

RESCUE PROCEDURES

The following Rescue Committee Policy additions were approved on 5/19/04

1. For any injury or problem that cannot be readily handled by the trip participants as a self-rescue, trip leaders must send someone to a telephone and call 911 and be sure to be connected to Mid-County Fire Department in Camdenton. (Some cell phone calls from the site will automatically route elsewhere but can be transferred to Camdenton by the 911 operator.)
2. Trip leaders must attend a formal training session on proper response to cave emergencies including use of the rescue haul system (use of which will positively exclude any gear hauling) before leading any trips which begin 60 days after adoption of this policy.
3. The rescue committee will conduct or designate someone to conduct emergency response procedures and haul system training (and do system inspection/maintenance) twice a year starting in 2005 and three times in the last half of 2004 to train existing and prospective trip leaders. Any CCC member can attend. Attendance is encouraged for those making several trips per year.
4. If or when the haul system changes in a significant way, e.g. to a winch system, then re-qualification will be required.
5. All trip leaders will be qualified for the balance of the calendar year in which they are trained and for the next two calendar years. If a trip leader ceases to be a trip leader due to not making one trip per year or for any other reason, then re-qualification will be required.

Carroll Cave Rescue Preplan

DRAFT

7/26/03

Background

In Camden County, Missouri the county sheriff's office has legal responsibility for all rescue operations. The sheriff's office has delegated this responsibility to the various fire departments throughout the county. Carroll Cave is located in the jurisdiction of the Mid-County Fire Protection District with headquarters in Camdenton. An Orientation to Cave Rescue course was held at the Mid County Fire Dept. in September of 2002. We now have a good working relationship with the fire dept. and they appreciate that underground rescue operations will be conducted primarily by experienced cavers with some assistance from their members who are comfortable going underground. The fire dept. will be in charge and will provide invaluable Incident Command function, communications, and logistics support as well as personnel.

Basic Cave Rescue Operations

1. Overdue Team

If the situation is an overdue in-cave team; then a call out of caver resources is necessary to determine the nature of the problem causing the overdue situation. A list of names and phone numbers of potential responders is available on-site at the back door entrance to assist in getting this callout process started.

It takes a Carroll caver to find a Carroll caver. This phase of an operation can be done without notifying the legally responsible agency since it is unknown if a rescue situation exists. Further information is required in order to determine the current situation status, and only competent Carroll cavers can provide that information.

1a. When is a team overdue?

For general trips into Carroll Cave, to assist in locating any overdue party, a log of intended destination or work assignment should be kept on the surface for each team entering the cave – every team, every time. An expected return time should be logged and a surface contact established to receive the call that everyone is out of the cave as expected. Four hours past the expected time is grounds for the surface contact person to initiate a limited callout of cavers to locate the overdue party and report their status to the surface. Team leaders must take this time limit very seriously to assure there are no false call outs just because some great new passage was found during the survey trip.

1b. Overdue response

A limited call out of at least 7 cavers should be made to form an Initial Response Team (IRT). IRT assignments: 4 cavers to go in new entrance and locate overdue team. 1 caver with cellular phone to remain on surface at new entrance. 2 cavers with cell phone to monitor natural entrance. All IRT members must carry extra food and water for immediate use if a rescue becomes necessary.

Communications by cell phone or radio between the two entrances may not be possible. Cell phone towers do not cover the area adequately and line of site for radios is blocked by the cliff at the natural entrance. As of June 2003, the rescue committee is considering placement of field phone wire in the cave between the back door and natural entrance. If done, the wire will be hidden. The only probable requirement for this communication would be if we were called by the fire dept. due to an overdue local party not associated with the CCC.]

If the Initial Response Team (IRT) can give adequate assistance to the overdue party, when located, while assuring a proper safety factor for the patient(s), then the rescue is complete and only some follow-up paperwork is required. The rescue committee will then generate an incident report for the purpose of education and evaluation within the CCC board. This report will also be shared with the Mid-County Fire Dept as appropriate.

2. Rescue

2a. Callout

If extrication of an injured caver is required, then the Mid-County Fire Protection District must be contacted. Dialing 911 is the most direct form of contact. The fire department should be specified for response to assure that a search team is not dispatched by mistake. Immediately following this contact, a general callout of cavers in the area should be instigated. A callout list is kept at the Mid County Fire Protection District Dispatch Center and at the back door entrance. NCRC resources in the central region should be put on standby to be available as required.

The NCRC emergency contact number is: 800-255-2587.

2b. Initial Situation Status

At this point a lot of things will be happening and focus is required to maintain control of the situation. The cavers already at the cave have the responsibility to step back from the immediate frenzy of the emergency and lay the foundation for a successful rescue.

Begin to write down everything that has happened so far. Create a written record of the situation. This is called a Situation Status Report. This really saves valuable time. You are either going to have to give a verbal report, several times, to the arriving authorities, or be able to hand them a report and continue with your other preparation work. The Situation Status Report is part of the Incident Command System, which the agency people will follow to organize the rescue effort. The following information is needed: When did the incident happen? What is the extent of injury to the patient? What are the vital signs of the patient – pulse, skin color, rate of breathing, level of consciousness, level of pain, extent of hypothermia? Of the people with the patient, what is their condition? How long have they been in the cave? Are they warm and fed or tired and hungry? Are they potential rescuers or potential additional patients?

On the surface:

Who has been called? What caver resources are responding at this time? What is their ETA? What are the phone numbers of coordinators who are doing caver call-out?

2c. Entrance Control

An entrance log is required. No team goes into the cave without an assigned objective and expected timeframe for completion of their task. This will be recorded on the entrance control log. This is also part of the Incident Command System and appropriate team assignment forms from the fire dept should be used.

2d Communications

The initial phone calls may be made from cell phones or the land owner's home, but more phone lines are needed. The Mid County Fire station will become the hub for all above ground communications. They have multiple phone lines and radios in their dispatch center. An experienced caver will need to get to the fire station to help coordinate the call out process.

3. Rescue Logistics

While there is much talk about cave radio development for Carroll Cave, field phones and hard wire will be used for underground communications until the radios are a reality. One battery powered field phone has been donated and is on site. Two more sound powered field phones and one battery powered phone are on site. A mile of field phone wire has been purchased and is on site. A modified PMI vertical haul litter is on site.

The Missouri Cave Rescue Cache contains additional field phones, an additional mile of wire, and an assortment of packaging and hauling materiel. Contact numbers for this are on the callout cover sheet.

Food, water, shelter, staging areas, medical supplies, etc, will be arranged through the fire dept. as required.

The fire dept. also has several plastic Stokes baskets which are appropriate for the cave environment. One Stokes has flotation capability.

4. In Cave Rescue Cache

Rescue committee members are completing a list of equipment that we feel should be placed in the cave in preparation for an incident. Hypothermia will be a major problem for any injured caver in Carroll Cave. The Cache should include appropriate hypothermia protection and prevention items such as plastic sheets, wool blankets, a stove for warm liquids, and heat packs.

In-cave rescue caches are located at the Round Room, the Lunch Room, the Mountain Room, Jerry's Cairn and the Mapped End