

Recommended BCA Guidelines for Technical Advisors

Who should be a Technical Advisor?

1. For Caves – a Cave Instructor Certificate (CIC) holder
2. For Mines – a CIC + Mines module holder or Local Cave and Mine Leadership Award (LCMLA) for the region - LCMLA Mines trainer/assessors (Level 1 objectives only)
3. A Trainer/Assessor for the LCMLA Scheme may be desirable if providers are requiring their staff to attain Awards or 'Certificates of Competence'.

Self Protection

- A. Set up a dated and date limited contract/formal agreement stating what you are offering. Only work within the remit of the agreement and your qualification and experience.
- B. Keep yourself aware of what the provider is doing – consider an annual visit to check operating systems, staff qualifications/experience, equipment, and venues being used. Make it clear if you are unhappy about anything the provider is doing.
- C. Always keep copies of conversations, phone calls, emails, letters etc. For a verbal conversation, precis as a letter or email and be sure the provider confirms their understanding.
- D. Get appropriate insurance and set a reasonable fee for the work done.

The Role of the Technical Advisor

- E. The role of the Technical Advisor needs to be appropriate to the provider's undertakings.
- F. What a Technical Advisor has to do depends on the experience and requirements of the organisation i.e. an established Outdoor Education Centre going underground for 20+ years with LCMLA staff may require less than a new venture with inexperienced staff.
- G. The responsibility for the activity *always* rests with the provider – make sure this is clear! Traditionally the role has been that of advisor – a Technical Advisor cannot be held responsible for advice not carried out.

Responsibilities

- H. Keep yourself up to date with current best practice, LCMLA and CIC schemes, equipment, venues, conservation and access arrangements as appropriate.
- I. Be prepared to answer occasional questions through the period of the contract/agreement.
- J. Give good advice – refer the question to someone with greater expertise if you cannot answer.
- K. Consider using the visit in B to give a good service – include staff training/workshops, induction to new venues or staff monitoring as appropriate.
- L. Provide links with LCMLA training and Assessment.
- M. Remember you have a 'duty of care' to deal with any unsafe practice that you see or become aware of.
- N. Offer links to Mine Inspections and Radon reports if appropriate.
- O. Be prepared to coordinate information regarding changing hazards and access between providers.

In-house qualification or 'Statements of Competence'

- P. Due to Health & Safety and mines legislation the leader is seen as in an 'at work' situation in both mines and caves if remunerated. The meeting at Bootle 1993 between the Mines Inspectorate and the then NCA stated that leaders should be LCMLA qualified. This has now been superseded by AALS (HSE) which has accepted the CIC and LCMLA Awards as the best way to show competence and also a sensible 'Statement of Competence' approach with conditions and time limits for lesser and limited undertakings.
- Q. Statements of Competence should be issued with the following guidelines in mind:
 1. The standard of any underground leadership approved will be that of the LCMLA.
 2. Site/s approved are listed on the Statement.
 3. Trained at the appropriate level.
 4. Personal underground experience beyond the proposed approval and also consideration as to whether the leader holds other similar outdoor activity qualifications e.g. ML, SPA.
 5. Assessment by an external or internal Technical Advisor.
 6. Level 2 leaders will ideally be level 1 assessed, level 2 trained and it is advised as a minimum hold the MIA.
 7. Statements of Competence should be dated and have a shelf life. They could either be considered as an interim agreement with assessment sought at the earliest opportunity or could be revalidated on receipt of updated training/assessment.