



Standard Guide for Throwing a Water Rescue Throwbag¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers the recommended procedures for throwing a water rescue throwbag.

1.2 This guide is one in a series of water rescue techniques for the water 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 *water rescue throwbag, n*—a rescue device comprised of a storage bag having a flotation element and a length of line attached.

2.1.1 *Discussion*—The line is randomly stuffed into the bag, which will allow the line to feed out freely when the bag is thrown. The line is held in one hand, while the bag is thrown with the other.

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This guide establishes a recommended procedure for a throwing rescue to ensure the safety of all water rescuers who may be involved in rescue techniques at a water rescue emergency.

3.2 This water rescue technique can be utilized from land, boat, or any stable platform.

3.3 All persons who are identified as water rescuers shall meet the requirements of this guide.

3.4 This guide is intended to assist government agencies, state, local, and regional organizations; fire departments; rescue teams and others who are responsible for establishing a minimum performance for personnel who respond to water emergencies.

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 Management and Operations.

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3.5 The procedure outlined in the document may vary with the number and type of victims, and water conditions.

4. Procedure

4.1 The water rescuer shall make visual contact with the victim. Upon making visual contact, the rescuer shall ready the rope to throw and notify the victim by yelling, “rope.”

4.1.1 To make the rope ready from the bag, the rescuer can remove a portion equal to two arms’ length from the bag and firmly grasp the free end of the rope above the knot. Do not place hand or fingers through the rope loop created by the knot in the end of the rope. Do not attach the rope to anything including the rescuer.

4.2 Before releasing the bag of rope in the direction of the victim, the rescuer may swing the bag underhand, overhand, or in a side-arm fashion to establish clearance necessary for throwing the rope.

4.3 The rope bag should be thrown at or slightly beyond the victim, thereby placing the rope within arm’s reach.

4.4 The rescuer shall maintain a firm grasp on one end of the rope, preparing to belay if necessary, and await victim’s contact.

4.5 As the victim grabs hold of the line, the rescuer shall direct the victim to roll into a supine position and place the rope over a shoulder and to hold firmly.


4.6 The rescuer shall pull the victim slowly or allow the victim to pendulum to safety.

4.7 Multiple throws may be handled by pulling the rope in quickly, letting it collect between the feet without tangling. Pick up the bag with water in it. The water adds weight which enables the bag to be thrown again without restuffing the rope into the bag.

4.8 A second option for multiple throws is the coiled rope toss.

5. Keywords

5.1 throwbag; water rescue; water rescue throwbags

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