

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

Safe Diving,

Richard Dreher



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CAVE DIVING

2008 - SECOND QUARTER SAFETY REPORT



A message from the Safety Director:

Internationally, it has been a quiet few months; however, here in Central Florida two deaths at the Devil's Cave System have attracted a fair amount of attention. One incident involved a Swiss explorer who was laying new line in the back of the system and the other was a relatively inexperienced young woman who was found alone outside of the ear and revived, only to lose her struggle for life a few weeks later in a Florida hospital bed. Our heart goes out to the families and friends of both of these individuals.

I would like to take this opportunity to touch on a subject that repeatedly stirs controversy amongst cave divers; and that topic is solo diving. The NACD does not encourage or discourage this practice; however, divers must be aware that cave diving is an inherently dangerous activity and doing it alone does not stack the odds in your favor.

While solo diving does not cause cave diving accidents, having a team to watch your back and lend a hand when necessary can help you through a potentially disastrous situation. Divers must decide for themselves whether or not they are willing to accept the additional risks associated with solo diving.

When diving as part of a team, there are certain protocols that must be strictly adhered to:

1. If you start the dive as a team, end the dive as a team. Do not leave team members alone, even during safety and decompression stops. Too often we see one member of a team finishing a decompression obligation while the others return to the surface. Keep in mind, the last 20 feet are often the most hazardous due to potentially long exposures to high partial pressures of oxygen, strong currents, and waves when ocean diving.
2. Anyone may call a dive at anytime for any reason. The team should proceed to the surface together without question. Cave Divers do not call a dive just for the fun of it; there is a reason for this call. This action has merit and should be observed by all team members.
3. Dive to the least experienced team member's comfort and skill level.

By observing these simple rules you may avoid freak accidents and the great regret and sorrow that you will surely feel as a result.

On a positive note, the NACD's 40th Annual World Seminar is fast approaching and I would like to highlight two events taking place which pertain to diver safety:

1. The number of unexplained cave diving fatalities over the past few years seems to be on the rise and unknown health conditions may be a contributing factor. Annual screenings will help alert divers to serious conditions that may be treatable before they pose a risk to yourself and to your team. LifeLine Screenings will have a booth at our seminar this year and I would encourage everyone attending to stop by for more information.
2. There are a couple of spaces left for our *American Heart Association's Heartsaver CPR course*. This course is for active NACD instructors who need to brush up on their CPR skills. The CPR course is taking place on November 14th at Ginnie Springs. I would encourage any instructor who has not taken part in a CPR update this year to attend.