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Northborough Fire Department in Service Training

Lesson 37 – Surface Ice Rescue

Objective

Review hypothermia protocols/treatments, surface ice rescue techniques and equipment, and the characteristics of ice.

Equipment needed

Massachusetts Statewide Protocols 2.8, Massachusetts Firefighting Academy guidelines for hypothermia, ice rescue suits, ice rescue equipment.

Important points to discuss

Ice Rescue operations are extremely challenging to firefighters; discuss why. There are many documented cases in where responders to ice rescues become victims themselves; discuss why this is and what we should do to ensure firefighter safety. Discuss the complications of hypothermic patients. How do we treat these patients? Why is it important to handle hypothermic patients with great care? Discuss appropriate PPE selection for rescue operations.

Operation

Review types of ice, Massachusetts Statewide Protocols 2.8 and discuss treatment procedures. Review Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Surface Ice Rescue section on Hypothermia.

Review:

Types of Ice

- Frazil Ice - The first type of ice to form. It is composed of disk-shaped crystals suspended in the water. These crystals form an oily film which floats to the surface. As the temperature drops, the films group together to form a solid sheet.
- Clear Ice - Is new ice formed by a long, hard freeze. It can be blue, green, or black. It is usually the strongest ice
- Snow Ice - Fragile ice that is cloudy or milky looking. It is formed from refreezing melted snow.
- Shore Ice - An unbroken sheet that is attached to the shore of a lake, pond or river.
- Drift Ice - Ice that is floating free in a lake or pond. Any lake or pond ice that is not attached to shore.