

Risk Assessment For

**Wookey Hole Caves & Mill
Wookey Hole
Wells
Somerset
BA5 1BB
Tel:01749-672243**

Assessment Undertaken

April 2009

Signed **D MEDLEY**
GENERAL MANAGER

Assessment Review

April 2010

Department / Area

SCHOOL TOURS

List Significant Hazards Below

List groups of people who are at risk from the significant hazards identified

List existing controls or note where the information may be found. List risks which are not adequately controlled & the action needed

**Pupils to be adequately supervised by party leader.
One adult admitted free of charge for every ten pupils for adequate supervision of pupils throughout the tour of the Caves and Mill.**

CAR/COACH PARK

Raised Walls

PUBLIC ROAD

CAVE PATH

CAVE AREA

Radon Gas in the caves

Rock fall at cave entrance

Visitors

Visitors

Visitors

Visitors

Staff and Visitors

Visitors

Coaches park adjacent to the River Axe. The water is only a few inches deep but there are vertical banks several feet high. Teachers/party leaders should supervise students as they leave the coach.

Students should not climb on these walls and should be supervised at all times by teachers/party leaders.

Route from Ticket Office to caves path crosses a narrow public road. Students should be supervised whilst crossing the road. There are warning signs and safety barriers.

The caves are approached by a 300-metre path with a wooded slope on the right-hand-side. Students should not climb on the fence.

Traces of radon gas are normally present naturally in caves and mines. A large fan and ventilation grilles ventilate Wookey Hole Caves. Radon readings are very low and risk during a 40-minute tour is infinitesimal.

Limestone caves and cliffs are inherently stable but some precautions are taken: Covered waiting area provided at the entrance of the cave. Door to caves is locked and a chain across to prevent public access to the cave until the guide leads them through. Metal grating above the side of the walkway to prevent rock fall access from the side.

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Slippery walkway at entrance to caves

Staff and Visitors

Entrance area swept daily to clear leaves and debris, etc.

Slippery and uneven floors in caves

Staff and Visitors

Teachers/party leaders should advise students in advance to wear sensible footwear for the cave visit.

Verbal explanation of low rock formation and uneven surface given by guides prior to cave tour.

Maintenance work and repair undertaken to uneven floors.

Low rock formations

Staff and Visitors

Verbal warning given about low rock formations during the tour.

Use of flash photography in caves causing temporary loss of vision

Staff and Visitors

Flash photography prohibited.

Verbal warning given by guide before the tour and a written sign at the entrance to the caves.

Rock fall in caves

Visitors

The caves are examined on a regular basis by a consulting geologist.
Tell-tale plates are placed to detect rock movement.

Underground river rising in public areas of cave

Staff and Visitors

The underground river occasionally rises a few inches above its normal level following heavy rain. Ample warning is given.
Buoyancy aids are located near the water areas.

Minor injuries

Staff and Visitors

First Aid kits are available at the cave entrance and exit. Staff are trained in First Aid.
Students behaviour needs to be supervised to reduce the risk of injury.
Telephones are sited throughout the caves for communication or to summon help.

Uneven steep steps

Visitors

Handrails are provided. Guidance given by cave guide.
Students must walk slowly, not push or bump into each other.

Vertigo over bridge area

Staff and Visitors

There is an alternative route for those who ask not to walk in bridged area of the caves.

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Lighting failure

Visitors

Emergency lights activate immediately 6 8 hours duration.
Emergency telephones are sited throughout the caves for communication.
The cave guides carry torches on all tours.

Restricted accessibility for some disabled visitors

Visitors

Visitors are advised on an individual basis of suitability and access to the caves depending on disability.
The caves are not suitable for wheelchair access.

VALLEY AND RAVINE
Path alongside the canal

Visitors

White demarcation line outlining the path edge.
Life belts are sited along the canal path.
Members of staff are trained in First Aid.
Path is lit during the winter and evenings when light is low.

Water features in valley

Staff and Visitors

Metal grille over areas that lead underground to prevent visitors falling in.
Students must be supervised in these areas by teachers/party leaders.

Valley models

Visitors

Students to be supervised in these areas by teachers/party leaders.
Safety signs are in place prohibiting climbing on the models/structures.

MILL BUILDING
Power cuts

Staff and Visitors

Visitors are directed by staff to areas of the building with natural light or to the nearest exit.

Fire

Visitors

Strict fire policy and procedures in place.
The mill has fire alarms throughout.
Staff are trained in the evacuation procedure to direct to the nearest assembly point.
Regular fire drills and weekly fire alarm tests are carried out.

Visitor viewing area to papermaking

Staff and Visitors

Rails and fencing are provided to prevent visitors falling into the papermaking area.

Handmade paper demonstrations

Visitors

Visitors are supervised whilst participating.
Aprons and hand-washing facilities are provided.

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Bumping into mirrors

Visitors

Students must be supervised by teachers/party leaders and guides are provided to monitor the maze area.

Wet floors in Mill

Staff and Visitors

Spillages are cleared up immediately and a wet floor warning sign placed over the wet area.

INDOOR PLAY AREAS

Visitors

Students must be supervised at all times by teachers/party leaders.
Height restrictions are in place.

Falling on entering

Visitors

Safety mats on floor.

Falling against metal supports

Visitors

All supports are securely covered with padding. Ties etc for padding to be checked weekly by maintenance department, and recorded in log book.

Injury falling off slide

Visitors

Safety mats on floor.

Injury falling on bridge

Visitors

Bridge & both entrance & exit made from padded material.

Risk of children bumping each other

Visitors

All surfaces protected with padded material. Teachers/party leaders can see whole castle. Signs asking for shoes to be removed. Signs insisting all students are supervised at all times.

Infection through cuts & wounds

Visitors

Guide on paper vat will replace stuff and clean the machine before next use.

Castle becoming unsafe

Visitors

Every Monday morning the maintenance department checks the castle and records in the log book.