

Gradering av grotteturer

A classification scale for caving trips

This article presents NGF's suggestions for a classification scale for trips into caves. This can be useful for inexperienced cavers as well as others to get quick information about what kind of a trip it is.

It is possible to create a two-dimensional classification scale (matrix). The one dimension can be climbing (vertical) techniques, classified by numbers. The scale is based on rising levels of technical skills:

1. No climbing technique required.
2. Must be able to hold on to a rope and free climb steep passages (2-20 meters long) secured by a rope.
3. Must be able to climb a ladder, both down and up (secured by a rope).
4. Must be able to manage normal rappelling.
5. Must be able to normal ascent/descent on the rope (if the pitch is too high (> 10-12 m) or too complex to use a ladder).
6. Must be comfortable with normal rope ascent/descent technique and be able to pass a rebelay in a pitch.

The second dimension can be the length of the trip (in the cave), classified by letters. The time-dimension can, for example, be divided into four (A, B, C and D). A is short trips (up to 4-5 hours), for example many guided tours and short exploring trips. B may be longer trips that require a pause for food and drink and extra light, lasting 5-10 hours. C may be longer than 10-12 hours, in which it is important to keep the motivation and be aware of the danger of hypothermia. D can be trips where one stays 'overnight' in the cave, which requires more equipment (but not necessarily more tiresome than a C-trip).

Note that no cave itself is classified, - but the kind of trip in the cave is. For example, on a trip one uses a ladder (Grade 3) at a pitch, while on a later trip one may use ETT equipment (Grade 5) at the same pitch.

The number of participants on some trips is significant for whether the classification should be an A or a B.

Physical and mental condition and danger of hypothermia are uncertain factors of the gradational scale, as is what cavers may think of as narrow passages. Nor does the scale differ between wet trips and dry trips. Whether a certain trip includes narrow (crawling) passages or is wet may be described in a brief report or with some remark after the graduation.

The scale does not deal with a classification of self-rescue or companion-rescue. Cave diving should have a classification scale of its own.