

| CLUB AND SOCIETY ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT | | Degree of Risk | | Risk Rating Matrix | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------|--|--|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Society Name: | Leeds University Union Caving Society | Likelihood | | Severity | | | | | | |
| Category: | Gryphon Outdoors | 5 | Inevitable | Likelihood | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Author(s): | Tara Delaney | 4 | Highly Likely | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Author(s) signature and date: | T.D 25/07/2025 | 3 | Probable | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| Persons Responsible: | Society Committee and leaders | 2 | Unlikely | | 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| Staff Sign Off: | [Signature] [Date] | 1 | Remote possibility | | 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| Staff Additional Check: | [Signature] [Date] | Severity | | | | | | | | |
| Locations: | Caves - Most commonly in the Yorkshire dales, but in various locations around the UK. Caving huts - Where we will be staying on residential trips Pubs, clubs, restaurants and other locations for socials around Leeds | 5 | Very high - multiple deaths | | | | | | | |
| Details of Activities: | ● Caving day trips, often | 4 | Highly - death, serious injury, permanent disability | | | | | | | |
| | | 3 | Moderate - Off Uni/work for at least 5 days | | | | | | | |
| | | 2 | Slight - First aid treatment | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Risk rating score Action | | | | | | |
| | | | | 1 - 4 Broadly acceptable - no action required | | | | | | |
| | | | | 5 - 9 Moderate - Reduce risks if reasonably practicable | | | | | | |
| | | | | 10 - 15 High risk - Priority action to be undertaken | | | | | | |
| | | | | 16 - 25 Unacceptable - Action must be taken immediately | | | | | | |

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Nil - Very minor

followed by visiting a local Leeds pub or restaurant

- Caving weekend trips - taking a group to a caving hut, spending the weekend caving and socialising
- Socials - Taking a group out to participate in various social activities in Leeds.

People who may be affected:

- Society members and participants (LUUCaS and ULSA)

| <i>Identify Hazards</i> | | <i>Estimate the risk</i> | | | <i>Evaluate the risk</i> | | | | <i>Evaluate residual risk</i> |
|--|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Hazard | How may harm result? | Li ke lih ood | S e v er ity | Ra ti ng | Risk control measures | Li ke lih ood | Se ve rit y | Ra tin g | Further action required? <i>Only fill out if additional control measures are needed to be implemented or reviewed</i> Include timescales and who is responsible for implementation |
| Hypothermia/ Extreme Coldness | Getting cold from the low temperature cave environment, | 3 | 3 | 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group numbers will be appropriate according to the nature of each individual cave and the numbers of experienced members in each team. Depending on the cave, large group | 2 | 2 | 4 | |

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| | becoming wet, or fatigue, leading to hypothermia | | | | <p>numbers can slow the trip down and cause members to become cold.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced members and/or trip leaders will communicate the importance of keeping warm with their team, ensuring appropriate clothing is worn, there is continuous movement, and sufficient food and water is provided for the duration of the trip. • Experienced members and/or trip leaders in each team will communicate the importance of letting each other know when they are getting cold and tired, as well as check in regularly with all members of the team. • Extra care of individuals who show early signs of hypothermia such as shivering will be taken by trip leaders and the members of the team, as they may stumble more and find simple ascents difficult. More spotting may be needed to prevent the person becoming a casualty. • Personal survival bags and/or a group shelter will be carried by the group leader or seconder and the ULSA call out procedure will be followed in case of emergency. • A list of appropriate clothing is in place in ULSA Caving Without Tears, which is available to all members via the ULSA virtual library. There is also a caving kit list with recommendations on the Caving Society Engage page. Experienced members and/or trip leaders can refuse to take inappropriately dressed individuals underground. | | | | |
| Fatigue/Exhaustion | Lack of food, water and physical endurance during caving may lead to fatigue and/or exhaustion. | 4 | 2 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before going underground, experienced members and/or leaders will communicate to the entire group the importance of speaking out when they are tired. If necessary the trip will end prematurely and head back to the car or hut to prevent further danger to the individual. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |

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| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be ensured that all individuals carry a personal supply of food and water sufficient for the trip. Spare food and water will be available from leaders. • The trip will move at a pace manageable for the slowest caver and within their capabilities assessed by the trip leader. Rest stops will be provided throughout the trip. . • All individuals on the trip will help their team members and look out for signs of tiredness in the other team members. • If any individual is suffering severe exhaustion/fatigue, they are not to engage in any unassisted rope work. Lifeline ropes and rescue techniques may be employed by the group leader. | | | | |
| Dehydration | Lack of water may lead to dehydration with symptoms such as headache and tiredness | 3 | 1 | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will carry a personal supply of water sufficient for the trip. A spare bottle of water will be available from the trip leader. • Extra care of the individuals showing signs of fatigue will be taken by the rest of the team, as they may stumble more and find simple ascents difficult. More spotting may be needed to prevent the person becoming a casualty. | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Getting stuck on a rope | Exhaustion and lack of training or experience may result in individuals getting stuck on a rope which may lead to sit harness syndrome, or even suspension syncope and negative psychological impacts. | 3 | 2 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training will be provided to all individuals new to caving prior to any trip to a cave requiring the use of rope(s). (A training risk assessment separate to this document has been uploaded to Engage) • Extra care of the individuals showing signs of fatigue will be taken by the rest of the team as described above. • Support through encouragement and guidance as to how to get unstuck will be provided when needed. • Rescue procedures including hauling may be employed by the group leader. Leaders will go up ropes first with seconders helping people | 2 | 2 | 4 | |

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| | | | | | getting on the ropes adequately. Leaders can then haul the stuck individual if needed. | | | | |
| Becoming separated and/or lost on the moor between the cave and the transport | May lead to injuries/harm from hiking, including minor injuries from slips, trips and falls, hypothermia, dehydration and exhaustion. | 2 | 3 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All individuals will look after one another and make sure nobody stays behind. Walking to the cave will proceed at the pace of the slowest individual to remain together as a team at all times. • Experienced members and/or trip leaders will know the location of the cave. Information on the location of the cave, the route between the cave and transport will be obtained using the ULSA resources. • When the cave entrance is difficult to locate or is not found, the individuals taking part in caving will find key features (such as a tree) ensuring that they can retrace their steps to return to their vehicles. • Where routes are long and/or complicated or bad weather conditions are likely, then a map and compass will be used by experienced members. GPS are also useful if any members of the club have these. • A mobile phone will be carried to cave entrances that are harder to navigate in order to call cave/mountain rescue if necessary. • Whistles will be carried and the ULSA call out procedure will be followed. • The weather forecast will be checked in the morning before the trip. If necessary due to poor visibility or risk of flooding, the trip will be changed or abandoned. • Sufficient food and water will be carried for the entire group, that will cover both the caving trip and the route to and from the vehicles and the cave. • Survival equipment such as group shelters and/or survival bags, and a first aid kit will be carried by the group leader. | 1 | 3 | 3 | |

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| Becoming separated and/or lost in an underground system | May lead to stress and panic, serious injuries could result from hypothermia, exhaustion, dehydration and slips/trips and falls. | 2 | 3 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders will brief the group at the beginning of the trip to stay together and never lose sight of the person in front and behind of you. The leaders/ most experienced cavers will be located at the very front and back of the group. • Individuals should not cave individually/alone. • Use of guidebooks, cave descriptions and surveys available via the ULSA resources, and more recent sources such as the CNCC website will be used to get informed of the route before the trip. • All individuals will be encouraged to find and remember key features and be made aware of them during the trip by the experienced members and/or the trip leader, ensuring that they can retrace their steps where necessary. • If in doubt, the caving team should take their time and turn around when necessary (such as when cold, or to meet call out procedure) rather than press on and risk becoming lost, exhausted, dehydrated, hypothermic and/or miss call out times. • The call out procedure itself is in place in case of emergency. If a group has not returned or at least made contact with a designated individual by the projected time, the police will be contacted and Cave Rescue called out to locate and evacuate the group. | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Drowning | Out-of-depth water, deep pools of water, ducks and sumps, and fast moving water may lead to drowning, serious injury and death when individuals are exhausted and/or cannot swim. | 2 | 4 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the trip in question will be gathered from the ULSA resources and CNCC website. This information will be communicated to all team members to provide them with the opportunity to raise concerns and drop out if necessary. • Experienced members and/or leaders will ensure all individuals can swim if deep pools are planned on the caving route. | 1 | 4 | 4 | |

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| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate clothing will be worn for wet trips, including wetsuits and use of buoyancy aids where required. • When carrying tackle sacks and equipment through deep water sections, these will not be attached to cavers and will contain floats when possible. • In the event of a snag, experienced members and/or trip leaders will have a knife to cut hauling rope in order to release the tackle sack if needed. • Group leaders will maintain consistent communication with members of their team - if any members are already fatigued or cold before a wet section or cave, the trip may be cut short to prevent risk of drowning. | | | | |
| Flooding | Getting trapped underground by rising water, getting hit by fast flowing streams carrying debris and drowning | 2 | 5 | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior knowledge of how the cave responds to rises in surface water levels will be gathered using the ULSA and CNCC resources. Unless stated otherwise, it should be assumed that any cave may flood under the right conditions, particularly where a streamway is present. • The weather reports will be checked on the morning of the caving trip, as well as taking into consideration the current surface water levels for that day. Even if there is no rain forecast for that day, existing high-water levels will impact on the safety of the trip and be taken into account. • Cavers will not enter a system if conditions are unfavourable. • Prior to the start of the trip, experienced members will explain what the cave will entail such as high water level streamways to ensure all members can swim. • Rigging of ropes and ladders will be as far away from waterfalls as possible to prevent pitches becoming impassible if water flow was to suddenly increase. | 1 | 5 | 5 | |

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| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For medium water levels, a dynamic risk assessment is needed to decide whether a pitch will be passable within the time limit of the cave trip, taking in consideration the current amount of water in the cave and the expected amount of water in the next few hours. If the experienced team member(s) are unsure, they will not undertake the pitch. • Pitches will not be attempted when high volumes of water are present or expected. | | | | |
| Getting physically stuck in a constricted area | May lead to injuries such as scratches and bruising to major injuries, including broken bones and dislocation, and in the extreme circumstances, restricted breathing and lack of oxygen having the potential to suffocate the caver. | 3 | 3 | 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of what to expect during trips will be gathered by group leaders and experienced cavers using guidebooks and other ULSA and CNCC resources. They will then ensure that all members of the party are aware of the technical difficulties of the trip. • Cavers will not go off course or undertake exploration without the guidance and supervision of the group leader/ experienced cavers. • Individuals will not force themselves through technical difficulties if they feel constricted. If an individual feels like they will become stuck, they will stop advancing to prevent further constriction. • If an individual is stuck, help from other members will be provided. | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Light Failure | May lead to the caver(s) not being able to see and therefore be unable to exit the cave safely. Serious injury could occur if an individual attempts to continue exiting the cave, or hypothermia if the | 2 | 3 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spare batteries and spare lights will be carried in the group. Members will be encouraged to purchase their own spare lighting. • The only appropriate lighting is one that leaves both hands free. • All members of a trip will check if their light is working before entering the cave. • Individuals will cave in teams and not alone. • Appropriate clothing should be worn, and survival bags or group shelter will be carried in case a long wait is needed. The ULSA call out procedure will then be followed. | 1 | 3 | 3 | |

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| | caver needs to wait for assistance. | | | | | | | | |
| Falling rock from a pitch head | May lead to a serious injury or death if the rocks hit or land on cavers.. | 2 | 4 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All cavers will wear caving helmets and oversuits to protect from falling pebbles and small debris. • Information on what the trip will entail will be gathered by group leaders/ experienced members prior to undertaking the trip using the ULSA and CNCC resources. • Technical aspects will be communicated to all team members, including the associated risks and how to manage these risks. For loose rocks this includes: Careful rigging; individuals/cavers waiting well away from pitch heads and base of pitches to avoid knocking rocks down or having rocks landing on them. • Only one person on a loose section (such as a boulder choke) or pitch at a time. • Should any rocks fall down a pitch at any time then this is communicated rapidly by shouting 'below'. All inexperienced cavers will be made aware of this call and when to use it. • Overall, caving trips will be chosen based upon the capabilities and experience of the individuals/cavers on the trip. Caves with abundant loose rocks tend to be deemed as more difficult trips, due to the inherent dangers associated and the need to cave carefully in these sections. | 1 | 4 | 4 | |
| Poor Air Quality | Lack of oxygen leading to dizziness, feeling sick, serious injury or death. | 2 | 5 | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior knowledge of the trip should be gained using ULSA and CNCC resources, but even more importantly in this instance is the use of experienced members' knowledge and keeping up to date with reports from magazines and forums where there may be warnings for specific caves. • Through training, individuals/cavers will be made aware of areas where poor air quality is | 1 | 5 | 5 | |

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| | | | | | <p>likely such as where there is a lack of flowing air including air bells between sumps and digging fronts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms relating to lack of oxygen should be understood by experienced members leading the trips and communicated to all those present on the trip. • The group leader will turn their group back as soon as any symptoms appear. • It is unlikely that cavers will undertake trips where escape from low air flow areas is not possible. | | | | |
| Uneven terrain, sudden drops and unprotected climbs | Uneven terrain, sudden drops and unprotected climbs risk slips, trips and falls that may cause injuries including scratches and bruises or more serious injuries or death. | 3 | 4 | 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on what the trip will entail will be gathered using ULSA and CNCC resources and the technical aspects of the trip will be communicated with all members of the group taking part in caving. • The pace of the trip will be set by the slowest persons and any difficult obstacles will be approached carefully and slowly. Those members seeming to have problems overcoming obstacles will either be assisted by experienced members or through the use of appropriate equipment. If problems persist, then the team will turn around. • Where required the appropriate equipment will be used to overcome obstacles including a travelling rope. When climbing is required, the experienced members will consider the capabilities of the group and the difficulty of climb(s) in question. Where necessary travelling lines will be used. • All members will wear appropriate UIAA helmets. | 1 | 4 | 4 | |
| Failure of in-situ gear (bolts, ropes and other gear already | Falling due to failure of in situ gear may lead to broken/ fractured bones, getting | 2 | 4 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with rigging experience will check anchors and in-situ rope prior to descending. If fixed aids are not deemed safe they will not be used and the trip may be abandoned if necessary. | 1 | 4 | 4 | |

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| present in the cave) | knocked unconscious or death. Falling onto people below could cause major injury. Those at bottom of the pitch can also get trapped if their means of ascent are compromised. | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping up to date by checking forums etc, for warnings about fixed anchors (as well as other issues) allows mentioned caves to be avoided.. • The ULSA call out procedure will be followed in the scenario that a team gets stuck at the bottom of a pitch. Survival bags/group shelter will be carried should there be any need to wait for assistance. • If any in situ gear is suspect, this must be reported to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible. | | | | |
| Individuals falling from height due to incorrect use of equipment | Falling from height may result in broken/ fractured bones, knocked unconscious from fall. Falling on the individual(s) below may cause a major injury. | 3 | 4 | 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexperienced members will undergo necessary training at The Edge training sessions and will be supervised. Individuals will not use techniques underground until they have shown competence in using the specific technique during the training sessions. • Individuals will wait well away from the base of the pitch as others come down. • All trip leaders and those supervising new members will have shown competence as detailed in the ULSA training guide. | 1 | 4 | 4 | |
| Falling from height due to failure of on-harness equipment | Falling from height may result in broken/ fractured bones, or being knocked unconscious from fall. Falling on the individual/s below may cause a major injury to them. | 2 | 4 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment will be checked on a regular basis by the Tackle Officer to ensure all ropes, ladders, rigging and SRT equipment is safe to use. This will be carried out using the ULSA Equipment Safety Check Guide. • During trips those rigging and using equipment will also visually check the equipment is safe to use prior to use. Experienced members will check the SRT equipment of the inexperienced members in their team. • Trip leaders and those with their own personal equipment will be responsible for ensuring the safety of it. • Individuals will be trained on how to check equipment, and any defect should be | 1 | 4 | 4 | |

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| | | | | | <p>immediately reported to the trip leader and Tackle Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will wait well away from the base of the pitch as others come down it. • All kit is checked and used in line with the manufacturing guidelines for suitability of purpose by a visual and tactile check. | | | | |
| Trapped fingers, hair or clothing in equipment | May cause minor injury such as cuts and pain, and inability to descend the ropes | 4 | 2 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip leaders will ensure all group members have their hair tied back. • Members will be trained on how to use equipment properly which will reduce the likelihood of trapping fingers in moving parts. • At least one knife should be carried on all trips by an experienced member and/or the trip leader should clothing need to be cut free. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Slips, trips and falls (not from height), in caves and approaching the cave/transport/caving hut | May lead to minor injury resulting from tripping over equipment, ropes and rocks. Could have the potential for a visit to the hospital (i.e. broken/sprained ankle). | 3 | 3 | 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trip will move at a speed appropriate to the terrain and the ability of the group, allowing cavers to be aware of their surroundings and obstacles to be safely passed. • Groups will move with sufficient spacing so that a slip does not injure multiple individuals, and hands will be kept free to break a fall. • Group shelters, personal survival bags and first aid kits will be carried to manage any occurrence and to prevent minor incidents becoming more serious such as hypothermia from waiting for assistance in the wet and cold. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Road traffic collisions | May lead to whiplash, major injury or death, especially if seatbelts are not worn. | 2 | 5 | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only vehicles that are legally road-worthy will be used and only legally qualified drivers will drive. • Being aware of road conditions and modifying driving accordingly. • Do not drive when tired. This is of main concern after a long caving trip, where drivers may be tired after a long and active day. If | 1 | 5 | 5 | |

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| | | | | | <p>tired drivers should consider staying at a nearby caving hut, or at least have rest stops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All individuals are expected to drive in accordance with UK and European laws and the Highway Code including not drinking and driving and wearing seatbelts at all times. | | | | |
| Unsecured loads in vehicles | May lead to serious accidents and road collision | 2 | 5 | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers and trip leaders are to ensure that all the loads in the vehicles will be secured prior to travel. | 1 | 5 | 5 | |
| Hearth fires and Bonfires | Fires could grow out of control and/or become extremely smokey, causing coughing, irritation, or increasing the risk of burns. Burns may also be sustained when building and maintaining fires. | 2 | 3 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an indoor fire is burning, windows should be kept open for ventilation. • Fires should only burn appropriate material, ie: only dry wood and kindling, no green vegetation, plastic etc. • Bonfires should only be built on designated and contained areas to prevent accidental spread. • LUUCaS committee members will oversee any fires, ensuring they are not overfed and are kept under control. • Care should be taken when building and maintaining fires, and when in proximity. When necessary equipment such as fire pokers and gloves should be used to minimize the risk of burns. | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| Slips, trips and falls (residential) | Tripping over objects or slipping on spillages may cause injuries | 4 | 2 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spillages are to be cleaned up immediately or reported to committee members. • Wet floor signs should be used after mopping. • All areas should be well lit, including stairs. • No obstructions in walkways such as boxes, gear, trailing leads or cables. All individuals are to keep the caving hut/accommodation areas clear. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Falling out of bunk beds in caving huts | May lead to pain, skin injuries and/or broken bone | 2 | 3 | 9 | All individuals using bunk beds are to use them with care, ie: no climbing on them, don't rush when going up and down | 1 | 3 | 3 | |

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| Faulty electrical equipment (residential) | Faulty equipment such as hobs and kettles may cause fires and electric shock. | 2 | 4 | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire evacuation procedures will be followed according to the caving hut/accommodation's evacuation plan. • The assembly point and fire exits will be pointed out by the LUUCaS committee upon arrival to a hut. • All the equipment will be ideally PAT tested and/or checked by a technician according to the caving hut/accommodation's processes. • All individuals will be advised not to use equipment that may look faulty or damaged. • All individuals are to report any faulty equipment to the LUUCaS committee. | 1 | 4 | 4 | |
| Food poisoning | Sickness and diarrhoea from eating poorly prepared food. | 2 | 3 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands before and during the preparation of food. • Fruit and vegetables should be washed before food preparation. • Always cook meat thoroughly. One member of the group should have a Food Hygiene certificate. • Do not use the same knife and board to cut uncooked meat, vegetables and/or fruits. Keep raw meat isolated while cooking. • Food should be stored safely ie: in the fridge or freezer and in containers, and not left out for unsafe lengths of time or uncovered. • Always clean the kitchen and utensils thoroughly after cooking, and ensure it is in a satisfactory state before cooking. • Personnel organising meals should ensure dietary requirements are sought before the trip. | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Allergies | Allergic reactions may lead to minor rashes and itchiness, or severe anaphylaxis and death. | 3 | 4 | 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An allergies questionnaire will be provided/collected prior to catered trips. Individuals with food allergies are responsible for communicating their needs. • Individuals with food allergies will have alternative food options and appropriate | 1 | 4 | 4 | |

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| | | | | | <p>preparation procedures will be carried out accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When individuals with severe allergies are on trip, the causes of the allergies will be removed wherever possible and known. • Individuals are advised to carry antihistamine and epi pen medication for allergies. | | | | |
| Hot surfaces | Minor skin damage and burns obtained whilst preparing food. | 3 | 2 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact will be avoided. In case of a minor burn, the impacted area will be placed under cold running water for at least 10 minutes. • In case of an emergency, a first aid kit is available and a first aider. • Individuals will be notified of hot surfaces including pans and stoves. • Ensure the cooking area is not overcrowded to avoid bumps and collisions while holding hot pans. • Appropriate protection will be used when handling hot items such as a protective glove for cooking. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Sharp objects and knives | Minor skin damage and/or cuts when using knives for cooking, and sharp objects such as fire pokers at weekend residential or socials. | 3 | 2 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle knives and sharp objects with care. Do not rush. • Keep kitchen stations clean and organised. • All sharp objects and knives will be placed in a secure area before and after use. • In case of an emergency, a first aid kit is available as well as a first aider. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |
| Alcohol Consumption | Overdrinking may cause alcohol poisoning, or sickness, and increase the overall likelihood of injuries from accidents and slips, trips and falls. | 3 | 2 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All society members should look out for one another. Committee members should keep behaviour in check and consistently check up on the wellbeing of members. The Welfare Officer is a main point of contact in large group gatherings if individuals feel they or someone else is unwell or irresponsible. | 2 | 2 | 4 | |

Document Information

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Foreword

This Risk Assessment has been developed for the activities undertaken by members of the University of Leeds Speleological Association (ULSA) and the Leeds University Union Caving Society (LUUCaS) whilst undertaking all aspects of ULSA caving trips. This includes all activities that are specifically organised by members of ULSA such as actual caving activities as well as transportation and residential activities (i.e. cooking). Therefore, for the purposes of this risk assessment, the range of activity has been broken down into the following groups:

- Training – In a separate risk assessment
- Caving
- Transportation
- Residential

It should be noted that LUUCaS members are also ULSA members under the ULSA Constitution and therefore, from this point forward, the pre-fix “ULSA” will be used to identify all members of ULSA and LUUCaS.

Document Development and Distribution

| Version | Authors | Distribution | Date | Notes |
|---------|--|---|----------------|--|
| V1_2003 | Sam Allshorn Jon Watt Jon Haynes | Leeds University Union ULSA Virtual Library | 2003 | N/A |
| V2_2014 | Matthew Day Holly Bradley | Leeds University Union ULSA Virtual Library | September 2014 | N/A |
| V3_2019 | Michael Brigham | Leeds University Union | 22/01/19 | Checked over and reformatted |
| V4_2019 | Michael Brigham | Leeds University Union ULSA website | | Added statement of general policy, Added further points to risk assessment, Included references to health and incident procedures in Code of Practice |
| V5_2021 | Larisa Onoufriadi | Leeds University Union | 20-9-2021 | The format was changed and the risk assessment score rating according to Leeds University template (issue July 2021) and guidance, and the feedback provided by the external consultant Dave Brown (March 2021). |
| V6_2023 | Lea Giguere-Richards | Leeds University Union | 18/07/23 | Clarified some points without changing the ideas. Corrected spelling mistakes. |

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| V7_2024 | Carla Tonks | Leeds University Union | 22/08/2024 | The format was changed and risk assessment scores re-evaluated in compliance with the new Leeds University template (issued July 2024). |
| V8_2025 | Tara Delaney | Leeds University Union | July 2025 | Made small amendments and additions to the entire document including adding the General Health and Safety policy to the list of contents. Removed redundant information/ recommendations. Retitled 'Introduction' section to 'Summary'. |

Summary

The University of Leeds Speleological Association (ULSA), of which members of the Leeds University Union Caving Society (LUUCaS) are also members, provides training to all members to enable them to cave safely underground, and organises trips where members are able to go and put their skills into practice.

Training sessions include the delivery of technical caving techniques to include ladders and rope work, as well as providing an understanding of basic underground safety such as preventing hypothermia. These training sessions are held at the Edge Climbing Wall every Tuesday from 7 to 9 PM and Fridays from 8pm to 10pm during term times and a separate risk assessment has been delivered to cover the risks associated with these activities.

ULSA partakes in caving activities across the British Isles and beyond, usually within Europe. This risk assessment identifies and assesses the risks that could occur whilst undertaking all aspects of caving within the United Kingdom and European boundary, and other surface activities associated with the delivery of these trips (such as transportation). Where routes to caves could be more difficult, such as requiring the use of specialised mountaineering equipment, then a separate risk assessment will be carried out. These are rare and would be associated with an overseas expedition.

This assessment includes measures and precautions that will be implemented to make all aspects of ULSA caving trips as safe as possible, including caving and approaches. The principles of caving safely will be instilled to all members as part of all training sessions and caving trips to ensure all members cave safely through a mechanism that is instinctive but also recognises responsibility at all levels of experience. It is recommended that where an ULSA caving trip takes place outside of the United Kingdom and Europe then a separate risk assessment is carried out to identify and address risks that may not be included here. This document does not provide any form of instruction of how to carry out these activities and is not designed to do so.

For the purposes of this risk assessment the term 'ULSA and CNCC resources' has been used to describe sources of information that should be used when organising caving trips or to further members' knowledge or skills. These resources include the ULSA library (Edward Boyle Level 8), the ULSA website, or through communicating with experienced

members by the ULSA mailing list, ULSA forum or directly to members using the ULSA address book on the ULSA website and the CNCC website (rigging topos, route descriptions).

Where the term 'individuals' has been used, this refers to all parties involved in the activity. 'Experienced members' define those members who have been caving previously and can provide assistance to other members, whether physically during a trip or through provision of information about a particular trip or technique. 'Trip leaders' are experienced members who lead the trip and are responsible for the safety of the rest of the team. This is further left undefined due to the inherent complications on defining how experienced a member is. For instance, one caver may have a lot of knowledge about a number of caves gained from guidebooks, which in itself is invaluable, but may not be a physically strong caver. Whereas another may be technically skilled with ropes and rescue techniques but have limited understanding of the caves of South Wales. Neither members are inexperienced. It is an understanding of individuals' capabilities and shortcomings. ULSA is a strong club in this respect due to the number of experienced members that remain caving in the club after graduating and remain in contact with the club via the email groups.

When caving, experienced members will ensure the safety of the whole team. However, all individuals are responsible for their own safety and will be expected to conduct all activities within the guidelines of this Risk Assessment and the Inductions. A level of common sense is expected of all participants and all individuals involved must deliver a duty of care to each other.

Circulating medical needs

- See Code of Practice

Incident and emergency procedures

Note - these procedures are idealistic and purposefully ambiguous as any action taken during an incident or emergency would be context specific and at the discretion of those participating on the trip.

Incidents and emergencies when underground

- See Code of Practice

First aid kits

- See Code of Practice

Call-out procedure

- See Code of Practice

Alerting Cave Rescue

- See Code of Practice

After an incident/emergency

- See Code of Practice

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Conclusions

All best efforts have been made to ensure that this risk assessment is comprehensive and accurate. It demonstrates that all risks associated with ULSA caving trips, including surface related risks as well as underground risks, are acceptable or moderate. This is achieved through the implementation of appropriate risk assessment and safety measures. To ensure these precautions and safety measures are implemented appropriately, the following reports and guides are available, and the procedures held within will be implemented as part of the training regime:

- EDGE Climbing Wall Induction
- ULSA Caving Without Tears
- ULSA Code of Practice 2022 edition
- ULSA Caving Kit List

Recommendations

This risk assessment, as well as those documents listed above, are made available to all ULSA and LUUCaS members via the ULSA virtual library and/ or the LUUCaS Engage page, and all members should read and be aware of their contents. The risk assessment and all other documentation must be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, as a minimum.

General Health and Safety Policy

This is the statement of general health and safety policy and arrangements for Leeds University Union Caving Society.

Arthur Watkinson, President, has day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice.

| Statement of general policy | Responsibility of: Name/Title | Action/Arrangements (What are you going to do?) |
|--|--|---|
| Prevent accidents and cases of society related ill health by managing the health and safety risks in the society. | Arthur Watkinson, President Tara Delaney, Secretary | Maintain a culture of putting safety and wellbeing first. Ensure all risk assessments, guides, codes of conduct and of practice, etc. are distributed and understood by all members of the society so each member is aware of the risks they are undertaking. |
| Provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure members are competent to do the activity. | Adam Erskine-Jones, Training Officer (ULSA) | Hold regular training sessions at The Edge climbing wall to ensure SRT competence in members before caving trips. Training sessions will include more advanced skills for leaders, seconders and those wishing to learn more. |
| Engage and consult with members on day-to-day health and safety conditions. | Megan Gransden, Welfare Officer | Check in with members of the society during society gatherings (socials, training, residentials, trips) to ensure good physical, mental and emotional condition. Monitor a private complaints/ feedback form and report to the President of any long-term issues. |
| Implement emergency procedures in caves and out– evacuation in case of fire or other significant incidents. | The group leader/secorder of a caving trip. Arthur Watkinson, President | Leaders and seconders will understand incident and emergency procedures. They will contact the LUUCaS committee as soon as possible in order for the committee (primarily the president) to liaise with the LUU, University of Leeds and other parties. |
| Maintain safe and healthy member conditions by providing, and maintaining equipment for activities. | Carla Tonks, Tackle Officer | Ensure all equipment is safe to use through regular kit checks and annual kit inventories. Repair or replace equipment that is not safe/suitable for use and ensure that retired kit is disposed of or suitably marked to indicate that it should not be used. Arrange the order of new equipment to replace kit that has been retired. |

Document review and approval

Document approved for publication by the 2025/2026 LUUCaS Committee:

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| President; Arthur Watkinson | Signature; AWatkinson |
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| Secretary; Tara Delaney | Signature; TDelaney |
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| Treasurer; George Crawford | Signature; GCrawford |
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