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Basic Swift Water Rescue Course Outline (BSWR)

I Introduction

- A. Introduce instructor
- B. Sign in: Name, address, phone number
- C. Release forms: Sign, check for accuracy and date
- D. Course completion cards. Distribute at end of course

II Course Objectives

- A. To teach and practice swift water rescue techniques with special attention given to simple and effective skills using basic equipment: Includes prevention, self rescue, swimming and wading techniques, rope handling skills, and approaches for dealing with broaches, pins and entrapments
- B. To practice skills on moving water
- C. To prepare the mind and body for safe, efficient, and effective rescue skills

III Assumption, Disclaimers, Prerequisites

- A. This course is geared toward river runners, guides and rescue personnel, familiar with the mechanics of moving water, rapids, and assorted pieces of equipment. Students are taught that river rescue, like river running, requires good judgment
- B. We do not attempt to cover every situation - each rescue scenario will be different. We are not teaching “hard and fast” rules. We are teaching basic, generally accepted, techniques that can be used in numerous situations. This course teaches ideas and guidelines that can be used, or combined, with other techniques depending on the situation in front of you
- C. Exercises will utilize techniques for protecting the rescuer and providing safety back up, however, you are ultimately responsible for your own safety. Don't put your or anyone else's safety at risk in a practice situation. If you do not feel comfortable with a scenario or technique in the course - then don't participate. Be careful
- D. Prerequisites:
 - 1. Eighteen years of age or older
 - 2. Personal health insurance coverage
 - 3. Basic swimming abilities
 - 4. Good physical condition

IV Equipment Requirements

- A. Full wet suit or dry suit
- B. Helmet
- C. Type III or V lifejacket/Personal Floatation Device (PFD)
- D. Appropriate foot wear – neoprene booties, wet shoe, lace sneaker with wool socks, etc
- E. Gloves - neoprene for cold water hand protection
- F. Throw rope
- G. Locking carabineers (2) minimum
- H. Knife
- I. Whistle
- J. Condition of equipment - good working condition

V Training Video

- A. Twenty eight minute river rescue video. To jump start our brains on the subject

VI Prevention and Self Rescue

- A. Prevention and Self Rescue (discussion and hand out)

VII Rescue Scene Protocol

- A. Incident sight command. In practice scenarios a leader will be appointed
- B. Communication
 - 1. Across the river
 - 2. On each side of the river
 - 3. With victim or victims in the river
- C. Paddle and hand signals
- D. ASSIST
 - A - Assess
 - S - Signal
 - S - Send - for help if necessary
 - I - Implement
 - S - Situation check - step back and make sure everything is covered
 - T - Transport - if necessary
- E. RETHROG
 - R - Reach Try to reach the victim
 - T - Throw Throw a rope or flotation device
 - R - Row Use a boat to row out to the victim
 - G - Go Refers to water based rescue; strong swimmer, rescue vest techniques

This mnemonic lists available water rescue options in order of increasing danger. Remember, the safety of the rescuer always comes first. You may take calculated risks, but don't add to the problem by getting in trouble yourself

- F. KIS (S) Keep it simple (simple). Try uncomplicated solutions before moving on to those that are more complex. Simple techniques are faster to set up, require fewer people, less gear and present fewer opportunities for mistakes, increasing the chances of success

VIII Knots (taught and practiced)

- A. The Family of Eights "8's"
 1. Figure "8" Stopper: to hold something in place on a rope
 2. Figure Eight Tracer: for tying a loop around an object such as a tree
 3. Figure "8" on a bight: creates a strong reliable loop at the end of a rope
- B. Double Fisherman's Knot - to join two ends of a rope together securely. For tying a Prussic loop
- C. Water Knot - used to join two ends of flat webbing. This is another tracer knot built upon a simple overhand knot
- D. Prussic Knot - The Prussic knot creates a movable connection point on a haul line

IX Throw Bags and Rope Handling Skills

- A. See outline

X Dealing with Entrapment (discussion and dry land)

- A. Head up vs. head down
- B. Getting muscle to the scene
- C. Support then extricate

XI Stabilization Line (dry land and water practice)

- A. Objective - to stabilize an entrapped conscious victim

XII Snag Line (dry land and water practice)

- A. Objective - to free an entrapped victim

XIII Weighted Bag (dry land and water practice)

- A. Objective - to get a snag line under a victim

XIV Criss-cross Cinch (dry land and water practice)

- A. Objective - to encircle and help free an entrapped victim and to hold victim once they're free

XV Swimming and Wading (water practice)

- A. Swimming - swiftwater entry, defensive swimming, aggressive swimming, getting into eddies, waves, holes and ledges, dealing with strainers
- B. Wading - single person with paddle, double crossing, circle crossing, pyramid crossing

XVI Load Distributing Anchors/Self Equalizing

- A. Use 1 carabineer, 1 rope, 3 points on raft, kayak, or canoe
- B. Why use it - to distribute force to more than one point

XVII 3 to 1 Z-drag (dry land)

- A. Anchors on shore
- B. Consider direction of pull
- C. Brake system
- D. Weighted anchor on haul line for safety

XVIII Conclusion! Discussion, evaluations and course completion card distribution

Advanced Swift Water Rescue Course Outline (ASWR)

Same as BSWR agenda above, with the second day for advanced skills development in the following:

I. Advanced rope and line techniques

- A. Lines across the river
- B. Ferrying a line
- C. The Vee and Vector pull
- D. Line assisted wading
- E. Zip lines
- F. Practical scenarios

II. Rescue PFD's

- A. Overview of RPFDF's
- B. How the harness works
- C. Causes of harness jamb
- D. Makes and models

- E. Types of tethers
- F. RPFDF skills
 1. Belaying; shore-based personnel
 2. Self belay
 3. Belaying swimmers
 4. Use as a towing device
 5. Tired swimmer rescue
 6. Straight and Vee lowers

- G. Practical scenarios

III. Releasing Pins

- A. Boat pinning mechanics
- B. Strong arm releases
- C. The Vector pull
- D. Mechanical Advantage - Z-drags
 1. Understanding the mechanism
 2. Setting anchor points
 3. Safety considerations
- E. Practical scenarios

IV. Dealing with entrapment

- A. Causes of entrapment
- B. Canoe and kayak outfitting
- C. Heads up vs. heads down situations
- D. Practical scenarios

V. Closing Discussion

- A. Evaluations and course completion card distribution
- B. Recommended resources
 1. Whitewater Rescue Manual by Walbridge & Sundmacher
 2. River Rescue by Bechdel & Ray