working as part of the group and maintaining contact with the group
- 3.4 Negotiation of hand lines e.g. hand over hand, body belay

4. Construct a simple hand line system

The candidate will:

- 4.1 Construct a solid anchor using appropriate equipment e.g. slings, pre-placed bolts
- 4.2 Rig a simple hand line at a maximum of 3m high

5. Demonstrate safe assistance techniques

The candidate will demonstrate management of another caver's safety by:

- 5.1 Spotting
- 5.2 Direct assistance e.g. helping hand, guiding foot placement, providing a knee or foot as a hold
- 5.3 A body belay on a hand line

The Environment

6. Obtain a weather forecast and apply weather interpretation skills

The candidate will:

- 6.1 Obtain a relevant weather forecast for the planned cave trip and provide a verbal summary of the forecast

- 6.2 Describe the implications of the weather forecast for the planned cave trip and make decisions about the session based on the forecast
- 6.3 Observe any changes to the weather or flow levels and modify the trip if necessary

7. Demonstrate cultural and environmental knowledge and interpretation of areas visited

The candidate will:

- 7.1 Provide interpretive information about the natural or cultural history of the cave e.g. process of cave formation specific to the area, a historical story about the cave
- 7.2 Provide interpretive information about local flora and fauna

8. Role model and promote accepted environmental practices

The candidate will:

- 8.1 Demonstrate and/or describe the responsibilities to land owners and other users, including access protocols
- 8.2 Role model and promote the principles of NZ Speleological Society's Code for cavers
- 8.3 Role model and promote the principles of Leave No Trace

Group Management and Leadership

9. Lead and manage a group for an introductory cave trip

The candidate will be responsible for a client group on a familiar cave route for a minimum of one hour and demonstrate:

- 9.1 Professional conduct ie role modelling (behaviour, clothing, use of equipment, conservation etc)
- 9.2 Preparing and briefing the group including setting boundaries/safe areas and ground rules
- 9.3 Manage time appropriately in relation to the activity plan and conditions
- 9.4 Coaching, encouraging, motivating clients to ensure they are interested, engaged and have a fun and positive experience
- 9.5 Assist tired client if needed
- 9.6 Establishing rapport with clients and an awareness of their emotional, cultural and other needs

10. Demonstrate effective safety management

The candidate will:

- 10.1 Leave intentions information with an appropriate group/organisation/person

- 10.2** Have a first aid kit and be able to deal with first aid situations if required
- 10.3** Carry spare clothing, lighting and/or a thermos if appropriate for the trip and conditions
- 10.4** Never compromise their personal safety or the safety of their clients
- 10.5** Position themselves at appropriate places within the group to manage hazards e.g. slippery surfaces, small drops, junctions, loose terrain, lagging clients
- 10.6** Demonstrate safe practices and good judgement and decision making within the scope of this qualification, including the assessment of client competency and confidence
- 10.7** Describe how they would manage a crisis with reference to the operations risk management plan

Instruction

11. Plan and prepare an introductory cave experience

The candidate will prepare a written activity plan which will contain the following information:

- 11.1** A clearly defined purpose and session appropriate for the group
- 11.2** A logical sequence of progressions and activities
- 11.3** The cave location including any consent or access issues
- 11.4** A conservation plan to minimise human impact e.g. care of speleothems, mud management, damage prevention, waste management
- 11.5** Clothing and equipment list for both individuals and the group
- 11.6** A weather forecast
- 11.7** Risk and hazard identification and management
- 11.8** Emergency procedures

12. Instruct a group in the cave skills required for a positive introductory experience

The candidate will provide clients with effective instruction in the following cave knowledge and skills:

- 12.1** Walking with a head torch
- 12.2** Basic movement techniques
- 12.3** Cave conservation (care of when moving through and education)
- 12.4** Use of a hand line (both up and down)
- 12.5** Spotting each other
- 12.6** Communication system
- 12.7** Waste management e.g. rubbish disposal, toileting

The candidate will use:

- 12.8** A logical sequence of progressions
- 12.9** Clear demonstrations and explanations