

# Cave Trip Checklist

So you're going caving... here's what you need to bring

## Trip Member Checklist

Caves in the Pacific Northwest are typically around 43°F and may be muddy, wet, and contain sharp rocks

- Helmet (contact trip lead if you need to borrow one)
- Three sources of light
  - Headlamp
  - Backup light #1 (*extra* headlamp)
  - Backup light #2 (cellphone or flashlight)
- Extra batteries
- Snack bar
- Water bottle
- Personal first aid kit
- Personal medications (allergies, asthma, etc.)
- Insulation layer such as a sweatshirt, fleece, etc. (No cotton! Wear synthetic or wool.)
- Protective outer layer such as a rain gear or cave suit
- Knee pads (Optional)
- Elbow pads (Optional)
- Heat source (handwarmers)
- Hiking boots or waterproof boots
- Gardening gloves
- Offline map of area printed or downloaded
- Emergency contacts
- Tell someone where you're going, who you're meeting, and give them a time you will contact them by to let them know you're safe

# Trip Lead Checklist

## Pre-Trip Planning

- Identify "Plan A" cave and "Plan B" cave
- Identify parking lots/meeting location
- Identify camping spots if needed
- Identify max group size

## Pre-Trip Communication

- Write a description of the cave, including:
  - Approximate location
  - Interesting features
  - Vertical/non-vertical
  - Crawling/squeezing required
  - GPS coordinates for meeting location
  - Driving directions/gotchas
- Post description online
  - Create an event in the grotto Facebook group
  - Create a thread in the trip planning channel on Discord
  - Post to email list
- Help coordinate carpools (optional)
- Help coordinate gear borrowing (optional))
- Manage headcount /group size

# Trip Lead Checklist

## Field Communication Plan

- Emergency contact info for trip leads
- Callout contact info
- ETA out of cave
- Callout time for rescue
  - Callout = ETA + buffer, remember to account for lack of cell coverage
- Share predetermined 2-way radio channel (Optional)
- Share Garmin InReach usernames (Optional)

## Group Gear

- Offline map of area
- Offline map of cave
- Spare helmet (if possible)
- Extra headlamps (if possible)
- Extra batteries
- Group first aid kit
- Hand line 20'
- Paracord
- Space blanket
- Disinfecting wipes
- Satellite messenger (Garmin InReach, etc.)

# Trip Lead Checklist

## Day of Trip Checklist

- Before you arrive
  - Check events and threads for last-minute posts
  - Get final expected headcount
  - Save contact info offline
  - Download offline driving directions and maps
  - Arrive early to the meeting location
- At the meeting location
  - Group gear check
  - Group safety/mindset check
  - Headcount
- En route to cave
  - Share coordinates / maps
  - Keep group together
  - Do a headcount again before entering cave
  - Notify callout person you are entering in the cave and headcount
- In the cave
  - Keep group together with regular checkpoints
  - Each person should have a buddy
  - Be responsible for the person behind you
  - Maintain group psychological safety
  - Check in on comfort levels, warmth, people are staying dry, etc.
- Exiting the cave
  - Headcount
  - Notify callout person you have exited the cave and headcount
- Leaving the parking lot
  - Make sure all vehicles start
  - Trip lead should be last to leave – confirm all vehicles exit OK

# Route Conditions Checklist

- Check [weather forecast](#) for cave– and route–related issues
  - If the cave has water, recent rainfall may raise the water level
  - Anticipate how weather will affect route to cave
- Check for road closures and conditions
  - Oregon DoT ([tripcheck.com](http://tripcheck.com))
  - Washington DoT ([wsdot.com](http://wsdot.com))
  - Check specific forest roads you will be traveling on, ie. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/giffordpinchot/recarea/?recid=74386>
  - Check general alerts and advisories for wilderness area, ie. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/giffordpinchot/alerts-notices>
- If traveling in winter backcountry, check [NWAC](#) forecast for avalanche problems

# Winter / Backroad Travel Checklist

When traveling on forest roads, it is important to plan ahead and be ready for difficult conditions.

- Check road conditions in advance for closures and route alternatives
- Download offline map of driving directions
- Make sure someone knows where you are going and who you are meeting
- Save group contact information offline
- Check vehicle condition – tires, battery, and fluid levels OK
- Snow tires or tire chains/cables
- Shovel
- Ice scraper
- Emergency blanket
- Water & snacks
- Jump start kit
- High visibility vest, hat, etc.
- Charging cables for devices and batteries
- When traveling in a group maintain frequent visual contact (be responsible for the vehicle behind you)
- Emergency satellite communication method such as Garmin InReach or iPhone 15+ (Optional)
- Two–way radio (Optional)
- Tow strap (Optional)
- Sandbag (Optional)
- Saw or chainsaw for removing fallen trees (Optional)
- Traction plates for getting out of mud/snow (Optional)