



## Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

# Risk Management Policy in the Natural Environment

*Redraft 2006, minor amendments 2019, amended January 2021*

### **Need for a policy and policy principles:**

There are many hazards associated with activities involving natural environments, such as caves and karst environments. **'Risk'** is the chance that a hazard causes an incident (an accident or near-miss) which has a negative impact on the aims of a caving group or of individual party members. The level of risk is measured in terms of the seriousness of the consequences of the risk and the likelihood of its happening.

Caving, as with all activities, inherently includes risk, and individuals evaluating and managing risks to reduce them to acceptable levels.

The Australian Speleological Federation Inc (ASF) and its members undertake our activities as safely as possible by carrying out a Risk Management (RM) process. It is impossible to completely remove risks, but it is possible to anticipate risks and to plan how to minimise them. ASF and its members understand that it is possible to learn from past incidents and to reduce future risks through that learning.

As a federated organisation, the corporate member clubs of the ASF, their trip leaders, and activity participants are responsible for the identification and control of risks which may arise during their activities in the natural environment. This policy is designed to aid member clubs to identify risk and to control risk in the natural environment. This policy aims to eliminate unacceptable risk and to manage residual risks to reduce accidents and incidents.

*Limits of this policy.* This policy applies to risks relating to the natural environment, and to outdoor and adventure activities. Risks such as caving when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, organisational financial and management risks, and risks associated with caving with children pose a different type of risk and are not included in this policy.

### **ASF shall formulate risk management guidelines for member clubs and trip leaders.**

The risk management Guidelines will outline and detail recommendations for managing risk in the caving environment and will be distributed to member clubs who will be encouraged to adopt the Guidelines as a minimum standard for risk management in the natural environment and during outdoor activities.

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### **ASF Executive shall assist in education and learning from past experiences.**

The ASF Executive:

- Is responsible for assisting in education and learning from past experiences by receiving and storing incident reports, found at:  
<https://www.caves.org.au/administration/commissions/cave-safety-leadership-risk-management-slarm>
- Is responsible for encouraging and facilitating the use of the incident/accident reporting system.
- Is responsible for analysing, summarising and publishing information obtained through the incident reporting system.

### **Relationship to the ASF Codes and Guidelines.**

When developing their own risk management procedures, ASF Members should refer not only to this policy and associated risk management guidelines, but also should consider all other ASF codes and guidelines, such as the ASF Safety Guidelines and ASF Free Diving Codes. Note that it is a requirement that all clubs shall accept the ASF Codes.

This policy shall be reviewed every three years from the date of adoption.