

**The National Cave Rescue Commission**  
of the  
**National Speleological Society**  
**Northeastern Region**

# **ORIENTATION TO CAVE RESCUE**

**October 28&29, 2006**

**Police Academy  
Pittsford VT**

**Registration Fee: \$60**

*This NCRC Weekend Orientation to Cave Rescue Seminar is designed to give both Emergency Responders (police, fire, EMS) and cavers an overview and limited hands-on experience with cave rescue operations, management, and requirements. By increasing the awareness of all groups, this course will improve inter-cooperation among all in the event of a real cave rescue.*

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE AGENCY PERSONNEL**

This course is especially important for fire and rescue squads who might be in a position of coordinating or assisting with rescue procedures. Caving experience is NOT required, and participants in this course will not be required to enter the cave during the mock rescue drill unless they wish to do so (there are a large number of critical above-ground roles required during a cave rescue which require an understanding of the cave rescue process).

## **CAVERS**

Knowledgeable cavers are the second key to a successful rescue, as they are the ones who understand and are comfortable with the cave environment. No previous rescue training is needed. All cavers are encouraged to take this course in order to better understand the inter-agency coordination and teamwork necessary during a cave rescue.

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Enclosed is an information sheet and an application for interested individuals. Feel free to reproduce this information and application form for distribution to other interested people. Checks should be made payable to "**Northeast Region NCRC**". Completed registration forms should be sent to:

Steve Hazelton  
81 Edgerton Street  
Rutland VT 05701

Phone: 802-775-6422  
e-mail: shazelton@rrmc.org

Registration deadline is **October 13**. Space in the seminar is limited, so register early. Registrants will receive a schedule, detailed information sheet, directions, and a waiver of liability form (which must be signed for participation in the course). Registrants under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

*(See back for more information)*

## CAVE RESCUE - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

***Q: Do we really have a need for Cave Rescue training in this area?***

**A:** Vermont has over 50 significant caves, and there is an active caving community ranging from the inexperienced and ill-equipped “flashlight spelunkers” to the experienced cavers pushing caves to new horizontal and vertical extremes. There have been few actual rescues so far, but a major cave rescue is probably inevitable.

While most northeast caves are not all that long, they are often tight and challenging, adding to the complexity of cave rescue. A patient with a leg injury who can assist with movement could take many hours to move a few hundred feet, and extrication of a patient with a back injury could be a multi-day rescue. When you consider that the average rescuer can only work underground for a few hours before being at risk for exhaustion and hypothermia, you begin to see the magnitude of the problem.

***Q: Are there formal cave rescue teams?***

**A:** No. The emergency agencies that cover areas containing caves are responsible for rescue. Cavers will assist as requested, but are not part of an agency charged with providing rescue. This course emphasizes how to make this interaction work smoothly, which is why we encourage participation from both the emergency agency and the caving communities.

***Q: What is covered during the course?***

**A:** The first day of this two-day course includes classroom review of some of the problems facing rescuers, the equipment used, and underground safety. Various patient movement and treatment strategies are demonstrated and practiced, and student teams are presented with a series of above-ground patient movement obstacles to overcome.

Saturday evening, practice sessions continue until 8:00pm. Afterward, cavers and non-cavers will have opportunities to share experiences. Demonstration of caving equipment and procedures will be available as well. Pictures and/or slides from local caves will be available for viewing. This is also the ideal time to brainstorm and pre-plan for the mock rescue.

The second day of the course is composed of a mock rescue from a local cave, in which all students get an opportunity to put their newly learned skills to practice.

It is important to realize that this course is only an orientation to the myriad of problems faced during a cave rescue. Information about more comprehensive programs will be available at the course.

***Q: What about meals?***

**A:** Saturday lunch and dinner and Sunday lunch are included in the course fee, as well as coffee/pastry both mornings.

***Q: Do I have to participate in both days of the training?***

**A:** In order to participate in the mock rescue on Sunday, participation in the Saturday classroom and evening skills practice activities are mandatory. This is for both your safety and the safety of other students and instructors.

***Q: What kind of equipment do I need?***

**A:** Primarily heavy-duty clothing, protective equipment (such as a hard hat), and lights for working in the cave environment. Upon receipt of your registration form, you will be sent a list of required equipment. Some loaner equipment may be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

***Q: How challenging will the cave for the mock rescue really be?***

**A:** The cave we will use will be representative of a typical Vermont cave (i.e. – cold, dark, and wet), but we will not put any students into conditions beyond what they are comfortable being in. We want you to experience the cave environment, but more importantly we want you to be able to successfully use the skills we teach you.

However, the mock will involve physical activity. Equipment will need to be carried to the cave, and the patient carried from the cave. This is typical of any off-road rescue situation.

***Q: I'm interested, but have no interest in going underground-- that's not for me. Do I have to go in the cave to participate in this training?***

**A:** No. There are many key coordination and support roles which take place on the surface. However, any participant who wishes to go underground will be able to do so.

***Q: Who sponsors these programs?***

**A:** The Northeastern Region of the National Cave Rescue Commission organizes these programs with the assistance of local volunteers. The NCRC is a coordination and training organization which works to promote caving safety, and to draw together the professional rescue and caving communities to improve understanding in both directions. All instructors are volunteers, and receive no compensation. Any proceeds from these courses are used to purchase and maintain specialized cave rescue training equipment.

***Q: You keep mentioning safety. Is this course dangerous, or something?***

**A:** Caves can be a hostile environment. They are rough on equipment, and they are rough on people. There is a degree of risk in entering a cave and there are significant physical and psychological stresses that come into play. We repeatedly stress safety in order to insure this is everyone's FIRST priority, and for the protection of all involved.

**CAVE RESCUE SEMINAR**  
**Pittsford VT**  
**October 28 & 29, 2006**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(H): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (W): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Cave Rescue Training/Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Background: \_\_\_ First Aid \_\_\_ ECA \_\_\_ EMT- B / I / P \_\_\_ RN \_\_\_ MD

Caving Background: \_\_\_ None \_\_\_ Some \_\_\_ A lot \_\_\_ Vertical

Physical problems/limitations that could affect participation in a Mock Cave Rescue: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee information:

Registration fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$60

Overnight on-site lodging (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Dorm room (\$10 per night x \_\_\_ nights) \_\_\_\_\_

Camping with bathroom access (\$7 per night x \_\_\_ nights) \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make registration checks payable to: **Northeastern Region NCRC**. Registration deadline:  
**October 13.**

Return this form with payment to:

Steve Hazelton  
81 Edgerton Street  
Rutland VT 05701