Rescue options

1 Dive out

Teach the group how to use scuba gear and decide when they are fit enough to swim and dive through the flooded tunnels. Most experts say this would be the riskiest.

Risks

- Some do not know how to swim and need lessons
- One spot requires diving for as far as 400m
- Cave is dark, cramped and flooded with fast-flowing, muddy water

• Even with two diving escorts, some may slip away from the guide rope, panic and endanger themselves and the rescuers

2 Drain the water

Pump and drain enough water from the cave so that the group can make its way to safety. More than 130 million litres of water – enough to fill 52 Olympic-sized swimming pools – has been pumped from the cave this week.

Risk

• Monsoon rains forecast in coming days

Orill an escape shaft

Find an alternative way into the cave by locating a natural shaft near the group's location. It would need to be widened to allow the boys and the coach to be extricated from above.

Risks

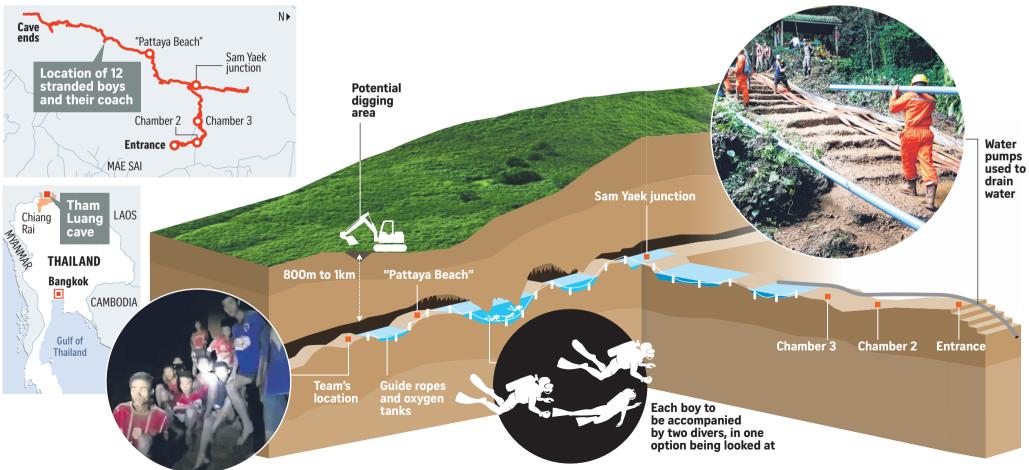
- Group is believed to be 800m to 1km below the surface
- Parts of the cave could collapse

4 Wait and see

The most straightforward option is to wait for water levels to dip enough for the boys to walk out. Officials say they have stored food, medicine and equipment to last up to four months at an underground base.

Risks

- It could take several months
- Air quality and oxygen level may deteriorate
- Cave may become completely flooded
- Psychological trauma of being trapped



NOTE: Graphic not drawn to scale.

Sources: REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, GUARDIAN, BANGKOK POST, THE NATION/ASIA NEWS NETWORK, DAILY MAIL PHOTOS: AFP, EPA SUNDAY TIMES GRAPHICS