

Risk Assessment Activity – Caving

Pioneer Centre	Assessed by: James Kniffen		Assessed/ Reviewed:	Next Review Date
			09/01/2023 07/01/2025 12/12/2025	12/12/2026
Reviewed by:	Assist Chief: Max Bishop	Dec 2025		
Reviewed by:	Senior Instructors: Andrew Evrard, Joseph Page, Steph McMenemy &Kieren Plant & Ronan Halpenny Lead Instructors: Rebecca Arms			
Overview: Caving takes place in one of two of the man-made wooden tunnel systems that has fibre-glass sections within a wooden structure. Bimonthly safety checks of the caving systems is done and recorded. The instructors will have been in-house trained who are leading the session. Preferred Staff to client ratio 1:12 with a maximum of 1:16. All instructors are first aid trained and emergency procedures are in place in case of a major accident.				
Hazards	Groups of People at Risk from the Hazards Identified	Probability	Control Measures – Reduces the severity and lowers the probability to acceptable levels	
		Severity		
		Risk Category		
Slips, trips and falls	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Likely	Recorded bimonthly safety checks, instructor first aid trained, with first aid kit readily available in the building that hosts both caving systems. General group management is provided by activity instructor, and the caving system and briefing rooms are managed by activities and maintenance team.	
		Minor		
		Medium		
Fingers trapped under emergency hatches	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Unlikely	Marked hatches, guests warned of danger and instructed only to bang on hatches and not try and push them open. Hhydraulic door closers are in place to prevent hatches closing quickly.	
		Major		
		Medium		
Abrasions from tunnel walls & ceiling	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Likely	Bimonthly safety checks of equipment and caving systems to ensure caving systems are in good working order and participants wear helmets and kneepads while using the caves.	
		Minor		
		Low		
Participants getting stuck	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very unlikely	Test holes used at start of session. Instructor supervises smaller tunnels, and clear instructions are given on proper use. False ceiling can be lifted in smallest tunnels to get stuck participants out. Instructors ensure that participants know where they can turn around in the system (larger areas) otherwise instructed to reverse same way they went in (not turning around) This shown to participants when doing their initial tour of the systems.	
		Major		
		High		

Being caught under the Hatch door in Old Caving system	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very unlikely	Hatch door bolted open, and guests told not to mess with it so that it isn't released, and staff are trained on use of the systems and are aware of the potential hazard.
		Medium	
		Low	
Falling down of open hatches	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very Unlikely	Safe walkways are clearly marked. Hatches shut during normal sessions and a hydraulic door closer are in place to prevent hatches closing quickly. Building locked shut when not in use to prevent unsupervised use.
		Major	
		Medium	
Fire	Instructors, staff and guest/participants	Very Unlikely	Fire Alarms are in place along with emergency procedures. Emergency lights are in the carving system if participants do not hear alarms and staff are ready to open hatches and get participants out of the system and building. Staff are trained in emergency procedures.
		Fatal	
		Medium	