

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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## “Ice Rescue Operations Practiced at Skyview Lake”

Open water this time of year is especially treacherous. Although the ice may look strong, it's thin and won't support very much weight. City of Norfolk emergency personnel have been practicing ice rescue operations this past week in the event that someone does fall into the water.

Norfolk Fire Department Lieutenant Landon Grothe conducted the exercises that required rescue personnel to get into the icy waters of Skyview Lake and practice saving a victim who had fallen through the ice.

Those in the water were outfitted with search and rescue dry suits that keep the wearers warm and dry from head to toe.

“The only way they'll get wet and cold is if they get water on their face,” Grothe said.



To practice, two of the rescue team wearing water proof suits walk far out onto the ice. One jumps in the sub-40 degree water and acts as if he needs help. The other jumps in attaches a rope with a metal hook around the waist of the “victim.” A signal is sent to the rest of the rescue team on shore who have secured the rope and pull the two up out of the water and onto the ice to safety.

Grothe said the water rescue drills are sometimes practiced in the YMCA but that it's important to get out in the open water.

“The rescuers need to practice how to keep vertical as the suits are very buoyant and tend to bring their feet up. We know that time is always an issue in a rescue operation, particularly when the victim is in icy water. In a real rescue operation we will put a dive team, emergency room and Life Flights on alert,” Grothe said.

He added that ice especially at Skyview Lake is very unpredictable.

“Even on the coldest days of winter, the geese keep part of the lake open. There is also water continually being pumped in. From now on it's best to stay off of the ice and keep your dogs on a leash so they don't run out on the ice either,” Grothe said.

Grothe is certified in ice rescue operations and will have trained all 27 members of shift emergency personnel in the last few weeks.