



# Box Alarm TRAINING

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## GENERATION WHY? - PART 2

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In the last article, we discussed the often maligned generation Y(why?). The act of questioning methods and processes can actually advance our cause in technical rescue. This can be achieved with questioning, critical thinking, and constructive debate. In Part 2 we will explore some "why's?" that may close capability gaps or even get people's blood pressure up. We will not cover each of these issues exhaustively, but may revisit some of them in the coming months. So let's fire the first shot...



Have you evaluated your rescue practices and do you understand why you are doing the things that you do?

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### **Why do some practitioners insist on tying a safety or back-up knot in the figure-eight family and some other knots?**

An overhand safety in the running part of the rope over the standing part does not get actuated. It takes more time to tie the knot properly. It requires some to untie and re-tie to get the tail length correct. Strength is not added to the figure eight with a safety. I have seen people even load the safety side of the knot when tied in the middle of a rope?! Perhaps we should focus on the knot having low gain and being dressed and tied correctly.

### **Why does the Bowline family of knots get so beat up and ostracized by parts of the rescue community?**

With the addition of a Yosemite Finish, a double-overhand bend, or slight modification of the knot (double loop / high strength), the bowlines can be reliable, strong, and easy to untie. There are so

many varieties of the knot that they can be tied into multi-point anchors, tied in-line, hard-tied into a fixed rope system, and many others.

### **Why does the Munter Hitch get such a bad rap?**

Whistle test? -Perhaps not. Two-person load? –Absolutely. We catch 600-800 lb. loads all the time using the Munter Hitch. The key to success is that the operator must manage slack and plan for some type of edge friction into the system. We use one change-of-direction carabiner. As for the whistle test- what happens if your Engineer is going code-3 into a curve and let's go of the wheel or has a heart attack? Does the whistle save your people? Should we back-up our drivers with safety-drivers? Or maybe take two SCBAs in a fire. I like many devices and tools out there, but the Munter Hitch has no cost, can catch big loads, can act as a Progress Capture Device, and facilitate twin-tensioned systems in lowering and hauling applications.



Do you use a Munter Hitch as a progress capture? Will the “Whistle Test” deter you from using this method?

I know everyone in US&R has cut-off saws that will allow you to cut just under 5” of depth. Have you ever heard of, or tried a ring saw? As technology improves why has a ring saw not made it into your cache yet? You can achieve 10” of cut depth on a platform that runs on gasoline or hydraulic power. It might really save a team a good amount of time on the dreaded step cut.

On a similar note, why is your team only sporting the 27” long Petrogen Torch that comes in the US&R Ensemble but train and work cutting in confined areas such as a 36” culvert. Thirty inches of torch in a 36” of culvert is unwieldy. Why has your team not looked into the 7” Breaching Torch that Petrogen manufactures. It has a 45-degree head rather than the 90-degree. It might be a handy enhancement to your cache when you are tunneling through rebar like pick-up-sticks.

How about- Why is the central mode of operations, in training and response, of some overland SAR teams a grid search? With training organizations like NASAR; and programs like FUNSAR, SARTECH Exams, and Managing the Lost Person Incident, there are too many better uses of resources than walking a dress-right-line in the woods. Save that for thorough secondary and tertiary searches or when a rescuer loses his flashlight or keys. Rapid / hasty searches, hailing searches, trailing / tracking, qualified canine assets, and technical search assets are all better

options and require diligent practice and training. Active searching and following a heading are day-one skills. Modern searches even use victim profiling and actuarial tables to predict traits and behavior. Have you heard about aerial drones in SAR? Let's elevate our profession by incorporating modern and practical methods.

Why are we trained to perform a Vent-Enter-Isolate-Search (VEIS) operation with a confirmed child in a working house fire, but we do not enter a confined space with a patient guppy-breathing until it is too late? Firefighters will even circumvent two-in-two-out to save a life in a fire. Permitted

Confined Space: a confined space with

possible mechanical hazards, low oxygen, electrical hazards, flammable atmospheres, and other such hazards. In fires these hazards are not only a possibility, but rather a certainty. In the VES operation we mitigate these with turnouts-for flash protection, SCBAs for respiratory protection, helmets and PPE for mechanical protection, and speed to reduce time in the hazard space. So why could rescuers not use the same ensemble with the addition of PH-Paper to perform grab-and-go rescues for the guppy-breather in the confined space or even trench realm? Especially if the company officer and competent person can reason that other potential hazards seem manageable. In-and-out. Grab-and-go. Arbitrary fast turnaround. We make OSHA exceptions on the fireground. We are trained to risk allot to save allot.

The last why for us to think hard on is- Why did Special Operations stop being special? A very basic Rescue Specialist will at least be up to speed in nine areas: EMS, Hazamt, Rope, Water, Wilderness, Confined Space, Vehicle & Machinery, Trench, and Structural Collapse. Staying on top of these can be a full time job. Trust me. So why do Chiefs and Emergency Managers seem to think anyone can do these things? They put unqualified people on specialized rescues and teams. Everyone deserves to be saved. Our customers deserve a second chance at life. The people we are sworn to protect.

Think about your family or kids- do you want the best for them? I do. Why people in high places cannot see this- I don't know. People have opportunities to take classes. Virtually all 1006 rescue and 472 hazmat classes are free in my state. There is a huge distinction between *certified* and *qualified*. I would only trust a small percentage of the students that come through our rescue programs to do the job at the level that the people we protect deserve.



**"Would you perform a VEIS operation if a mother was screaming her child was in the living room? If so, what constitutes untenable conditions for your dept. at a Confined Space call?"**



Special Operations participants should be vetted, interviewed tested, refreshed annually, and mentally / physically fit for duty. The percentage of the general population in emergency services, that can perform at this level, is small. Think -FBI HRT, Secret Service CAT, Army Rangers, Coast Guard AST swimmers, Air Force PJs, etc. I would say somewhere in the realm of 3%, in my state, are guys I'd want responsible for my family at a technical incident. Instead team participation and training are used as political poker chips and virtual entitlement programs

for the masses. It takes decision makers that have really done the job to empathize with the rescuers and the people being rescued. The *they* will tell you- "Oh I took the class. It was tough. It was hot. I know how it is. . . ." This is not so. The guy that acts like that guy would probably risk more for his next promotion than he would for a child in a raging creek. That's no the heart of a real Special Operations rescuer. Rather, they strive to be humble, consummate, professionals. Their calling is tradecraft and a source of pride. They are courageous and daring, not recklessly so, but because of the operators next to him, on his team. Their confidence comes from years of training and experience and the knowledge that the guy next to him would risk all and do all for the team and the people we serve.

The last one was long, but perhaps touches all of us in this field. It is important to use the knowledge and critical thinking responsibly. You will encounter closed minds and we are obligated to honor SOPs / SOGs within our teams and departments. In closing I would like to reiterate: do not accept old ways and the status quo blindly. Take courses, books, instructors, and check the facts. Conduct equipment trials and firehouse experiments. Try new methods and put the issues in the spotlight. Continue to ask why- just do it in the right way. Quietly and humbly enjoy the wins. Take your losses on the chin and sleep well knowing that you know the answer from firsthand experience.



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