



## SAFETY POLICY



The Essex County Scout Caving Team exists to provide good quality caving for members of the Scout Association, which is both fun and educational, but above all, caving that is safe.

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It is the Team's policy only to take members of the Scout Association caving after they have received appropriate training above ground. Such training to be provided in written form sufficiently in advance to allow people to purchase any clothing required and additional Training is given before going underground.

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The Team undertakes to ensure that every person it takes underground is properly clothed and that safety helmets are worn at all times. The Team provides safety helmets for this purpose.

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The Team provides purpose made electrically operated helmet lamps with appropriate batteries for every person it takes underground. It is the Team's policy that every party going underground carries with it at least one spare headset and one spare set of batteries.

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Every party going underground carries a suitable first aid kit and at least one survival bag and one survival blanket. Emergency food is carried when appropriate.

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It is the Team's policy only to use equipment suitable for its purpose and to properly maintain and regularly check such equipment for damage or wear. All ropes are marked with their length at both ends, so it is apparent if a rope has been shortened. Any rope showing unacceptable signs of wear, deterioration or damage is immediately destroyed to prevent its accidental use.

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The Team provides instructors on the basis that every party it takes underground will be supervised by a suitably experienced and properly trained instructor holding a current Scout Association Caving Permit appropriate to the grade of cave being entered in accordance with the Rules of the Scout Association. In addition to the party Leader a suitably experienced Assistant Instructor will also accompany every party.

It is the Team's policy that if any member of a party underground shows signs of hypothermia, fatigue, illness, distress or injury, the entire party will be evacuated from the cave at the earliest opportunity.

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It is the Team's policy that every party Leader must be familiar with the particular cave systems into which he or she proposes to take groups of novices.

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It is the Team's policy to limit the size of parties going underground to a maximum of 8 people including the Leader and Assistant Instructor. Smaller parties may be required for some trips.

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Before entering a cave system liable to flooding in wet weather, the party Leader will obtain an up to date weather forecast for the area and must be satisfied that conditions are suitable to enter the cave.

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No party members will be permitted to negotiate a ladder pitch or an exposed rock climb without a safety line.

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It is the Team's policy that Course Leaders for its various courses are drawn from its most experienced cavers and leaders. A Course Leader's decision as to whether conditions on the day are unsuitable for caving, or whether individuals are insufficiently fit to cave on the day, is final for both Course members and Team members.

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Caving from Essex involves travelling considerable distances. It is the Team's policy only to use minibuses with forward facing seats and with all seats fitted with safety belts. All minibus doors, including any rear doors, must be unobstructed to facilitate egress in the event of an emergency. Where necessary, the Team provides a separate vehicle for the transportation of equipment, catering supplies and personal luggage. Journeys will be broken at intervals of approximately 100 miles or 2 hours, whichever is the sooner, in order for the driver to take a rest.

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Where the Team agrees to provide instructors for a single day's caving involving travel from and back to Essex on the same day, it is the Team's policy that such instructors do not drive and that those persons who do drive, cannot take part in the caving activity. This is to avoid safety being compromised either underground or on the road.