

# VT Cave Rescue Network

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## THE VERMONT CAVE RESCUE NETWORK

Cave rescue in Vermont is the responsibility of the formal emergency agencies (fire, police, EMS). There is no formal Cave Rescue team, agency, or organization in Vermont. However, there are a number of individuals with caving experience and/or understanding of the cave environment who are willing to assist in a cave rescue. To reach these individuals, the Vermont Cave Rescue Network (VCRN) was formed.

The Vermont Cave Rescue Network is not an agency, club or organization - it is simply a resource list of cavers and other individuals willing to respond and assist in the event of need. These individuals bring to the rescue a variety of training and skills, as well as an expressed interest in helping. Because of the diversity of responsibilities that would be involved in a cave rescue, neither caving nor medical backgrounds are required. Participants are encouraged to obtain training in cave rescue techniques, but no one is expected to have expertise in all roles. Participants are not paid for their services, nor can they expect reimbursement for expenses or liabilities incurred in the course of a drill or rescue.

Because the incidences of cave rescues are few, the VCRN has been loosely developed. No standby list is maintained, and there is no guarantee that any assistance will be available. The VCRN functions under the precept that participants who can be reached and are available to help will respond. There are no officers or pre-assigned roles. Other emergency agencies control the scene and incident, with responding participants working under an Incident Command System structure established by the emergency agencies, filling roles as necessary to the best of their abilities.

It is important to realize that the Cave Rescue Network is only a RESOURCE of cavers and others who understand the cave rescue environment. We legally operate as part of a rescue only with the approval of those responsible for the rescue. We can only offer our assistance and caving expertise to area police, fire, and EMS services and hope it is accepted.

