

Equipment for Caving

The Following list is neither comprehensive or authoritative. It is based upon my personal experience, and may not be appropriate for everybody. It is intended for use by members of the UC Mountaineering club on club trips.

Most caves have a temperature of 55 degrees fahrenheit, and very high humidity. Cave conditions are the same year round. Geologically 'Live' caves will be wet. This might simply be dripping water, or it might be running water that you will have to walk through. Any equipment that you take into a cave will get dirty or muddy unless you take special precautions. The dirt that is found in caves mud is very fine, and tends to get in everything.

Mandatory Equipment

- Helmet and Headlamp. These are available in the gear room, but you must supply your own batteries.
- Spare batteries and bulb for your headlamp. Make sure that a spare bulb comes with the headlamp.
- One or more independent backup light sources. A small flashlight works well.
- Warm Clothing.

Desirable Equipment

- Durable clothing. It will get very dirty and worn. Thrift store clothing is a good choice.
- Suitable shoes with some ankle support. They will get very dirty and quite possibly wet. Don't use your good hiking boots.
- Long underwear. Polypropylene or some other synthetic fabric, no cotton.
- Wool or other synthetic socks. Caves are usually wet, and it can be hard to keep your feet dry.
- Knee pads. Caving usually requires some amount of crawling. The UCMC has a few sets available in the gear room.
- Cave pack or other durable small pack. (available in the gear room)
- Cotton gloves to protect your hands. Inexpensive gardening gloves are fine. Its good to bring a second pair in case the second gets slippery from mud. You can often get these in gas stations or at department stores for a dollar per pair.
- Clean dry clothes to wear after leaving the cave.
- A towel and a plastic bag for your dirty clothes.

Other

- Drinking Water. Plastic bottled water bottles are very durable.

- Food. Anything you take into a cave should be resistant to crushing.

The Voice of Experience

- A clean handkerchief in a plastic bag.
- Contact lenses, if you wear glasses. Glasses fog easily in a cave.
- A short section of webbing and a carabiner.

A Gear Room Checklist

- Helmet and Headlamp, plus a spare bulb
- Cave Pack
- Knee Pads