



Winter Weather Fire Fighter Safety

Winter weather is definitely here and it does get cold in Texas. The good thing is that it doesn't stay long, but the bad news is that when we *do* get it it's a big deal: Texans aren't always ready for ice, snow or several days of very cold temperatures.

Cold weather events can be handled with proper planning and preparation prior to the event. Improvisation and cooperation are crucial when necessary! Some tips for cold weather planning are:

- Be prepared. Carry extra pairs of dry gloves and socks on the apparatus
- Dress in layers. Keep a sweatshirt in your locker to wear during cold weather.
- Hydration is important in cold weather. Encourage hydration and monitor the amounts of fluids crews are taking in.

The most important thing to do is slow down! Training and fire ground operations planning and execution should include ways to reduce and eliminate accidents. Even a small amount of ice and snow on the roadways can create big changes in how an apparatus operates—and watch out for all the civilian vehicles!

Between Dec. 1, 2013 and Dec.17, 2013, 24 slip or fall injuries were reported to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection as a result of icy conditions.

[TCFP Injury Blog](#)

Slowing down may be the best thing to do to get to the incident safely. This doesn't apply only to driving; it's easy to slip and fall with ice and snow on the ground. Imagine working a car wreck with entrapment and handling heavy tools while trying to keep your feet—take time to make the area as safe as possible.

If you or your department would like some training videos on winter fire fighting, check out these audiovisual items available in our library:

[WINTER FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS](#)

AV08-2227 Date Acquired: 3/7/2008 Length: 60:00 Format: DVD Author: FETN

This American Heat program covers how to prepare for and endure winter firefighting conditions. The first segment visits the Toronto Fire Department where temperatures can get as low as 30 below zero. The second segment visits the fire department of International Falls, Minnesota where temperatures may stay at 20-30 below zero for 2 to 3 weeks at a time. The last segment goes back to Toronto for a tour of their fire boat, which can break ice up to 2 feet in depth. A list of 17 special concerns in winter firefighting is presented with an emphasis on how important rehabilitation is during winter weather conditions. The importance of mutual aid and working with other city departments is also stressed. Some of the topics covered are organizational preparedness, facilities, apparatus, and personnel, the public, and anticipated problems. A study guide accompanies the DVD. (c.1999; DVD format 2008)

[FIRE SERVICE RESCUE: WATER AND ICE RESCUE](#)

AV07-2127 Date Acquired: 6/28/2007 Length: 15:00 Format: DVD Author: ACTION TRAINING

This program is Part 7 in the 10 part series Fire Service Rescue. Water, ice and surf create some of the most dangerous conditions rescue personnel can face. Knowing the tactics and techniques for rescues of this type can save lives and limit hazards to fellow rescuers. Topics covered are: water and ice rescue size up, performing water and swift water rescues, ice rescue procedures, and surf rescue. A lesson plan and PowerPoint CD are available with this 10 part rescue series upon request for training officers and instructors. (2004)

[ICE STORM](#)

AV09-2376 Date Acquired: 12/3/2009 Length: 30:00 Format: DVD Author: AMERICAN HEAT via FETN

On January 12-14, 2007, Springfield, Missouri, was the center of an ice storm that left 1.5 inches of ice covering 29 counties and over 200,000 people without power for days and even weeks. That followed on the heels of a similar event but of a lesser nature only 6 weeks prior. Most recently, large areas of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri suffered another severe ice storm that left one-third of all Oklahoma residents without power and led to the deaths of over 22 people. This course reviews the conditions that lead to major ice storms and how they impact emergency services. It also focuses on pre-incident preparation and operational considerations for incident mitigation. The lessons learned will provide basic principles that organizations can use to prepare for, and respond to, a wide range of natural disasters. (rel. 11/09, c2009)

[SPECIAL TEAMS: INTRODUCTION TO ICE RESCUE](#)

AV10-2386 Date Acquired: 2/10/2010 Length: 30:00 Format: DVD Author: FETN

Ice rescue incidents pose special hazards to the responding personnel. If fire personnel are not aware of the potential hazards, they could easily become victims themselves. Understanding the limits and capabilities of responding personnel can result in a successful ice rescue and ensure that the rescuers are not harmed. Part one of a two-part series, this course discusses incident planning, tactical operations, and safety concerns for rescue personnel at an ice-involved incident. Types of ice formations and the characteristics and potential hazards of ice are described. In addition, this course provides an overview of the signs and symptoms of hypothermia and its treatment. (rel. 8/06, c2009)

[SPECIAL TEAMS: INTRODUCTION TO ICE RESCUE, PART 1](#)

AV07-2184 Date Acquired: 8/30/2007 Length: 30:00 Format: DVD Author: FETN

Ice rescue incidents pose special hazards to the responding personnel. If fire personnel are not aware of the potential hazards, they could easily become victims themselves. Part 1 of this program will describe incident planning that should occur before responding to an ice rescue; list and define ice formations, characteristics, and hazards; discuss personal safety concerns; describe the tactical options available to first responders; list and identify equipment available to first responders; and describe signs and symptoms of hypothermia and appropriate treatment. (2006)

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[Winter planning](#)

