

# BASIC WATER SAFETY TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

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# Basic Water Safety Training Requirements for Employees and Volunteers

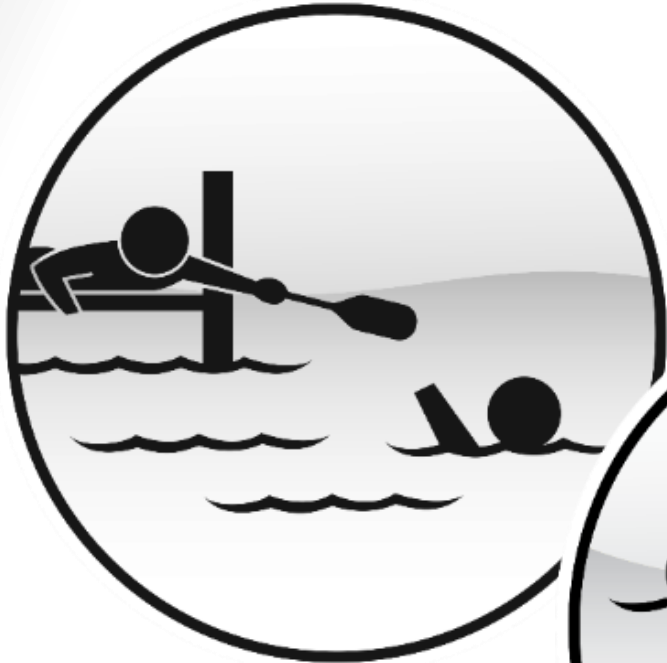
## **EM 385-1-1 Safety and Occupational Health Requirements “USACE Safety Manual”, 15 March 2024, Chapter 1**

Employees and volunteers that work around water must be provided basic water safety training to include the following:

- The “Reach, Throw, Row, Don’t Go” method.
- Hazards associated with working around water (for example, temperature, depth, current).
- Hands-on training on how to use rescue equipment (for example, throw rings and bags) and personal protective equipment (PPE) (for example, personal flotation devices(PFD)) properly. (1-3.a.(7))



# PROPER WATER RESCUE METHOD



**REACH**



**THROW**



**ROW**



**DON'T GO in the  
water, GO FOR HELP**



# PROPER WATER RESCUE METHOD



## REACH

If the person is close,  
reach out with a long object.



# PROPER WATER RESCUE METHOD



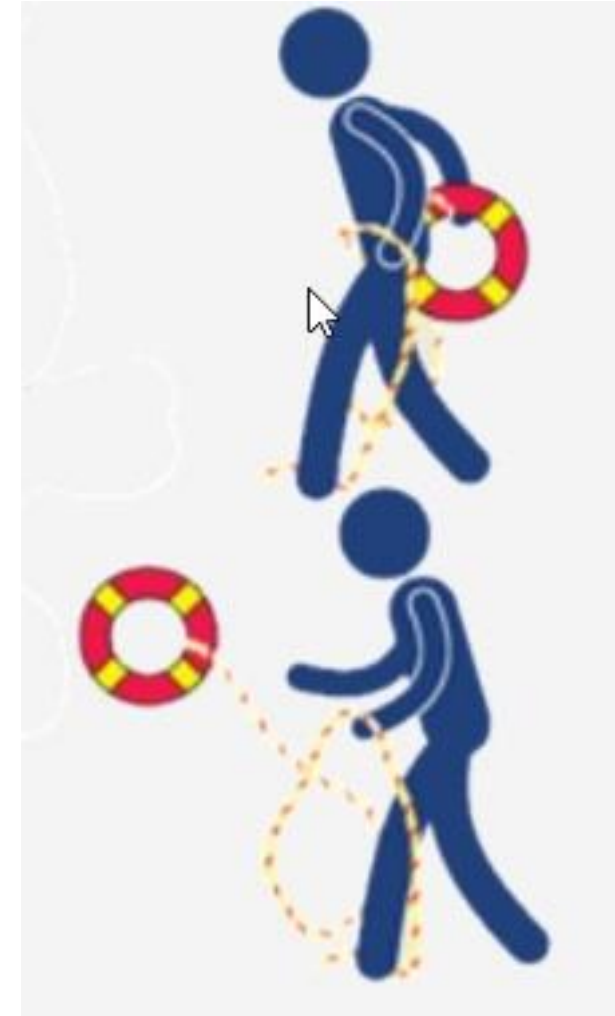
## THROW

If you can't reach the person, throw them anything that floats.



# HOW TO THROW A LIFE RING

1. Before throwing life ring drop the end of the rope and stand on it.
2. Hold life ring in your dominant hand and grasp rope with your other hand.
3. Communicate with the person by yelling “rope, rope, rope” or “throw, throw, throw”.
4. In an underhand motion throw life ring near the person and pull it towards them.
5. After they have ahold of life ring pull them slowly towards you using a hand over hand method.





# PROPER WATER RESCUE METHOD



**ROW**

If there is nothing to throw, row a boat to the person in trouble.





# PROPER WATER RESCUE METHOD



**DON'T GO in the  
water, GO FOR HELP**

Never place yourself  
in danger by going in  
for the person.  
Instead, go for help!



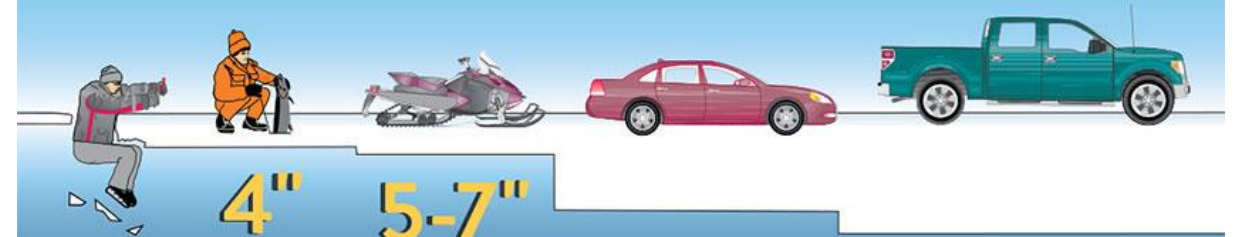


# HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH WORKING AROUND WATER: Cold Water and Ice

## COLD WATER KILLS

**1 minute - Cold Shock**  
**10 minutes - Incapacitation**  
**1 hour - Hypothermia**

## Ice is Never 100% Safe!



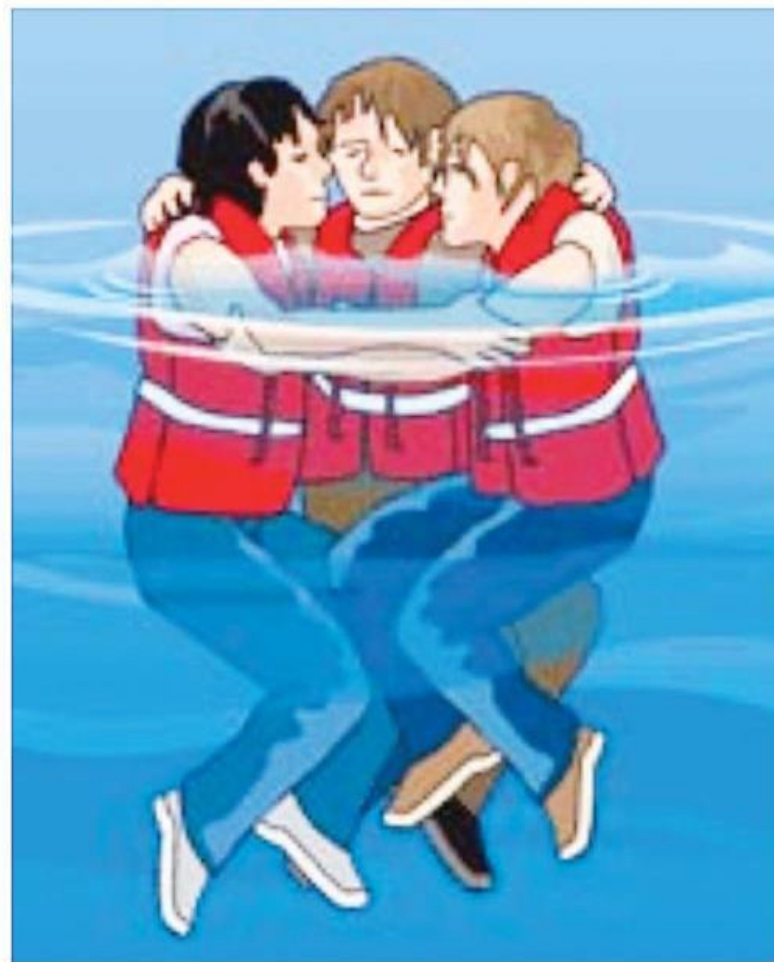
Minimum Ice Thickness Guidelines  
for New Clear Ice Only



# HELP AND HUDDLE POSITIONS



*H.E.L.P. Position*  
Heat Escape Lessening Position



HUDDLE



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU FALL THROUGH THE ICE





## STAY CALM

The shock of plunging into cold water more than likely will cause you to gasp and possibly hyperventilate. Resist this if you can – the shock will wear off in 1-3 minutes and you have 15-45 minutes to escape before you lose consciousness.







## ORIENT YOURSELF

Get back to where you fell through. This ice held you before. Don't try to pull yourself straight up; become horizontal by kicking your feet while using your elbows or sharp objects such as ice picks for traction.





## LIE FLAT

Once out, roll away to prevent further cracking in the ice. Get to a warm, dry place and seek medical attention.





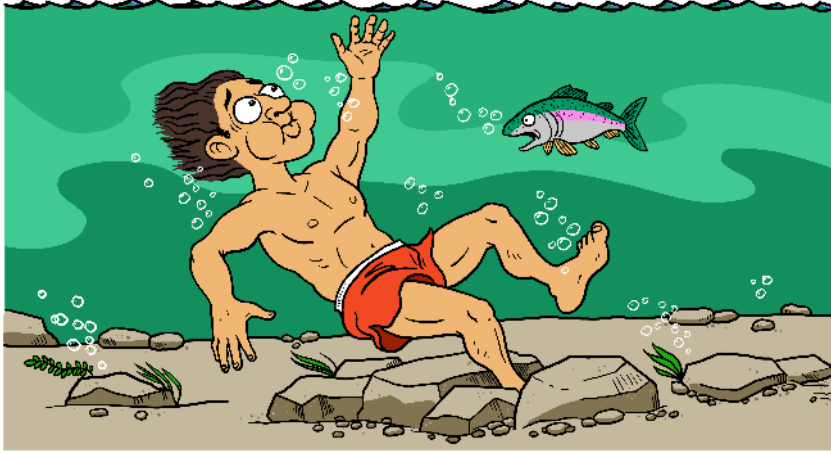
## SAVING SOMEONE

If someone falls in, call 911. Then try coaching them through the self-rescue process. It is critical to keep yourself low and on solid ground. Then you may be able to extend a looped rope, ladder, or branch to help pull them out or throw them something that floats.





# HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH WORKING AROUND WATER: Current

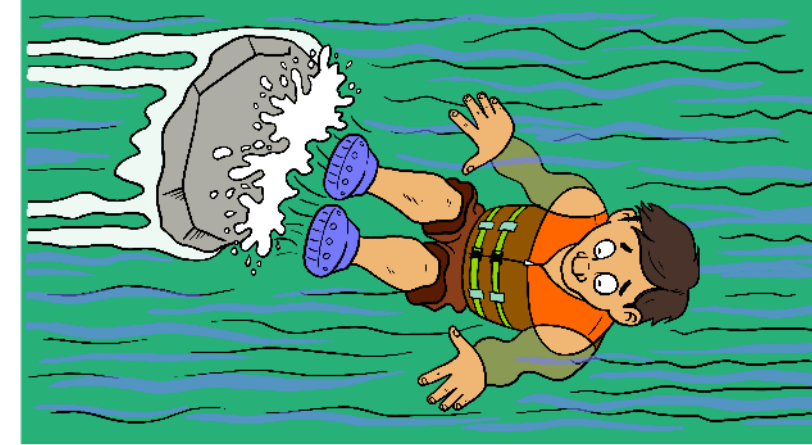


**Swift Currents Can Trap You.**



**Fast Moving Water Is Dangerous.**

Water flowing at 8 mph is equal to 300 pounds of constant force.



**If You Fall In Keep Your Feet Up And Facing Downstream.**

Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current's pull, then swim diagonally back towards the beach. Avoid swimming directly against the current.





# PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

**Off-Shore Life Jacket: Type I**



**Throwable Devices: Type IV**



**Near-Shore Buoyancy Vest: Type II**



**Special-Use Devices: Type V**



**Flotation Aids: Type III**





# PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES: New Label

## ADULT UNIVERSAL

User Weight: >40 kg (>88 lbs)  
Chest Size: 76-132 cm (30-52 in.)



- Drowning hazard if not worn.
- Must be fastened and properly adjusted to float the wearer.

Choose and wear the device which fits you and your activity, visit  
[www.wearitlifejacket.org](http://www.wearitlifejacket.org).  
Read and keep the owner's manual and tags for info on wear and care

Company Name  
Company Address  
Company website if available  
Made in XXXXX

USCG Approved 160.064/XXXX/X  
TC Approved XXXXXXX-X  
ANSI/CAN/UL 12402-5

Model: XXXX Style: XXXX  
Lot No. XXXX

Approval conditions state that this device must be worn to be counted as equipment required by vessels meeting Transport Canada or USCG regulations.

Lab  
Certification  
Mark

Certifying Lab  
Identification  
and address

Use:  
Fasten all closures and adjust for a snug fit.  
Inspection:  
Inspect your life vest before each outing. Do not use if your life vest shows signs of weathering, damage, or rot.  
Care and Storage:  
Dry thoroughly after each outing.  
Store in a dry, cool place out of direct sunlight.



## Performance

- Lower-level number generally offers greater mobility, comfort, and style with good flotation for most people.
- Higher-level number generally offers greater flotation, turning, and stability in the water.



No Turn



Turns Most



# PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES: Inflatable Life Jackets

## EM 385-1-1 Safety and Occupational Health Requirements “USACE Safety Manual”, 15 March 2024, Chapter 5

Automatic-Inflatable Personal Flotation Device (PFDs) Users. Users of automatic-inflatable PFDs must be trained in the use, including restrictions, maintenance, care, cleaning, storage, inspection, and post-deployment procedures according to the manufacturer's instructions before use. Wearer must be a confident swimmer (that is, able to tread water and swim for 100'). (5-3.d)





## **PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES: Inflatable Life Jackets**

In-water testing is performed prior to use for all first-time users so that wearers become familiar with the feel and performance of the PFD. (5-8.g.(2)(b))

PFDs must be inspected, maintained, stowed, and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. PFDs used in heavy construction or maintenance activities, or where hot work (for example, welding, brazing, cutting, soldering) is performed, must be designed, tested, and certified by the manufacturers for this type of work. An AHA must be developed for the intended activity and must identify the most appropriate PFD for the hazard(s) identified. (5-8.g.(2)(c))



## **PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES: Inflatable Life Jackets**

Each auto-inflatable PFD must have at least 31 in<sup>2</sup> (200 cm<sup>2</sup>) of retroreflective material attached to its front side and at least 31 in<sup>2</sup> (200 cm<sup>2</sup>) on its bladder that is visible when deployed (with the exception of Work Vests, which are allowed to have a total of 31 in<sup>2</sup> (200 cm<sup>2</sup>) front and back, combined).

(5-8.g(3)(b))

Note: The standard commercial auto-inflatable PFD often does not meet these requirements.



# PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES: Inflatable Life Jackets



MD3183 T2

Mustang Survival Inflatable Life Jackets with HIT (Hydrostatic Inflator Technology)



MD3183 T3

Features 64 square inches of SOLAS reflective tape on outer shell and back flap. Back flap can be custom screened at additional.



MD3188 02



SOLAS reflective tape on inner bladder





# PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES: Inflatable Life Jackets

It is critical that you inspect, maintain, and know how to manually inflate your inflatable life jacket.

Check the life jacket owner's manual and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.





# Choosing and Wearing a Life Jacket Properly

- 1. Check The Label**
- 2. Check For Damage**
- 3. Fasten Up**
- 4. Check For Proper Fit**

