

Bankside Trainer Notes

General Notes

To undertake this training participants must be happy to swim in cold moving water wearing a buoyancy aid and drysuit. Participants must understand that this training has a strong inherent risk of bruising due to contact with rocks in moving water.

This is not a technicians course and you must always be aware of the level we are training at and not train above the level.

These notes are intended to support and to be used in conjunction with the Bank Team Training Syllabus.

Moving water training is inherently dangerous, if you need further support regarding venues or are in any doubts please contact a qualified instructor.

The minimum level of experience to run this training is the Rescue 3 technician award or equivalent, ideally the instructor would have the advanced or instructor award.

Drysuits, white water helmets, buoyancy aids, throwlines and boots are required for all participants undergoing this training. It is important that as trainers we model best practice with suitable and highly visible equipment

If required, equipment can be hired from Howard Crook(Kendal)
howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk

I advise you document your training: who, when and what was covered.

The training correlates with the national flood rescue framework at level 2 (bankside support) and is a recognised syllabus all aspects must be covered if you are to declare your team members trained to this level.

Timing, this is a 9-5 programme, participants will not become experts in all areas, on-going training is essential. As a trainer do not try to ensure participants are 'perfect' in each element before moving on, or you will run out of time.

I suggest you take lunches to your training site to save time.

Before your session it is advised that you carry out awareness level training using video; Having the Knowledge (trainer notes for this session from Howard Crook)

If your training session is running slow you may end up delivering the search element in the dark, which is perfectly acceptable.

Venues and Vehicles

Ideally close to a road so you don't lose time walking. Good roadside access also allows you to have immediate access to O2 carried in MR vehicles in the event of a nasty swim. Many M.R. vehicles carry bolt croppers which are good to have access to in the event of entrapment

Some venues commonly used for swiftwater rescue have very high inherent risks associated with them, for example skelwith Force on the Brathay, do not assume a venue is safe for use because it has previously been used.

A suitable stretch of grade 2 water is required for this training

Venues change dramatically with water levels, a venue deemed safe at low level may develop dangerous features at higher levels.

Trainer must check out the venue at the conditions that expect to train in and have swum the site before training commences. Always dynamically risk assess every time. Be particularly aware of trees which often get washed into a training venue around and can be very difficult to spot.

Always swim the site before you put candidates into the water, have a upper level and stick to it.

Risk assess your venues at extreme low water, I suggest you record this via video.

Ideally the venue would end in a calm pool or shallows.

Some other key hazards:

Participants being swept downstream

Strainer hazards, particularly trees and wire

Over power lines (danger for throwline practice)

Cold

Unstable river banks including overhanging rock

Equipment to have on site:

First aid kit

Comms – phone/radio

Hot drink/spare clothes

Sling, 3 karabiners, 2 prussiks, tin snips, small pruning saw, torches, glowsticks, laminated trainer notes and syllabus, long canyon line.

Trainer will require a swiftwater style rescue vest with, knife, whistle, karabiner and sling.

Kisu

On arrival at site:

Check the site for hazards and indicate specific hazards to the group. Walk the course and identify key water features to the group including:

- Stoppers
- Eddy's
- Downstream vees
- Laminar flow
- Turbulent flow

Session One, 40 mins

The remit of the training.

Designed to provide training for hill going MR personnel to work safety around but not in the water including bankside searches and river crossings, develop a safety first mindset to working around the water

Equipment

Discuss suitable equipment for bankside searches, the trainer will have examples of suitable pieces of equipment to discuss

Locking knife

Fixed blade knife

Helmets water verses climbing helmets

Buoyancy aids - should have a whistle and knife attached

Buoyancy aids and helmets should be considered as essential pieces of equipment

M.R. personnel may consider having stripped down hill kit to wear on river searches

For night use light sticks are excellent

Comms radios are very good but are very hard to hear next to moving water.

Show participants how to put on drysuits and kit up

Buddy check

Session Two, swimming, 90 mins

Objectives

For participants to appreciate the power and inherent danger of moving water

For participants to know how to react if they accidentally fall into moving water

Walk the venue discussing water features and terminology, explain river left and right

1. The instructor demonstrates the defensive swim position on dry land, danger of entrapments, calms,

2. The instructor demonstrates a defensive swim over a simple and highly controlled course, demonstrating use of arms to move to across the river.

Be prepared to change the course if you feel it is too demanding.

3. The instructor returns to the group and sets up a system of signals and controls for the session

Whistle signals:

One blast stop - look at me

Two blasts look - upstream

Three blasts - look downstream

Repeated blasts – emergency/help

Hand signals:

Stop

ok

not ok

Directional (move to left or right)

The instructor will be based at the bottom of the rapid and only commit one person to the water at a time, participants only enter the water when they have the ok signal from the instructor.

Note swimming in white water in a drysuit for the first time is physically very demanding, expect participants to have little or no control, the instructor must be able to provide absolute non conditional rescue cover for each participant. Give feedback to participants as appropriate.

Be aware of foot entrapments, strainers and the dangers of being swept away

Rescue cover by throw line alone in moving water would not be acceptable

Once the whole group have practiced one swim return to the group and run through a second time. You may choose to extend the length of the course and tell people that as soon as someone is on safe ground the next person will go, still ensure you only have one person in the water at all times and that you have direct sight of each person in the water.

Bring the group together and discuss aggressive swimming. The instructor will model aggressive swimming over a set course and have the group swim one at a time.

Bring group together and summarise, usually participants are surprised at the difficulty of swimming in moving water, even with a drysuit. Ask participants to think what it would be like if unexpected at night.

This session is designed to teach a strong respect for the water and how to react, not to make people expert swimmers!

Session Three, Throwlines, 90 mins.

Objectives

For participants to understand the use and limitations of throwlines.

For participants to gain experience of using a throwline

1. discussion - Essential piece of equipment for river searches. Discuss features of a throwline:

Length,

rope type

visible

floating

no knot at the throwers end

2. Start with underarm throw which people tend to find easier, demonstrate stance, and throwing technique.

3. Participants practice throwing the bags to each other to feel the swing and weight - don't spend too long doing this as the throwline behave differently when deployed.

4. Model a perfect throw with casualty on dry land

Shout,

Legs position one foot forwards for stability

Rope needs to land within reach, if you miss, tell them to swim

Tell casualty to roll onto their back with the rope over their shoulder

Be ready for a large load, go dynamic if needed and Talk to the casualty

Swing the casualty to the bank and walk to the casualty while keeping them under tension, assist them from the water as required.

How to repack the line into the bag

5. In pairs throw to a target about 12 -15 meters away, need to be on target,

6. Model throw in the water with recovery, beware of pulling people into danger.

How to hold the rope, lie on back hold over shoulder

7. Group to practice in the water. Only one person at a time, have a second line as downstream backup if people miss and instructor positioned at the bottom of the rapid as final backup, by now you will established that everyone is happy to swim on your stretch of water.

8. Bring group bag together and model overarm throw, discuss why it's useful:

More powerful

Can be used when you have bankside vegetation restricting underarm throw

9. Practice overarm throws on land and then in pairs in the water

10. Introduce re-throws, but stress that the most accurate and reliable technique is first time deployment from the bag. This technique works well on flat still water.

11. Practice re-throwing the rope after a failed throw

As a final round up you may want to discuss side arm throws (used when you have bankside vegetation and tree cover) and that people need to practice often to remain accurate.

Lunch, 30 mins.

Session four, River crossings, 90 mins

Introduced once you know everyone can safety swim to shore in your chosen location

Emphasis that while the remit of this training is for bankside searches staying out of the water that this is included as virtually every MR person at some point will encounter crossing moving water.

Objectives

For participants to understand the dangers of crossing moving water

To encourage a safety first mindset to river crossings

To demonstrate a variety of techniques that can be used to cross small rivers

1. Discussion around river crossings:

Don't do it

Consequence of a slip

Venue

Power of water – water as shallow as 6 inches can take you off your feet

As a group member – tell people to stop and consider the dangers and options before blindly crossing moving streams

If you have to cross

Prepare – undo pack belts and have over one shoulder, consider if your rucksack will float in an emergency

If the water more powerful than predicted return to shore

Look for the best spot, consider the river bed, access and egress points

2. Practical session - Allow individuals to cross the river on their own in a challenging location.

3. Introduce line astern technique, demo on dry land and allow group to practice, compare to the first crossing on their own

4. Introduce line astern with a pole

5. Introduce the 3 man wedge technique, demo on dry land and allow group to practice, compare to the first crossing on their own

6. Introduce crossing with the aid of a rope - first man across under tension then remainder cross on a tension diagonal, holding onto the rope

Session Five, Bankside searches, 90 mins.

See notes

Objectives:

For participants understand the importance of correct clothing and equipment

For participants understand the principals of safe water margin searches including moving water searches

For participants adopt a safety first approach to river side searches

1. Discuss equipment:

Helmet, buoyancy aid, good boots, throwlines, comms, lighting

2. Introduce searches as a common M.R. activity and the need to ensure we are properly equipped.

3. Extremely hazardous environment, particularly at night, always consider calling off searches in the dark. Dangers of cliffs, river bank collapse, overhanging trees, moving boulders and rocks, water immersion.

Importance of having sub group leader responsible for the safety of the group and a group formation.

4. Demonstrate 3 and 4 man river search pattern and allow the group search a kilometre of relatively challenging terrain, taking in turns to take lead, if leader considers an area too hazardous they will skip it and ask for the support of a water team or return at low water levels

At the end of the allocated section river section review the experience with the group, aim to cover the following points:

The leader has a very active role

It's very time consuming

Ensure you can see all group members at all times

The searcher may consider having stripped down kit

Ensure you have an allocated sub group leader

Final Review , 30 mins.

Ensure that participants understand how this training fits in with the national flood rescue framework, advise people of the dangers of water pollution, that they should wash down with fresh water and alcohol gel and inform a doctor if they feel unwell

The limitations of the training, it's not intended for in-water work and the importance of on-going training.