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Standard Guide for Ice Staff Self-Rescue Technique[1]

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide describes the self-rescue technique on ice utilizing an ice staff.

1.2 This guide is one in a series of self-rescue techniques for the ice rescuer.

1.3 Individuals who will operate in the cold water or ice rescue setting need to be aware of the equipment and physical requirements necessary to be able to perform all identified objectives and necessary skills in the setting.

1.4 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Terminology

2.1 *Definitions:*

2.1.1 *drysuit, n*—a protective suit that encompasses the wearer, prohibiting water from entering; a drysuit provides no buoyancy or thermal protection without insulative undergarments.

2.1.2 *ice awl, n*—a device consisting of a sharp spike with a handle used for rescue on ice.

2.1.3 *ice staff, n*—a stick, pole, or rod with a sharp spike in one end used to traverse on ice or rescue on ice.

2.1.4 *immersion suit, n*—designed to provide cold water protection and buoyancy by one person in cold water emergencies.

2.1.4.1 *Discussion*—These devices should conform to standards set by the appropriate national regulatory authority, that is, the U.S. Coast Guard in the United States.

2.1.5 *personal flotation device (PFD), n*—a buoyant device suitable for use by one person in water emergencies.

2.1.5.1 *Discussion*—These devices should conform to standards set by the appropriate national regulatory authority, that is, the U.S. Coast Guard in the United States.

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This guide establishes a recommended procedure for utilizing an ice staff as a self-rescue technique on ice.

3.2 All persons who are identified as ice rescuers shall meet the requirements of this guide.

3.3 This guide will assist government agencies; state, local, or regional organizations; fire departments; rescue teams; and others who are responsible for establishing a minimum performance for personnel who respond to ice emergencies.

3.4 This guide is not intended to be used in isolation, but as a component guide acknowledging many skills and techniques needed to respond at a cold water and ice emergency.

3.5 An ice rescuer shall be wearing an immersion suit, drysuit with PFD, or equivalent cold water protection and buoyancy to perform these rescues.

3.6 An ice rescuer shall carry a set of ice awls along with the ice staff as a backup technique.

4. Procedure

4.1 The ice rescuer should grasp the ice staff firmly near the spiked end.

4.2 Extend the staff in a downward slanting position, tapping in a semicircle to test the ice.

4.3 Listen for a clear, hard resonating sound indicating good ice.

4.4 Move slowly onto the area of ice that has been tested.

4.5 Continue to traverse by sliding steps to lessen the impact of the footsteps while distributing body weight as evenly as possible.

4.6 When moving, continue listening for the clear, hard resonant sound; however, a dull sound or thud may indicate weaker ice.

4.7 The rescuer should use the spiked end of the staff to test those areas of ice by jabbing at the surface. If the ice breaks away or is deteriorative, select another path.

4.8 If the ice begins to break, lie down and roll to safety.

[1] This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.02 on Management and Operations.

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