

# BY LAWS

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## Safety Code

1. General Safety:
  - A. Never Cave alone. It is recommended that at least three people be on any caving trip; at least one full or associate member on horizontal trips and at least two full or associate members on vertical trips.
  - B. Everyone participating in a trip should be physically and mentally capable of caving on that type of trip. Mind altering substances will not be used immediately prior to or during a cave trip.
  - C. No one should exert themselves or be forced to exert themselves beyond their limit of endurance.
  - D. If all lights fail, wait in place.
  - E. Avoid jumping.
  - F. All equipment should be in working order and pass inspection before entering the cave.
2. Equipment
  - A. General equipment per person.
    - i. Hard hats with suspension, chinstraps, and a mounted light source are mandatory while caving.
    - ii. At least three (3) sources of light, each providing sufficient light to exit the cave under reasonable circumstances.
    - iii. Supplies for light sources.
    - iv. Heat source.
    - v. Trash bag or space blanket.
    - vi. Energy ration (candy bar, etc.)
    - vii. Gloves, heavy boots or shoes, heavy clothing, or cave specific clothing are advisable.
  - B. Appropriate type and quantity of equipment shall be taken on all caving trips.
3. Procedure
  - A. Always inform someone of the whereabouts of the caving trip, the expected time of return and appropriate phone numbers.
  - B. Observe surroundings: respect landowners' wishes and be considerate of their property.
  - C. If possible, consult someone who is familiar with the cave.
  - D. All rigging is to be checked by a full or associate member. Ropes should be protected from fraying. All group members should be satisfied with rigging before it is used.
  - E. Never leave a prospective member or other inexperienced caver alone.
  - F. A belay should be used on every person on a ladder. No belay shall be used when ascending rope. Prospective members or other inexperienced cavers must accept a belay when requested to by a full or associate member. Anyone desiring a belay shall have one. The first person to descend a rope shall ensure that those following have a belay. The order of ascent and descent shall be determined by a full or associate member on the trip.
  - G. An appropriate loop knot should be tied in the lower end of any rope used for rappelling.

## Membership

1. Qualifiers:
  - A. The qualifier "inactive" applied to any of the membership categories shall denote that said individual has not paid current dues and therefore retains on the privilege of attending and addressing regular meetings. payment of dues shall result in automatic reinstatement of the membership previously held and all privileges thereof.
  - B. The qualifier "life" shall be applied to any full, associate, or prospective member of the VPI Cave Club upon receipt of life membership dues. Life members shall have membership privileges for which they qualify, but are exempt from yearly dues.
2. Training Program:

The VPI Cave Club training program shall develop educated cavers consistent with Article II of the Constitution. The training program shall develop the basic skills to be safe and self-reliant underground. To be qualified as

a full or associate member of the club, a prospective member must:

- A. Read and understand the constitution and by-laws of the Cave Club.
- B. Remain a prospective member for at least 10 weeks during which time he/she spends 40 hours underground on at least 6 trips on which at least one full or associate member is present.
- C. Demonstrate elementary climbing skills in a cave.
- D. Demonstrate a working knowledge of belaying methods.
- E. Be able to tie a seat harness with webbing.
- F. Demonstrate a working knowledge of changeover from descending to ascending and ascending to descending.
- G. Demonstrate a working knowledge of passing a rebelay while ascending and descending.
- H. Demonstrate a working knowledge of rappelling and climbing rope in a cave.
- I. Demonstrate how to rig and pad a rope correctly.
- J. Know how to tie (demonstrate the lock off and back off where appropriate) and explain the uses of: bowline, bowline on a bight, bowline on a coil, figure 8, figure 8 on a bight, double figure 8, alpine butterfly, square knot, overhand knot, Münter hitch (and lockoff), water knot, helical, prusik, double fisherman's bend.
- K. Complete satisfactory a comprehensive general information quiz.
- L. Be endorsed by a full or associate member in good standing.
- M. Submit to the editor a suitable article for publication in the Tech Troglodyte allowing reasonable time for review and revision.
- N. Be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the full membership.

## Disciplinary Action

1. Any prospective, associate, or full member who has allegedly committed an infraction of the VPI Cave Club Constitution, or by-laws, or upon recommendation of the Safety and Techniques Committee, may face possible disciplinary action in the form of a reprimand, suspension, or expulsion, as defined below.
2. A. Levels of disciplinary action:
  - i. Reprimand: A reprimand shall be the lowest level of disciplinary action and shall be noted in the minutes.
  - ii. Suspension: A suspension is the intermediate level of disciplinary action. A suspension shall be reduction of an associate or full member's rights to those equivalent to prospective member status. A prospective member cannot complete any membership requirements while on suspension. The time period for a suspension shall be fifteen (15) weeks after which time the previous membership status is reinstated.
  - iii. Expulsion: An expulsion is the highest and most severe level of disciplinary action. An expelled person is ejected from the club and club functions and current dues are returned. Previously completed membership requirements are null and void. A person expelled from the club shall not be allowed to restart the training program or regain any level of membership in the club.
- B. Procedure:
  - i. A member of any class may bring a complaint for disciplinary action to the president.
  - ii. The president shall convene the Executive Committee to evaluate the complaint.
  - iii. Upon review the Executive Committee shall bring the complaint to the club, within two regular meetings of the receipt of the complaint, with a recommendation for action.
  - iv. The Executive Committee's recommendation shall constitute a motion.
  - v. If the motion is to dismiss the complaint, upon a "second" it may be voted on at the current meeting and requires 2/3 majority vote to pass.
  - vi. If the motion is for a level of disciplinary action, as defined above, upon a "second" the motion will be tabled until the next regular meeting.
  - vii. The accused shall be given notice of the tabled motion at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting in which the final vote is to be taken and shall be given ample opportunity to present a defense before the club.
  - viii. At the meeting following the tabled motion a discussion on the accused's infractions will occur. At the close of the discussion a secret ballot shall be taken to determine whether or not action will be taken on the disciplinary measure.
  - ix. A vote to take action must be passed by 2/3 majority of full members.

## Officers

1. The officers of the club shall be elected by ballot from candidates nominated from the floor. The order of the election shall be president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. To be nominated, a member must meet the qualification of Article IV, Section 2 of the constitution. A separate ballot shall be voted for each office. A simple majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. In case there is no majority, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and a re-vote for the remaining candidates shall be taken. The election shall be held at the tenth regular meeting of the spring semester. A 2/3 vote of full members shall be necessary to invalidate the election.
2. If the president and vice-president are absent during the summer, the president shall appoint a president pro tem from among the full members available.
3. In event of the resignation or release from office of an officer, a special election shall be held at the next regular meeting to elect a member to the office for the completion of the term of office.
4. The duties of the president shall be:
  - A. To preside at all meetings and call special meetings.
  - B. To act as an ex-officio member of all committees.
  - C. To represent the club officially in all matters except those which require the cooperation of the treasurer.
  - D. To make appointments to special committees unless provision is made otherwise in the resolution establishing the committee with the approval of the majority of the committee members.
  - E. To make appointments to standing committees and to appoint committee chairmen and to remove appointees.
  - F. To make arrangements for the meeting room.
  - G. To appoint an editor for club publications.
  - H. To appoint a club parliamentarian.
5. The duties of the Vice-President shall be:
  - A. To assume the president's duties during the president's absence.
  - B. To assist the president as the president shall require.
  - C. To countersign as authorizing officer, vouchers for the expenditures that have been authorized by the club.
  - D. To be an active participant in the safety committee as director of the new member training program.
6. The duties of the Treasurer shall be:
  - A. To have charge of the finances of the club.
  - B. To keep an accurate record of the finances of the club, including balancing records weekly.
  - C. To collect any and all dues and fees which the club shall authorize.
  - D. To give a complete report on the financial status of the club at every regular meeting.
  - E. To keep a list of the club members and their status, and to make this available to all members, faculty advisors, and at all club meetings.
  - F. To make disbursements when authorized by motions passed by the club and only when so authorized.
  - G. To comply with regulations of the VPI Office of Student Affairs pertaining to finances.
  - H. To allow no transactions to occur without proper receipts.
7. The duties of the Secretary shall be:
  - A. To keep a record of all club proceedings of all meetings of the club and place a copy in the club files, within two academic weeks.
  - B. To keep a phone list of the members of the club and to make this available to all members and faculty advisors.
  - C. To conduct correspondence for the club as directed by the president.
  - D. To notify the NSS of changes in officers and other pertinent information.
  - E. To notify faculty advisors of proposed amendments to the Constitution or the By-Laws.
  - F. To make note of proxy votes.
  - G. To provide timely notifications to club members of issues as specified by the constitution or by-laws.
8. Impeachment
  - A. An officer may be impeached for specific and willful infractions of the Constitution, the By-Laws, or the policies of the club.
  - B. Process:
    - i. A motion to impeach stating specific infractions shall be made by a member, committee, or other officer.
    - ii. The motion shall be automatically tabled upon a "second" to the next regular meeting.
    - iii. The officer shall be given notice of the motion at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting in

- which the vote is to be taken, and be given ample opportunity to present a defense before the club.
- iv. Final action shall be by secret written ballot and will require a 2/3 majority vote of the full membership for removal from office.
9. Officers who are full members at the time of election shall assume their duties at the close of elections. Officers who are associate members at the time of election shall assume their duties at the first meeting of the fall semester. All officers shall serve until the elections of the following spring. If any office is left vacant by the election of an associate member, the president shall appoint an officer pro tem from among the full members available.

## Advisor

If desired, any person may be elected as an advisor to the club by a simple majority of votes from full membership.

## Meeting and Quorum

1. To constitute a meeting for the transaction of business, a quorum shall constitute one half (1/2) of the full membership either in person or represented by proxy.
  - A. The secretary shall be notified of each proxy before a vote. Blanket or continuous proxies shall not be held.
  - B. meetings shall be held Fridays at 7:00 p.m. during the academic year.
  - C. Meetings shall comply with Robert's Rules of Order.

## Dues

Dues for prospective members, full members and associate members shall be ten dollars (\$10.00) per semester. Life membership shall be one hundred and thirty dollars (\$130.00), payable in installments, to be paid in full within one year of the first installment.

## Committees

1. It shall be the duty of the Safety and Techniques Committee to:
  - A. Supervise the new member training program.
  - B. Encourage safe caving practices and recommend disciplinary action where necessary.
  - C. Present periodic programs on current safety practices.
  - D. Submit a written report to the president upon request.
  - E. Oversee maintenance and inventory of club rescue gear.
  - F. The Safety and Techniques Committee shall consist of the safety chairman, the president, the vice-president, former safety chairmen, former presidents, and vice presidents, and anyone that the president or safety chairman deems necessary.
2. It shall be the duty of the Publicity Committee to:
  - A. Communicate with incoming freshman and the student body on the availability and activities of the club.
  - B. Submit articles to the school newspaper, etc., on the club's activities.
  - C. Publicize any activities which may be open to other groups.
  - D. Submit to the files such material that may be printed by or about the club.
  - E. Submit a written report to the president upon request.
3. It shall be the duty of the Conservation Committee to:
  - A. The chairman of the conservation committee shall be a member of the National Conservation Committee of the NSS.
  - B. Encourage projects and better practices in cave conservation.
  - C. Instruct new members on the principles of cave conservation.
  - D. To bring to the attention of the club any violation of the club's policy of conservation.
  - E. To scrutinize the mailbag for any material related to cave conservation.
  - F. Submit a written report to the president upon request.
4. It shall be the duty of the Project and Program Committee to:

- A. Plan and coordinate club projects, special activities, and social functions
- B. Plan and make arrangements for programs to be presented periodically at the regular meetings.
- C. Submit a written report to the president upon request.
- 5. It shall be the duty of the Supplies Committee to:
  - A. Buy equipment for the club store for sale to the club members and prospective members out of a special revolving fund established for this purpose.
  - B. Make equipment available for sale at all meetings to all dues paying individuals.
  - C. The fund shall be increased by semesterly appropriations until such time that it becomes self-sustaining. The fund shall be allowed to draw upon the club treasury in the form of loans when additional funds become necessary.
  - D. Keep an accurate and up-to-date record of the finances of the club store, including giving a financial status report within one week of a request from the treasurer, and submitting a complete report of the store's activities to the treasurer at the end of the fall and spring semesters.
- 6. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to:
  - A. Preside over disciplinary proceedings.
  - B. Act for the club in emergency situations when it is not feasible for the club to meet.
  - C. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers, the head of the Safety and Techniques Committee and other person(s) appointed by the president.
- 7. It shall be the duty of the Equipment Committee to:
  - A. Maintain an inventory of Club equipment.
  - B. Maintain the storage and dispersal access of Club equipment.
    - i. Club equipment shall be checked-out by dues-paid members as restricted in Article III.
    - ii. Club equipment shall only be used to support Article II.
  - C. Establish an equipment check-out policy to include how long equipment may be checked-out and the required condition of equipment upon return.
    - i. Gear checked-out that does not conform to this policy, is grounds for a 21-day suspension from the privilege of accessing the Club equipment cache.
    - ii. Club equipment not checked-in, or checked-in damaged from negligence, shall be replaced by the Member who checked out the equipment.
  - D. Maintain Club equipment in a safe condition, and quarantine equipment that is not in safe condition.
    - i. Quarantined equipment may be sold, gifted, repaired, or destroyed at the discretion of the Equipment Committee. All gear sale proceeds will return to the Club General Fund.
  - E. Maintain Club identification markings on all non-infrastructure Club equipment.
  - F. Identify equipment capability gaps for common Club activities.
  - G. Recommend the acquisition of new equipment when necessary.

## Club Files

- 1. Maintenance: The president shall appoint a person to keep and maintain the files.
- 2. Substance: The club files shall consist of cave maps, trip reports, meeting minutes, cave related publications, membership related material, and historical material.
- 3. The file chairman shall submit a written report to the president upon request.

## Club Trips

Club trips are caving trips which are recognized by the VPI Cave Club and which follow the spirit and intent of its constitution and by-laws. A caving trip is recognized if it has at least one full or associate member on it and it is properly signed out. (See By-Laws, Safety Code, Section 3.A for definition of a properly signed out trip.)

## Club Savings

- 1. The club shall establish a savings fund to be placed in an interest drawing savings account.
- 2. The savings fund shall be drawn upon only for investments of long range importance to the club.
- 3. The savings fund shall be increased by semesterly appropriations when possible.

## Club Publication

1. The grotto shall publish a periodic journal to advertise grotto projects, trips, and other activities. It shall further contain material of scientific and technical interest to the caving world.
2. The title of this publication shall be: The Tech Troglodyte.
3. The format and journalistic style shall be set by the editor.
4. The circulation of this publication shall be to all members and prospective members who have paid current dues. In addition, the NSS library and all other grottos which offer their publication in exchange shall receive this publication. An exchange editor will be appointed by the president for these duties, and he/she will cooperate with the mailbag person to keep an updated exchange file.