



# Companion Cave Rescue Workshop

May 27-28, 2017

Horne Lake Caves, Vancouver Island, BC



## What would you do if somebody in your caving party got hurt underground?

The 20-hour companion cave rescue workshop, organized by Alberta/British Columbia Cave Rescue and Island Pacific Adventures Ltd, is designed to give you skills for small group self-rescue in caving. The workshop is intended for anyone who takes people caving, either recreationally or as a paid guide, and for anyone who gets taken caving and who wants to contribute to their group's safety. It is open to novices and experienced cavers alike. Topics covered in the workshop include:

- Evaluation of common cave hazards and risks
- Rigging for self-rescue, including anchors, pulley systems, and counterweight raises
- Improvised in-cave hypothermia shelters
- Trip planning and equipment considerations
- Vertical pickoff techniques for unconscious casualties on rope
- Improvised casualty transport techniques

The workshop is designed around small group, hands-on practice of skills and scenario-based learning. Facilitators are experienced cave guides, cave rescue and/or technical SAR volunteers, or emergency medical practitioners. Certificates of completion are issued, but skill proficiency is not assessed; the workshop emphasizes effective learning over formal evaluation.

Proficiency in caving single rope techniques (SRT) is required for the workshop: Participants must be able to progress on rope in any direction, changeover in any direction mid-rope, and pass any mid-rope obstacle in any direction (knots, rebelay, traverses, deviations, etc). A no-cost intensive one-day SRT clinic is being offered on-site on Friday, May 26 for participants who are not familiar with SRT. Registration in the clinic is limited to **five** people, and prior rope experience is required.

This workshop takes place at Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park near Parksville, Vancouver Island. The workshop fee is \$85 (\$100 for commercial guides); this includes \$10 to cover camping at the adjacent regional park is organized through the workshop. (This fee will be refunded for participants who live in the area!) Participants are responsible for their own meals. The workshop schedule allows ample time for cooking breakfast and dinner, but field lunches are required for Saturday and Sunday.

Registration is limited to 20 participants; **at least 10 participants must have registered by May 6th for the workshop to run.** Spaces in the workshop are not guaranteed until registration fees have been received; these fees are charged to cover organizational costs and equipment for cave rescue training and response in Western Canada. If you are new to caving or are not yet a member of a BCSF club or the ASS, we strongly encourage you to register early so as to join a club and go caving before the workshop. You can pay your club membership fee as part of your registration fees, and most clubs organize regular caving trips.

**To register, visit <http://www.cancaver.ca/bccr/BCCRreg/ABCCRtrain.htm>**

For more information, contact Doug Munroe ([doug.munroe@questu.ca](mailto:doug.munroe@questu.ca); 604-966-4441)

## **Program: Companion Cave Rescue Workshop**

### Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>

- 09:00-15:00 hrs. SRT clinic (specific schedule TBD based on participant experience and skill levels)  
16:00-18:30 hrs. Check-in for workshop and equipment/skill safety check. Time for participants to set up camp and prepare dinner.  
18:30-21:30 hrs. Workshop starts: Introduction of participants; orientation to workshop objectives and approach; risk management in caving; cave rescue resources in western Canada

### Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>

- 08:00-12:30 hrs. Skills training in concurrent, alternating breakout sessions (all participants will do both sessions)  
1) Vertical pickoffs: discussion of harness hang pathology; lowering techniques  
2) Rigging for self-rescue: Principles of alpine/European rigging, materials, knots, simple haul systems, counterweight raise  
12:30-13:00 hrs. Bag lunch  
13:00-17:30 hrs. Shelter-in-place and improvised hypothermia shelters; improvised casualty transport techniques  
17:30-18:30 hrs. Evening meal  
18:30-20:30 hrs. Trip planning and equipment considerations; forming groups for simulations on Sunday

### Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>

- 08:00-13:00 hrs. Small-group simulations in Horne Lake caves (two rounds of simulation, time permitting)  
1300-1330 hrs. Bag lunch  
1330-1500 hrs. Debriefing of simulations; equipment cleanup; review and close of workshop

*Note: This program may be adjusted to best meet the needs of the participants.*

### **Required Equipment**

All equipment must bear your name or ID marks. Equipment can be supplied (in limited numbers) for those wishing to borrow. Please indicate any equipment needs on registration form. If you are building your vertical rig or have any questions about required equipment, please contact Doug Munroe ([doug.munroe@questu.ca](mailto:doug.munroe@questu.ca); 604-966-4441.)

- An approved helmet with chin strap,
- A helmet mounted electric light, plus 2 backup lights with spare batteries & bulbs
- A whistle
- A caving sit harness with connecting chest harness (chest harness may be either off-the-shelf or improvised)
- 2 cowstails, made from **single-rated dynamic rope**, minimum 9mm diameter recommended, with two carabiners (one locking and one non-locking)
- Ascending system (Frog-style SRT system, with a hand ascender/footloop combination and a chest ascender)
- Descender (Petzl SIMPLE or STOP strongly recommended; other in-line descenders acceptable e.g. mini-rack. Do not plan to use a Figure 8, Grigri, ATC or similar device.
- Minimum of 2 locking carabiners in addition to those used for cowstails and vertical rig.
- Prusik loop, ~1m long untied 6mm cord (will grab on 8mm handlines)
- 1 pulley, personal size, Petzl Microtraxion preferred but all kinds accepted
- Cordelet / waistlength: a 10 m. length of 8 mm low-stretch rope, or 25 mm tubular nylon webbing.
- Small sidepack or caving pack containing pocketknife, foil space blanket, lighter, candle, thermal balaclava, snacks
- Rugged, warm clothing for caving: waterproof coveralls, fleece top and bottom, wool socks. No cotton!
- Knee pads for caving: gardener's or light roofer's pads are recommended; porous sport-style discouraged.
- Gloves: warm gloves for damp caves (rubber-palmed construction gloves are commonly used, as are rubber electrician's gloves for wetter caves); all gloves should allow easy operation of carabiners and tying of knots
- Boots: waterproof rubber boots, cayoneering boots, or sturdy hiking boots – good grip is essential

Participants must be in good physical health and condition and, although covered by an EMBC Training Task Number, they must also be willing to sign liability waivers. Additionally, participants should be prepared to work in difficult situations and while under supervision, negotiate drops of up to 30 meters during the workshop. All exercises will be outside or underground and may subject to rain and cool temperature

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