



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CAVE DIVING

2007 - FOURTH QUARTER SAFETY REPORT



A message from the Safety Director:

2007 has come to a close and we welcome the 2008 cave diving season. I am pleased to report very few cave diving accidents this year, however it seemed to be plagued by a number of fatalities from unknown causes. Unfortunately, I had to take part in the recovery of one of these individuals. While we do not know the causes of these deaths, it seems appropriate to stop and take a look at our diving practices and think about what can be done to minimize the risk of death while cave diving. Of course we all know the rules of accident analysis, but what else can we do to stack the odds in our favor?

- Watch your CNS exposures. Keep in mind, oxygen toxicity can occur even while diving within "safe limits." Always be conservative. Remember, diving a 1.4 PO₂ is not always safe. Divers need to consider the exposure times as well as the dose.

- Stay Fit. Many divers, especially those in cold climates, spend their winters indoors, and may have desk jobs that do not require physical fitness. Many of these divers take their annual cave diving trip and want to get the most bottom time they can possibly squeeze in. I see many divers doing up to four dives in a day. This is hard on anyone's body, and especially hard on those who are not acclimated to being in the water. Remember, cave diving should be fun. Relax and enjoy yourself while on vacation and hit the gym in the winter if you are forced indoors all winter by the cold white stuff.

- Pay attention to your body. Remember, if something feels wrong, it is wrong. There is nothing in a cave worth dying for.

A couple of safety concerns have been brought to my attention during the fourth quarter of 2007 which need mentioning.

- The water levels in Florida are still very low. Many cave entrances have become tricky to say the least.

- Chuck Stevens reports: Of importance is the recent rash of armed robberies occurring in the remote dive site of Angelita. The site is far away from regular police patrols and does not have a land owner living on the property to control what goes on. Cars have been stolen there and in another incident people were robbed at gunpoint and then tied up to trees and left there. Fortunately no one has been injured in these incidents. As well Maya blue attracts a lot of thieves as well due to the site being well off the main highway and cars are regularly broken into.

I would like to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable 2008.

Richard Dreher – International Safety Director

If you would like to volunteer to help in your area, or have interest in becoming a regional safety officer, please contact us at safety@safecavediving.com.