



BCSF Cave/Karst Classification Cribsheet

(1 of 4)

BCSF 130306

Resource Contents Classification (A<E)

Class A: Caves which contain few or no items of scenic or scientific value. If any such items are present within the cave, they are of the type which cannot, without great effort, be destroyed or removed from the cave. Basically, a cave in which frequent visitation by any and all types of cavers will cause little or no change within the cave.

Class B: Caves which contain secondary deposit-type formations of the ordinary type, such as stalagmites, stalactites, columns, flowstone, draperies, and rimstone dams, which are so positioned within the cave that they are not easily damaged and/or vandalized; or any items of biological or other scientific value which are of the type which cavers could not seriously disturb or destroy.

Class C: Caves which contain secondary deposit-type formations of the ordinary type, such as stalagmites, stalactites, columns, flowstone, draperies, and rimstone dams which are of exceptional size or quantity, and/or are so positioned within the cave that they are quite susceptible to breakage and/or vandalism; or any items of scientific value which are of the type which cavers could seriously disturb or destroy.

Class D: Caves which contain formations that are of unusual quality or are very delicate and susceptible to breakage, even by well-trained and very careful cavers; or any items of scientific value which are of the type which cavers could and/or would seriously disturb or destroy. Examples of Class "D" Cave formations would be selenite needles, gypsum flowers, epsomite formations or crystals, cave helictites, moon milk, rare biological species, etc.

Class E: Caves which contain items of scientific value which could and/or would be seriously disturbed or destroyed by frequent visits, or by visits of uninformed cavers as to the item or items of scientific value, i.e., a biological species which has a delicate habitat, or is in danger of extinction in the area or within the particular cave. The items of scientific value could be either archaeological, biological, or paleontological in nature, or very rare cave formations.



BCSF Cave/Karst Classification Cribsheet

(2 of 4)

BCSF 130306

Hazards Classification (1<5) Factors: a) navigation, b) extrication problems related to a rigid stretcher, c) vertical pitches, d) stability (floor, ceiling, walls), e) water, f) energy requirement (length/depth, etc.), g) other (bad air, wildlife, etc.)

Class 1: A Class 1 cave offers the least hazard to a caver and has the following general characteristics: **(a)** Single, well-defined main passageway, with few lateral passages. **(b)** No passageways posing stretcher extrication problems. **(c)** No drops over 2 meters, no rigging required. **(d)** Negligible passage instabilities. **(e)** Negligible risk of hypothermia or flooding. **(f)** Low level of energy required.

Class 2: A Class 2 cave contains moderate hazards, and is predominantly horizontal in structure. General characteristics of Class 2 caves are: **(a)** Well-defined main passageways, with relatively short dead-end lateral passages. **(b)** Several main route points difficult but feasible for a stretcher evacuation. **(c)** Drops over 2 meters but none over 6 m; no rigging required. **(d)** Main route passage instabilities present but with low risk if injury. **(e)** Very low likelihood of hypothermia or flooding. **(f)** Generally limited extent requiring a low level of energy.

Class 3: A Class 3 cave contains structural hazards not found in Class 1 and 2 caves. General characteristics of Class 3 caves are: **(a)** Multiple passageways with straight connecting passages. **(b)** Contains many difficult main route stretcher evacuation problems and/or several points requiring exposure bag extrication **(c)** Vertical drops from 2 to 6 meters or steep passages requiring rigging. **(d)** Main route passage instabilities with risk of severe injury can be mitigated or avoided **(e)** Water conditions could contribute to hypothermia; flooding unlikely to create entrapment. **(f)** Main passages are of a length, depth or character cumulatively requiring a moderate level of energy.

Class 4: A Class 4 cave is the most hazardous from the structural standpoint and has the following general characteristics: **(a)** Maze-type passageways. **(b)** Contains main route passages requiring passage modification or other special measures (passage stabilization, sump passing, etc.) to effect an exposure bag extrication **(c)** Vertical drops over 6 meters requiring rigging. **(d)** Main route passage instabilities with risk of severe injury are unavoidable. **(e)** Main route contains wet passageways subject to flooding which could cause entrapment; may require wet suit to explore. **(f)** Main passages of a length, depth or character cumulatively requiring a high level of energy.

Class 5: A Class 5 cave is most hazardous due to the presence of extreme examples of the above factors, individually or in combination, or of any other hazards which require special equipment to protect the caver (e.g. diving equipment).



Appeal Classification (V<Z)

Class V: Caves which, for reasons of limited extent, high hazard, lack of features of interest and/or remoteness, have virtually no appeal to either cavers or the general public.

Class W: Caves whose characteristics make them moderately attractive to cavers but not to the general public. Characteristics might include: **(i)** Technically sporting passages; **(ii)** a limited number of interesting features; **(iii)** suitability for training or practice.

Class X: Caves whose location, features, relative lack of hazards and relative durability makes them suitable for and moderately attractive to general public visitors. These caves might have general adventure appeal, but would not be worthy of full interpretive or commercial development.

Class Y: Caves having special appeal to cavers or speleologists owing to the presence of various factors, including: **(i)** outstanding speleological features (speleothems, etc.); **(ii)** relatively low vulnerability; **(iii)** challenging features (pits, etc.); **(iv)** surface accessibility; **(v)** unexplored passage or potential; **(vi)** record-holding qualities (depth, length, etc.); **(vii)** underground wilderness qualities; **(viii)** significant biological features.

Class Z: Caves having great public appeal and characteristics which would make them highly suitable for public display or interpretation. Factors would include: **(i)** outstandingly beautiful or impressive speleothems; **(ii)** other outstanding cave features such as waterfalls, rivers, lakes, large passages and chambers, etc.; **(iii)** relative ease of access to features without major impact or cave modification; **(iv)** acceptably low hazard level; **(v)** relative ease of surface access and proximity to population centres or main lines of transportation.

