

# Authorisation Scheme for Activities in Caves and Mines

**info**

Scout  
Information  
Centre

0845 300 1818

## Guidelines for the issue of a District Commissioner's Authorisation

### Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the factsheet, which updates that coded FS120403 and dated Aug 99. It provides the information required for an applicant for authorisation to lead activities in caves or mines.

These notes form an integral part of the application and should not be detached from the form. If it is necessary to photocopy this material then both the notes and form should be copied.

Further editions may be published in the light of experience. The publication of further editions will be notified in SCOUTING Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

### General

The Rules of the Association relating to activities in caves or mines are contained in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*. The benefits of the authorisation scheme are that it assists District Commissioners to ensure that those leading activities in caves and mines are competent to do so. It shows clearly to parents that those who introduce young people to these activities have been authorised by The Scout Association and that all relevant training will be provided by an authorised person.

It must be stressed that this scheme is for the safe encouragement of all activities in caves or mines within the overall context of the development of young people through Scout training. It is not a qualification for use outside The Scout Association.

Competency in activities in caves or mines will be assessed by the County/Area Caving Activity

Assessor, who should take into account any documentary evidence, log books or certificates. These must be attached to the application and may be photocopies rather than the originals.

### To the Applicant

In completing this form you are openly and honestly declaring your background knowledge and experience. You will be aware of the importance of party leadership when with young people and the areas of responsibility as a leader of any particular cave or mine activity.

Consider the possible serious implications of overstating experience gained when you were perhaps physically more able. The effects of any physical, medical or mental condition on your ability to act in emergencies should also be considered. Be sure to state all recent experience. In claiming successful completion of any formal training, e.g. a qualification of the National Caving Association, **you must** enclose the original or a photocopy of the page or pages which indicate your successes. In addition a log of your activities for the past three years will assist the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor to come to a reasoned recommendation. An example of a suitable log sheet is included in this Factsheet.

You should complete the attached form giving as much detail as possible. Do not be afraid to attach additional sheets of paper if the space on the form is inadequate, or if you wish to add information not covered in any of the spaces available. You may also wish to indicate the level of authorisation sought.

Having completed the form, you should forward it to the appropriate Commissioner (normally the District Commissioner), via your Group Scout Leader. If the County/Area Caving Activity

Assessor is not already aware of your experience you should expect to hear from your County/Area Caving Activity Assessor about arrangements for a practical assessment to be carried out etc. If you have heard nothing within one month of submitting your application form, you should contact your Group Scout Leader and/or the appropriate Commissioner.

You should consider the possible serious outcome of overstating any experience gained when you were physically more able. The effects of any physical, medical or mental condition on your ability to act in emergencies should also be considered.

You must be familiar with "*Cave Practice and Equipment*" by David Judson, published by Cordee Books for the British Cave Research Association and the Rules of The Scout Association as contained in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*.

#### **To the Commissioner responsible**

On initial receipt of this form you should consider the applicant and decide whether or not that person is suitable for authorisation. The fact that a person holds a Scouter's warrant does not necessarily mean that he or she is suitable to lead young people in potentially hazardous activities.

This is no reflection on a person's ability as a Scouter, but age, physical disability, general health and fitness etc., may be reasons why you should not allow this application to go forward. What is important is that you are satisfied in general terms about the suitability of the applicant to be responsible for a party of young people engaged in such activities collectively or individually. Your acceptance at this stage is probably the key signature on the form. Whenever possible consult with the ADC or ACC/AAC (Activities) as appropriate before signing.

You should now send the form to the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor for a recommendation on the level of authorisation to be granted. In the case of difficulties forward the form to the Programme and Development Department, Gilwell Park, Bury Road, Chingford, London E4 7QW.

It is important for the satisfaction and encouragement of the applicant that you complete your part of the process quickly. Seven days is the maximum time that the application should be with you.

On receiving the form back from the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor, you should decide on the level of authorisation to be granted in the light of the recommendation given by the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor. You should note that you are in no way bound by what has been recommended by the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor. It is within your right to reduce the scope of any authorisation. If you intend to give an authorisation that differs from that recommended by the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor, you must consult the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor.

Having decided on the level of authorisation, sign the bottom of the form and return the form to the applicant.

As the authorisation is valid for the maximum period of five years it is important that your County/Area or your District maintains a record of all authorisations granted. It is for the County/Area to determine who monitors the records and takes the subsequent action to cancel or renew authorisations.

You may also wish to make use of the facility to record this authorisation in the Leader's record book, the record of authorisation or the authorisation card, these being available from the Resource Centre at Gilwell Park.

#### **To the County/Area Activity Assessor**

On receiving the form from the District Commissioner, you should assess the level of technical experience and ability claimed by the applicant and check any supporting documents. It is for you to decide whether to carry out a practical assessment. If the applicant does not hold a formal qualification, and is not known to you from previous experience, you will normally want to do so. In this case you should contact the applicant directly to discuss suitable dates.

It is not envisaged that such an assessment will last for more than one day. The format of the assessment is for you to decide. While seeing

the applicant actually leading a party of young people is the ideal, this is not mandatory.

While a practical assessment should be considered the norm it may be that the applicant's caving ability is well known to you. If you are satisfied with the applicant's capability, it is acceptable to dispose with the practical assessment since no useful purpose is likely to be served by its formal completion.

It is unlikely that the applicant will have the same depth of knowledge or the same breadth of experience as yourself and you should not expect it. A proven satisfactory assessment by The National Caving Association should be accepted and you should have good reason before giving a lesser recommendation. There is no reason for an applicant, necessarily, to have personal experience of an area before a recommendation can be given for that area. Knowledge of a similar area should be taken into account.

After deciding on your recommendation you should complete your section of the form and return it to the District Commissioner concerned. Like the District Commissioner you are expected to process this form quickly or contact the applicant directly if any delay is anticipated.

#### Notes for all

1. Should an applicant gain further experience, another application may be submitted at any time in order that the authorisation may be reassessed. When this new authorisation is given it begins a new period of validity, i.e. normally five years.
2. The applicant need not be a warranted Scouter nor a Member of the Movement.
3. There is no upper or lower age limit for any applicant - suitable Scouts or Venture Scouts may be authorised. Any authorised person under 18 years of age may only operate with the permission of his or her Scout Leader or Venture Scout Leader on each separate occasion.
4. The possible outcome of overstating any experience gained by the applicant when physically more able should always be borne in mind by applicant, Commissioner and County/Area Caving Activity Assessor.
5. Those applying for authorisation must have attended a Scout Association First Response Course within the last 3 years or hold any current approved adult First Aid qualification. Holders of a valid First Aid Qualification, where the syllabus equals or exceeds that of a First Response Course, especially in respects to hypothermia and hyperthermia, meets this requirement.
6. Applications should be accompanied by all documentary proof available, certificates of attendance at courses, log books, etc. or clear photocopies of these documents. The originals should be made available if requested by the appropriate Commissioner or County/Area Caving Activity Assessor.
7. It is expected that the complete authorisation process should be completed as soon as possible and certainly within one month.
8. The authorisation is granted by the appropriate Commissioner, who may grant an authorisation which differs from the recommendation of the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor. The County/Area Caving Activity Assessor must be informed before issuing the authorisation.
9. It is for the Scout County/Area to decide where the record of authorisations granted is kept. This can be at County/Area or District. That body is then responsible for initiating the renewal or cancellation of the authorisation granted near the end of the period (normally five years) for which it was granted.
10. Visits to show caves or mines do not require authorisation.
11. Exploration trips to unfamiliar caves, cave systems or mines at home or abroad may be authorised if led by experienced cave leaders. In all such cases the advice of the County/Area Caving Activity Assessor must be sought. Where there is no such Assessor advice is available through the Programme and Development Department at Gilwell Park.

12. The authorisation scheme does not affect Groups wishing to make use of professional instruction and leadership. The Leader concerned must check that, if required, the Instructor(s) are registered in accordance with the Adventure Activity Licensing requirements.

### ***Publications Cross Reference***

*Current editions of:*

*Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association, ISBN-0-81565-290-5*

*First Response                      The Guide Association*

*Record of Authorisation            CT120191*

*Authorisation Card                CT120095*

*First Aid and the Saving of Life FS120051 5/97*

*Cave Practice and Equipment by David Judson  
ISBN-0-85165-206*

**Activity Authorisation -  
Caving and Mine Exploration**

**Title:** ..... **Full Name:** .....

**Maiden Name:** (where applicable) .....

**Full Postal Address:** (including postcode) .....

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**Tel. no. - Daytime:** ..... **Evening:** .....

**Contact details:** (e.g. Mobile, fax, e-mail) .....

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**Date of Birth:** .....

**Health Factors:** (Things that may affect the activity e.g. diabetes, asthma)

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**Current Scouting appointment:** (if any) .....

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**Previous Scouting experience:** (if any) .....

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**Do you hold membership of any relevant club or society?**

*Please give details:*

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**First Aid:** *Please state any relevant courses attended, e.g. First Response, and give dates.*

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**Is this your first application for authorisation?** **Yes/No**

*If No, please give details of previous applications.*

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**Has a previous application been refused?** **Yes/No?**

*If Yes, please give details.*

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**State which activities you wish to be authorised for:**

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**In which Systems do you want to carry out these activities?**

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**Have you any experience of setting up an S.R.T. system?**

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**How many years experience have you relevant to these activities?** *Please give details on the form on the back page or attach a copy of your log book*

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**Please give details of relevant training courses attended.**

*Please attach photocopies of all relevant documents including log book and/or licence.*

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**I have read and understood P.O.R. - Activity Rules. I am familiar with the appropriate chapters of Cave Practice and Equipment by Judson.**

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**Signature of Applicant**

**Date**

I am satisfied as to the maturity, ability to lead and supervise young people and the general suitability of the applicant.

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Signature of the GSL

Name in block capitals

Date

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Group

District

County

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Signature of the DC

Name in block capital

Date

I recommend that authorisation be given within the following limits:

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Signature of County Assessor

Name in block capitals

Date

I hereby grant authorisation within the following limits:

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Signature of the DC

Name in block capitals

Date

**Review Date** ..... **Signature of DC** .....

## Caving and Mine Exploration Experience

Date	System	Cave or Mine	Role	Comments - Condition, group details	S.R.T.

Please feel free to photocopy this blank form to provide more space for experience