

TRAINING BULLETIN

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TRAINING BULLETIN NO. 52

EXTENDING LIFELINES



INTRODUCTION

Recent incidents have occurred where the standard lifeline was not long enough to reach an objective. In these cases it became necessary for personnel to improvise various methods of extending lifelines.

A practical procedure to extend two lifelines has been developed. Two lifelines are joined together at the eyes by a carabiner. The top lifeline is connected to a fixed point utilizing the same belay rigging as is used with the litter basket and aerial ladder. The rescuer attaches to the bottom lifeline using the standard rappelling hookup with the exception that the rope bag is attached to the rappelling harness.

This configuration of equipment allows the rescuer to move to the objective using a combination of belay and rappel maneuvers as dictated by the needs of the incident. It has the advantage of working directly out of the rope bag thereby reducing the chance of fouling the line in rugged terrain.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

1. Two complete Lifelines (lines, carabiners, harnesses, figure eights, etc.)
2. Gloves
3. Helmets
4. Goggles
5. Turnout Coat or Brush Jacket

PROCEDURE TO EXTEND LIFELINE

1. Remove the rappelling harnesses, figure eights, carabiners, and cables from the two bags.



Figure 1

2. Join the two lifelines together at the eyes with a carabiner (Figure 1).

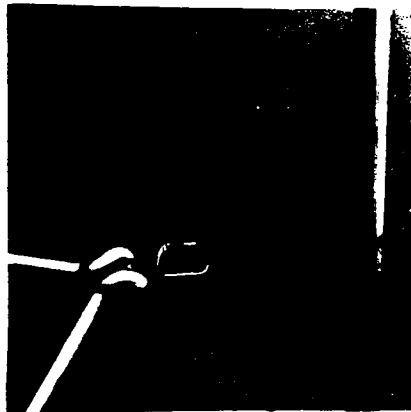


Figure 2

3. Locate a fixed object (rock, tree, rig, etc.). Attach a cable to the fixed object. Attach a figure eight to the cable as you would when securing the lifeline to the base of the aerial ladder in a litter basket operation. One lifeline will be attached to the figure eight (Figure 2). This will become the belay line.



Figure 3

4. One member must be assigned to attend the belay line (Figure 3). This member will belay the rescuer as needed. The member must have constant communications with the rescuer (radio, hand signals, voice, etc.).

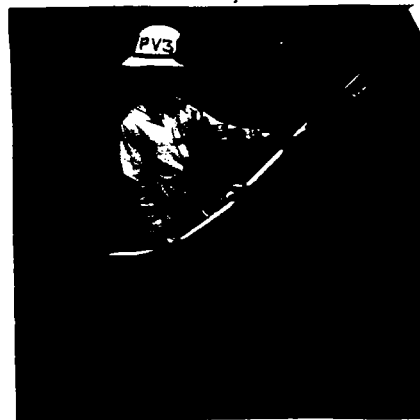


Figure 4

5. The rescuer hooks into the other lifeline using the standard rappelling hookup (Figure 4).



Figure 5

6. The rope bag is attached to the rescue harness using a carabiner (Figure 5). If the situation warrants, the rescuer should carry a radio for communications.
7. The belay member gives slack to allow the rescuer to move into position for rappel.
8. Once in position, the rescuer approaches the objective using a combination of belay and rappel maneuvers as dictated by the type of terrain or circumstances.

NOTE: In rugged terrain it may be beneficial to belay the rescuer into position from which the rappel could be made to avoid unnecessary chafing of the lifeline.

On a building or other sheer surface the rescuer could rappel to a staging position, lock off, and be belayed into the final position thus allowing a hands free approach to the victim.

As with all lifeline operations, these methods must be practiced by all members in order to provide smooth implementation.