



## Basic Caving

### Equipment and Clothing Checklist

Suitable for most Kentucky horizontal caves.

**Three dependable sources of light (Required)** One light should be mounted on your helmet. Each source of light should be dependable and bright enough to get you out of the cave. Most lights these days have LED bulbs.

**Helmet with chin strap (Required)** A construction helmet with suspension inside is fine. If the helmet does not have a chin strap then make one, preferably a non-elastic one. A helmet should stay on your head if you fall down. A climbers helmet is best. Avoid army, football, motorcycle and bicycle helmets. Bring a bandana to wear under your helmet. Sometimes this is more comfortable.

**Sturdy boots (Required)** Old hiking boots with laces, lug soles and good ankle support are best. Avoid rubber boots and tennis shoes. Most types of military boots are fine. Your feet are likely to get wet. Water proofing them will not be necessary.

**Knee Pads (Required)** Athletic type knee pads are fine. You can buy these in any sports store or sporting goods department. Look for thick and flexible pads that cover as much of your knee and shin as possible. Avoid extra thick volleyball type kneepads. Expect white knee pads to turn permanently brown. Some cavers prefer to wear elbow pads also.

**Gloves (Required)** Regular garden or work gloves. A pair of \$1 brown jersey gloves work great! Avoid insulated, winter or rubber gloves.

**A Note On Fabric:** *Most cavers avoid wearing cotton clothing whenever possible. Cotton is fine until it gets wet. Wet cotton clothing is heavy, less insulating and does not dry quickly. Choose wool or synthetic fabrics like nylon, polyester or polypropylene. Wool will keep you warm even when wet. Synthetic fabrics are lighter, hold less moisture and dry faster.*

**Coveralls** A pair of non-insulated (mostly nylon) work-type coveralls are great. Try them on before caving to make sure they fit. You should not feel any tight spots when bending over or raising your arms in the air. Avoid insulated or winter coveralls. They will probably be too warm. If you can't locate coveralls, then choose a pants and shirt that are mostly nylon or polyester. Don't worry about style or color clashing. Wear jeans or sweat pants as a last resort.

**Undergarments** Wear a pair of polypropylene long underwear (tops and bottoms). They will keep you warm and wick the moisture away from your skin. Other types of non-cotton long underwear are fine. Hosiery works too. Choose wool socks over cotton. Some cavers prefer to wear a thin liner sock under their wool socks.

**Cave Pack** You will need some kind of pack to carry all of your gear, food and water. The best kind of pack is worn around your waist such as a fanny pack. This style of pack is easy to rotate when going through tight or narrow places. A pack worn on your back is acceptable. Avoid small fanny packs and make sure it has ample room to carry all the things you will need. Choose a pack that is easy to take off, easy to open but closes securely. You do not want the contents of your pack strewn along the cave floor because it accidentally opened and you didn't notice it!

**Recommended Items:** water bottle, food/snacks, spare batteries, candle, lighter, first aid kit, map of cave, space blanket, trash bags, compass, camera & film, heat packs.