

# Cave Rescue in the USA and Canada

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## Introduction

- Recent Travels offered the opportunity to attend both British Columbia Cave Rescue (BCCR) and National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) rescue courses in Canada and the US.
- This presentation will outline courses and how the organizations operate but will not go into detailed analysis or comparison of techniques taught.
- Other cave rescue organizations exist in both countries but Jay and I only had the opportunity to attend courses presented by these organizations.

## Canada – British Columbia Cave Rescue (BCCR)

- formed 1984
- rescue and training service of organized caving in British Columbia
- recognized by the Provincial (State) Emergency Program (PEP) as the lead agency in cave rescue, providing specialized personnel and equipment for cave rescue emergencies
- on callout by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) or the PEP Emergency Coordination Centre.



## Environment

Canadian caves range in temperature from 0- 9°C.

Caving requires equipment for cold and wet conditions.

Caves in Canada are very hard, and rescue practice is undertaken in cave. Generally rescue exercises are undertaken in “sacrificial” caves that have little restriction of public access and exhibit significant visitor impacts.

## Rescue equipment and property

- BCCR has three rescue gear caches one on Vancouver Island, and secondary caches in Kamloops and Prince George.
- Each cache contains several bags of pre-sorted equipment for quick deployment.
- Equipment bags include: Initial response equipment (first aid and patient management equipment), rigging packs, rope packs, medical packs, communications equipment



## Rescue co-ordination and procedures

### Courses and Training

Cave Companion Rescue course - weekend rescue courses held annually.

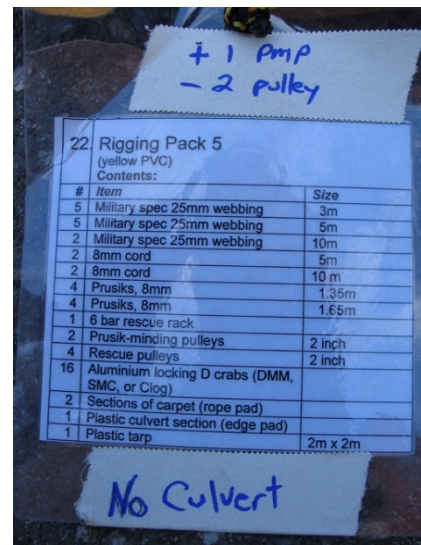
Include hands-on practice with:

- Basic first-aid, planning and preparing for a cave trip
- basic SRT rope skills (ascending / descending)
- equipment & safety considerations
- raising & lowering systems
- team approach to cave rescue
- mock cave rescue scenario

course fee of \$75.00 (\$40.00 for persons affiliated with a recognized caving group or SAR group)

### Weeklong Cave Rescue seminar

- Introduction, BC rescue organizations, caving accidents and incidents
- Medical, First aid, planning, packaging and basic patient transport
- Rigging theory and practice
- High angle rigging and practice
- Major search and rescue organization, incident command system
- Communications
- Underground horizontal and vertical stretcher handling practice



Course cost \$120, provides course notes and use of BCCR rescue equipment.



## National Speleological Society

### National Cave Rescue Commission (NSS – NCRC)

- established 1979
- NSS representative on cave rescue training and operations.
- Volunteer group developed primarily to train and track US cave rescue resources
- NOT a functional cave rescue team, NCRC trains rescuers, but doesn't conduct rescues – limits liability.



## NCRC Aims

### General NCRC stuff

### NCRC courses

#### Weekend Cave rescue orientation course

Course includes many elements of the weeklong seminar  
does not include vertical rescue

- Cave environment
- Equipment and patient packaging and planning
- First aid equipment, medical and psychological considerations
- Communications and documentation
- Incident command system
- Search and rescue
- Bad air, water - special situations
- Practical rescue practice and considerations



Course fee: \$35US, notebook \$10US

## Summary

**BCCR**

**[www.cancaver.ca/bccr/](http://www.cancaver.ca/bccr/)**

**NSS – NCRC**

**[NCRC.info](http://NCRC.info)**

**[www.caves.org](http://www.caves.org)**