

Swiftwater Rescue Classroom Outline

Waiver explanations

Request information on health problems

“Challenge by Choice” - Students will decide whether to participate in each exercise. Each exercise will be EXPLAINED, then DEMONSTRATED. If you are still unsure, then watch other students PARTICIPATE. If you're still unsure, then don't get involved with the exercise!

WE DO NOT TEACH first aid or vertical rescue skills.

We can recommend specialized courses for both.

1. Rescue Principles

a) Group Management: Keeping everyone together

Duties of the lead and sweep boater

Duties of the individual paddler

River etiquette

b) Deciding if you need to get involved

Is someone in trouble?

Can I help without unnecessary risk?

Am I interfering with another group's efforts?

c) Keep rescues as simple as possible (KIS)

d) Minimizing your risk: the limits of RETHROG (Reach, Throw, Row, Go)

e) Understand the effects of STRESS and PRESSURE

a) People tend to freeze up when they're in grave danger; preplanning, knowledge & training helps them react with

confidence.

b) Stress tends to narrow a rescuer's sphere of awareness;

Consciously widen your focus beyond your immediate concerns

c) Adrenaline may increase a rescuer's speed to failure point

SLOW DOWN. You'll still be working faster than usual.

d) Move very deliberately on shore – watch your feet when you're on the move

e) Strategies for making fast rescues

a) Self-Rescues are always the fastest

b) Fast assists are routine for whitewater paddlers

c) Getting outside help can be very time consuming

d) Evacuate by river whenever possible – keep people moving!

e) The one big exception to the focus on speed: Spinal Injuries

Is there a MECHANISM? Then check for SYMPTOMS!

2. Rescue Organization

a) Leader Directed vs. Self Directed Rescue Response

a) Private boaters vs. outfitters vs. emergency responders

b) Training – Gear – Organization - Mobilization

it
a risk of life

b) Site Setup and management
a) Most rescues require you to make physical contact with pinned boats or victims

b) Provide backup on the nearest shore or rock
c) Set upstream lookout and downstream backup
d) Someone goes to the opposite shore or side if possible
e) Use River Signals

f) The Incident Command System

a) Protocols for interactions between units
b) Managing Bystanders
c) The role of helicopters in river rescue
g) Liability and the Standard of Care

3. Personal Gear

a) PFD, Helmet, Cold Water Protection
b) Knife and saw
c) Carabiners: Standard, Locking, and Auto-lock
d) Whistles
e) Webbing loop and/or Flip line

4. Throw Bags– Types & Specifications

a) Rope Materials & Construction
b) Static vs. dynamic rope
c) Breaking Strengths
d) Throw bag design and lengths
e) Webbing and Prussiks

5. Throw bag use in current

a) Stance & Throwing: Underhand, overhand, & sidearm
Throw bag use in rafts (guide training only)
b) Positioning to catch & pendulum a swimmer
c) Catching the line
d) Individual and Buddy Belays
e) Vectoring the line
f) Team throw
g) Re-stuffing and carrying a throw bag

6) Managing rope:

a) coils & spaghetti piles
b) Staying out of the loop in and out of the water
c) Pulling on the rope: hauling team setup & the fireman's grip

6. Swimming- the basis for self-rescue

a) Defensive and aggressive
b) Swiftwater entries
c) Crossing eddylines
d) Swimming into strainers

- e) *Swimming over pourovers and ledges*
- 7. *Wading*
 - a) *Basic Principle – maintaining your balance*
 - b) *Individual – with paddle*
 - c) *Paired, Circle, Line, and Wedge*
- 8. *Using Rescue Life Vests*
 - a) *Allows you to belay someone in or around swift water*
CAUTION: Not for Vertical Rescue!
 - b) *Makes and Models; Types of tethers*
 - c) *How the swiftwater harness works; what causes the harness to jam*
 - d) *Uses: Belaying shore-based personnel*
Self-belay
Belaying Swimmers
As a boat towing device
Tired Swimmer Rescue
Straight and Vee Lowers
- 9. *Getting Lines Across a River*
 - a) *Ferrying a line*
 - b) *Minimizing water contact*
 - c) *Putting a bend in the rope*
 - d) *Line-supported wading*
 - e) *Zip Lines*
- 10. *Knots*
 - a) *Figure 8 family (straight, on a bight, follow-through, directional)*
 - b) *Fisherman's Knot, Water Knot, bowline*
- 11. *Boat Unpinning*
 - a) *Dynamics of pinning*
Types of pins: Center, end to end, pinch, and vertical pins
Unpinning Open Canoes
Unpinning Inflatables
 - b) *Developing an unpinning strategy*
 - c) *Muscle Power Releases*
 - d) *Mechanical Systems*
Anchors: Single & Multi-point
The Z-Drag & Pig Rig
Safety: planning for kick-back
- 12. *Entrapment Rescues*
 - a) *Causes of entrapment*
Canoe & kayak outfitting
 - b) *Heads up vs. Heads Down situations*
 - c) *Entrapment Rescue*
 - d) *Get muscle to the scene; support, then extricate*
 - e) *Stabilization and snag lines*
 - f) *Foot entrapment Rescues*
- 13. *Loose Boat Rescues*
 - a) *Chase people first, gear second*

b) *When manpower permits, split up the load:
one person helps the swimmer, another the boat, and the third gets he
paddle.*

c) *Encourage Self Rescue*

d) *Swimmers should abandon gear in difficult rapids*

e) *The "Hand of God" rescue to right a flipped kayak with a paddler inside*

14. *This is a good beginning. New techniques constantly evolve so keep on learning!*

Recommended Resources:

Whitewater Rescue Manual by Walbridge & Sundmacher

River Rescue by Bechdel & Ray

Swiftwater Rescue by Slim Ray

Whitewater Self Defense (Video) by Ford, Walbridge, & DeCuir

River Safety Reports by Walbridge