

Sikker ferdsel i grotter

Safe trips in caves

To enter a cave can always be risky. Even well experienced cavers can suddenly find themselves in a dangerous situation. NGF has worked out a set of recommendations for preparations and precautions, to make the trip safer and thus more pleasant. The article also gives advices of behaviour at the site if an accident happens, as well as the content of the first aid kit.

The recommendations for caving trips:

1. **N**ever go on long trips without necessary training. The length of the trip must fit with your physical and mental condition, your experience and what equipment you bring.
2. **T**ell somebody which cave you intend to visit, and when you estimate to be back home. Give as much detailed information as possible. If you should change your mind while on the trip, leave a message of this at the entrance of the cave first intended.
3. **L**isten to experienced cavers. They can often give you information about difficult places, water-filled passages or the risk of a flood, and give advices of which route to follow.
4. **B**e prepared for an accident, even on short trips. Do always bring first aid equipment, an insulation bag of some sort (even a big plastic bag can be used), extra food, extra clothing and extra light.
5. **A**lways remember which way you came. When the cave divides in more than one passage, always turn around and look which way you came from.
6. **N**ever go alone. If you go alone, there will be nobody there to help you or to contact a rescue team, if you get into difficulties. To be part of a bigger group is no guarantee. Avoid groups of individuals with big differences in experience.
7. **T**urn back in time, there is no shame in that. If the route back out is long and difficult, then turn around before there is doubt whether you may be able to return to the surface. Remember that others might put their life at risk for your sake.
8. **R**ationalize your strength. Slow the pace to the slowest one in the group, and avoid getting sweat. If you walk in a row, then turn your head occasionally and make sure everybody is still following. Physical and mental strain requires more food and drink than normal. Do not postpone the pause until you are exhausted.

What you should do on location if an accident has occurred, can roughly be described in two phases:

- **I**mmEDIATE reaction. Get control of the situation.
- **L**ong-term reaction. Get the injured person out.

The article then describes in detail how to act, which can be found in a lot of relevant literature about first aid and rescuing. The same goes for the content of the first aid equipment - this can easily be found in several books.