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

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers the self-rescue technique on ice utilizing the ice awl.

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

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Terminology

2.1 *Definitions:*

2.1.1 *drysuit, n*—a protective suit that encompasses the wearer, prohibiting water from entering.

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

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

2.1.3.1 *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.

2.1.4 *personal flotation device, PFD, n*—a buoyant device suitable for use by one person in 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.

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This guide establishes a recommended procedure for utilizing ice awls 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.

4. Procedure

4.1 Upon initial immersion in cold water, the rescuer should cover the mouth and nose to prevent the aspiration of water.

4.2 The rescuer should move to the edge of the opening in the ice.

4.3 Grasp the ice awls placing one in each hand.

4.4 Reach forward onto the ice and strike downward driving the point of the ice awl into the ice.

4.5 Allow feet and legs to float up behind you to the surface, so that you are floating horizontally on the surface of the water.

4.6 While pulling yourself forward onto the ice utilizing the ice awls, keep your horizontal position and add a strong flutter kick.

4.7 Ice conditions may not support the rescuer. It may be necessary to continue alternately stabbing and continuously kicking to reach stronger ice.

4.8 Once in a supportive ice, the rescuer should not stand up.

4.9 Roll to safety in the direction of shore or safer ice.

5. Keywords

5.1 ice; ice awls; ice rescue; ice rescuer; water; water rescue; water rescuer

[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 Search and Rescue Management.

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