



Central Region
School Insurance Group

FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES:

**Exploration of Abandoned Mines
(Commercially Run)**
Examples- California Caverns, Mercer

CAVE EXPLORATION IS A DANGEROUS ACTIVITY WHICH POTENTIALLY COULD CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY, PERMANENT DISABILITY, OR DEATH.

Caving and mine exploration can be a dangerous sport. The total and unremitting absence of light is a constant source of danger to those who explore the subterranean world. The temperature of many caves can cause hypothermia unless proper precautions are taken. The mud and the humid atmosphere create slippery conditions underground and normal above ground climbing techniques are not sufficient to insure a reasonable margin of safety in cave exploration. Reasonable safety in caving can only be achieved through a combination of proper attitude, good equipment, and training to those already well versed in the specialized techniques of cave exploration.

Safety and accident prevention must be practiced by each individual member at all times. Most accidents are avoidable if the hazard is noticed and/or corrected in time. It is not possible to list every hazard or wrong condition you may find when caving, or every unsafe practice you should try to avoid; however, the following precautions may be helpful to you in doing your part.

Cave exploration can be fun and exciting. It can also be dangerous. Here are some Safety Tips:

1. The following adult to student ratios should be used when arranging groups: 4th grade & up— 1 adult: 10 children 3rd grade & below-- 1 adult: 5 children.
2. Most cavers find that boots are the best footwear to use.
3. Wear heavy-duty clothing. When choosing the type of clothing you wear, that it is cold and damp in a cave. Also, arms and legs should be covered to protect them from cuts and scrapes.
4. Never allow a student to go away from the group. It is safest to go in groups of four or more. Then, if a person is injured, at least one person may stay with the injured party and give first aid and encouragement while the others go for help.
5. Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
6. Be prepared for emergencies. Carry a basic first aid kit, and know the "basics" of first aid.
7. Always try to curb the tendency to engage in "horseplay" or to grandstand. Caves are not the place for this activity.
8. Watch Where You Step. When underground, or when on your way to a cave, always keep alert and be sure of where you are stepping. Your principal danger outside is snakes; inside it is probably loose rock and holes.
9. Watch Your "Housekeeping". Don't scatter trash or poison the cave owner's cattle by dumping spent carbide outside. Use the motto: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints."
10. Don't drink Cave Water. This water is often contaminated.
11. Learn Correct Techniques. If you don't know a safe way to do a specific thing, ask someone who has more experience.
12. Kids should never explore caves without an adult.
13. Don't run or jump in a cave. Even a sprained ankle can be deadly in a cave.
14. Don't go in a cave when there is rain predicted for the area. Caves often flood suddenly.

15. Never touch or damage stalactites or other cave formations. These take thousands of years to grow. Even a light touch of a finger is enough to mar one!
16. Never cave when you are ill, under medication or under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
17. Leave the cave as you found it. Do not collect souvenirs! If you find an artifact, leave it where you find it. Report your finding.
18. At mines and quarries, never pick up or pull any wires or plastic objects, which may be detonators or other explosive devices. Be sure to teach these things to children, who tend to pick up anything curious. Detonators might be mistaken for small plastic toys

Be Safety Conscious At All Times! Your safety and that of the other members of your party may depend on you!