



CMC Rescue Technical Report #6

Washing Rope Rescue Equipment

All equipment should be kept clean and free of dirt and grit to prevent wear that will reduce the strength, effectiveness, and life of rescue equipment. After gear has been washed, remember to re-mark it if necessary and log that it has been washed.

Rope & Webbing.

The CMC Rescue School uses the following procedure to wash our ropes. Rinse off any excess dirt with a hose. Then soak the rope for about 30 minutes in a plastic tub of water with Lifeline Cleaner added. Rinse the rope by pulling it through a Bokar Rope Washer twice. Then hang the rope in a cool, shady place to dry.

Rope that has come into contact with blood or other body fluids can be cleaned using chlorine bleach per your department's protocols for decontaminating equipment. Our tests indicated that a 10 minute soak in a 10:1 water/bleach solution resulted in a 2% loss of strength in the rope.

Sewn Nylon Gear.

The "D" rings and buckles on these tend to damage washing machines. Use Lifeline Cleaner to soak them in a tub. Light scrubbing with a brush should remove heavy dirt deposits. Rinse and air-dry the same as rope and webbing.

Hardware.

When necessary, wash hardware in warm, soapy water. Be sure to get all of the dirt out of any moving parts. Rinse and towel or blow-dry. As we mentioned under equipment inspection, the rule against lubricating carabiners and hardware appears to be changing. Use of a dry or non-sticky lubricant following washing may help preserve the life and performance of your hardware.