



# ASF Code of Ethics

Adopted 1992

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Recognising their primary aim of protecting the caves and karst of Australasia, cavers will actively promote cave conservation and sound management practices through example, education, advice and training.

1.2 This code establishes a minimum standard of caving practice.

1.3 Higher standards may be required by management authorities for particular caves or karst regions, in which case those standards will be adhered to.

## 2. Toward Landowners and Management Authorities

2.1 Landowners, tourist guides and any person representing a management authority will be treated with courtesy and respect.

2.2 All caving parties must have specific or tacit approval from the landowner and/or management authority before entering any property or reserve, must follow only agreed routes and must not visit forbidden areas.

2.3 The prevailing procedures regarding gates on properties and reserves will be followed, and care taken to cause no damage to stock, crops, equipment or landscape features. In short, leave as found.

2.4 All parties will be as self sufficient as possible and will not presume on the good will of landowners and/or management authorities for water, supplies or assistance.

2.5 Where the cave entrance has been blocked by the landowner and/or management authority, it will be re-blocked after use, or, with the landowner and/or management authority's permission more appropriate protection installed unless the landowner and/or management authority otherwise instructs.

2.6 No gate will be installed at or in a cave unless approved by the landowner and/or management authority and arrangements are made for key security. Any gate must have an accompanying sign giving reasons for gating and access conditions unless the landowner and/or management authority otherwise instructs.

2.7 No cave excavation, including the use of explosives, will be undertaken without the permission of the landowner and/or management authority and/or management authority and the society committee, and only after an assessment of the environmental effect.

### **3. Toward Caves**

3.1 Camping will not occur in a cave, unless absolutely necessary to achieve a specific speleological or conservation objective.

3.2 Caving activity must be conducted in a manner responsible to the cave environment, taking particular care to avoid damage to speleothems, sediments, biota and other natural phenomena. The maximum size of any party should be limited to that which provides the best quality of experience or achieves specific aims.

3.3 Cave entrances and passages should not be excavated/enlarged, including the use of explosives, water levels in sumps should not be modified and stream flows should not be diverted, until all possible effects are assessed and the appropriate permission gained. Any modification must be the minimum required.

3.4 Established marked routes must be used, single tracks should be followed and care taken to avoid needless deposition of mud. Mud-throwing or modeling is unacceptable.

3.5 All human introduced wastes must be removed from the cave and disposed of properly.

3.6 Cavers will not smoke in any cave.

3.7 Caves must not be disfigured by unnecessary marking (including 'direction arrows'). Entrance tags and survey marks should be small and inconspicuous.

3.8 Disturbance should not be caused to any biotic community. No disturbance should be caused to maternity or over-wintering roosts of bats. Collection of specimens will be kept to the minimum required for study purposes only.

3.9 The technique, agent and justification for air or water flow-tracing experiments should be chosen to minimise environmental impact and must be approved by the relevant authorities and the society committee.

3.10 Explosives should not be used inside a cave or at the entrance unless absolutely necessary, and then only with the permission of the landowner and/or management authority and the society committee, and only after an assessment of the environmental impact.

## **4. General**

4.1 Recognised codes for minimum impact camping will be observed with particular emphasis on complete removal of rubbish and, wherever possible, avoidance of camping on karst catchment areas.

4.2 Reports on speleological work and caving activities are to be honest and accurate, avoiding sensationalism or exaggeration.

4.3 Any published work must acknowledge other people's contributions to the work, either as clubs or individuals, published work or personal communication.

4.4 Consideration should be given before publishing an article disclosing a cave's location, as to its intended audience, the wishes of the landowner and/or management authority, and the subsequent effect on the cave.

4.5 When visiting an area frequented by another society, the club or party will co-operate fully with that society.

4.6 Disputes will be conducted in a restrained and responsible manner.