



Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

ASF Code of Ethics

Revised 1974 by Ad hoc Committee. Adopted 1992, revised Jan 2013 and clauses 1.4 and 3.11 added Jan 2014, revised 2021

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Introduction

This Code is intended to cover the standards of behaviour expected of ASF Members when they interact with landowners, karst management authorities and their employees, members of the public, and other ASF Members.

ASF's primary aim is to protect the caves and karst of Australia. This Code should be read in conjunction with ASF Minimal Impact Caving Code, ASF Minimal Impact Code of Ethics for Scientific Investigation in Caves and Karst, ASF Minimal Impact Rescue Code, ASF Safety Guidelines, ASF Media Contact Policy and Guidelines, and ASF Social Media Policy.

Members should be aware of the UIS Code of Ethics, found at:

<https://uis-speleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Code-of-Ethics-of-the-UIS-English-Language.pdf>.

Interactions with Land Managers (Landowners and Land Management Authorities and their employees)

1. The rules for access to caves shall be followed. It is the responsibility of ASF members to familiarise themselves with cave access policies where they cave. This can be done either by contacting the land manager or by asking caving groups which are active in the area.
2. Land managers shall be treated with courtesy.
3. All relevant permits and permissions need to be obtained, and all attached conditions should be complied with.
4. Local procedures regarding gates on properties and reserves shall be followed. Usually, this is leave as found. It is important not to damage stock, crops, infrastructure, equipment, or landscape features.
5. All parties shall be as self-sufficient as possible and shall not presume on the good will of land managers for water, supplies or assistance.
6. Where the cave entrance has been gated by the land manager, it shall be closed and re-locked on leaving the site.

7. No gate or other infrastructure shall be installed at or in a cave unless approved by the land manager. Gates should have an accompanying sign giving reasons for gating and access conditions unless the land manager instructs otherwise.
8. No cave excavation, including the use of explosives (capping), shall be done without the permission of the land manager and the caving club's committee. There should be an assessment of the environmental impact of such work, and appropriate health and safety measures put in place.
9. ASF members will report incidents of damage to caves, or other information which may promote conservation outcomes, to the land manager as soon as possible.
10. ASF members will document speleological activities in an open and transparent way, for the benefit of land managers and the caving community.
11. ASF members will respect the decision of the land manager to restrict or prevent access to a cave. Where appropriate, cavers will negotiate access to the cave with consideration of all conservation and safety aspects, and the objectives of the land manager.

Interactions with the Public and with other ASF Members

1. ASF members will treat the public and other ASF members with courtesy and respect.
2. ASF members shall not defame, discriminate against, or make public personal attacks on others. Disputes shall be conducted in a respectful and responsible manner, according to the ASF's dispute resolution guidelines.
3. Personal information about trip participants (eg medical information, home address, etc) received by party members shall only be used in the manner in which it is needed. Members need to act ethically with regards to the retention, release, and use of that information.
4. Recognising their primary aim of protecting the caves and karst of Australia, ASF members will actively promote cave conservation and sound management practices through example, education, advice, and training.
5. Novice cavers are to be mentored to develop their awareness of cave conservation and competence in safe, minimal impact caving practices.
6. In areas where the public is present, ASF members shall behave courteously and with consideration for others.
7. Reports on speleological work and caving activities shall be produced promptly and accurately. They shall avoid sensationalism and exaggeration.
8. Published work shall acknowledge other people's contributions to the work, either from clubs or individuals, or published works, or personal communications.
9. Cave locations shall not be made publicly available and only be published according to the ASF Publication of Cave Related Material Code.
10. When visiting an area frequented by another club, ASF members shall co-operate fully with that organisation.
11. Photos or videos should not be passed to another person without the approval of the photographer. Photos or videos should not be published, whether in print or on-line, without the permission of the photographer and of persons depicted. Attribution should be given to the photographer unless prior permission has been granted.