

Foot Entrapment

Considerations

- Is the victim's head above the water (head up) or below the water (head down)? A head up victim will usually last longer than a head down victim.
- If head down, does the victim appear to have an air pocket? An air pocket may not be visible to rescuers, but can extend the window of opportunity to rescue a live victim for some time, especially in warmer water.
- How long has the victim been in this situation?
- Is the victim still struggling?
- How far is the victim from shore?
- How wide is the stream?
- Is the victim creating a noticeable eddy?
- How cold is the water? Moving water passing by your stationary victim can cause hypothermia very quickly, much faster than when a victim is moving with the current. However, very cold water sometimes improves the possibility of resuscitating the victim up to an hour or more after drowning.
- What resources are available (people, equipment)?

Techniques

- **Eddy Push:**
 - Swim to the victim.
 - Catch the eddy behind the victim.
 - Determine if it is safe to stand in this eddy. If so, lift the victim so his/her head is out of the water (if head down). This will buy time until the victim can be freed. If possible, push the victim back upstream to free the foot. **Beware:** Position your feet so you can escape easily when the victim is free and the eddy is gone.
 - Use your downstream backup to get the victim to shore.
 - Assess and treat the patient. ABCs. Suspect injuries to the lower extremities.
 - **Advantages:** fast, simple, requires fewer resources, may be accomplished by one person, may keep the victims head up while the V-method is set up
 - **Disadvantages:** higher risk (particularly of foot entrapment for the rescuer), less likely than the V-method to actually get the victim out

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- **V-Method**
 - Start upstream from the victim.
 - Using a rescue PFD with a quick release tether, connect one rope from each bank to the rescuer's tether.
 - Have shore based rescuers lower the go rescuer to the victim (moving the shore based rescuers upstream reduces the angle between the ropes and, therefore, reduces the force they have to hold).
 - The go rescuer grabs the victim, preferably by the PFD.
 - The shore based rescuers pull the go rescuer and the victim upstream until the victim is free.
 - Slack one rope so the go rescuer and victim will swing to the other bank.
 - Assess and treat the patient. ABCs. Suspect injuries to the lower extremities.
 - **Advantages:** low tech, lower risk
 - **Disadvantages:** takes longer to set up, requires a line crossing, requires a rescuer on each bank, prone to floating debris snagging on the lines

- **Motor-craft Pull**
 - Using a rescue PFD with a quick release tether, connect a go rescuer to a motorized craft using an appropriate length of rope. Ideally, this rope can be quickly released from *either* end.
 - Use the motor-craft to lower the go rescuer to the victim.
 - The go rescuer grabs the victim, preferably by the PFD.
 - Slowly power upstream to free the victim.
 - Get the victim to shore.
 - Assess and treat the patient. ABCs. Suspect injuries to the lower extremities.
 - **Advantages:** useful on wide rivers without useable eddies/dry boulders to work from, looks good on TV
 - **Disadvantages:** requires more equipment, requires considerable skill on the part of the motor-craft operator, more can go wrong