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**PIERRE FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINS FOR TRENCH RESCUES**

*Pierre, SD* – With the construction season upon us, and as a result of a trench collapse last summer involving a Pierre contractor installing utilities, the Pierre Rescue Squad determined a need for more advanced Trench Rescue Training should an incident such as this occur again in the future.

On April 16-17, Todd Lowe and Travis Thom of Sioux Falls Fire Rescue provided trench rescue training to 10 members of the Pierre Fire Department. The training consisted of properly shoring different types of trenches to ensure secondary collapses do not occur while attempting to extricate a victim. One scenario the firefighters worked on was a patient that had been trapped by a large, concrete culvert inside a trench. “They [Pierre firefighters] had to first shore the trench properly and then get down to that patient. From there, they had to figure out how to lift a 6-foot cement culvert off the victim. So they utilized a lot of rescue principals along with emergency shoring for a trench.” said Lowe.

“Trench rescue is different than any other type of rescue, in that you can't just run in and begin working on the patient. This is an extremely labor intensive type of rescue, and most often heavy equipment is not used due to the increased risk of secondary collapses caused by vibrations” said Ian Paul, Captain of the Pierre Rescue Squad.



To help expedite a rescue, the Department has constructed numerous large panels and other shoring materials that can quickly be set into place to hold back most secondary collapses. These building materials and other construction supplies were donated by area businesses that include United Building Centers, Schlachter Lumber of Pierre, Runnings Farm & Fleet, Baumann Lumber, First Dakota Enterprises, Dakota Builders of Presho, and the Home Depot of Sioux Falls. “Pierre Fire Chief Greg Baker thanks these businesses that donated approximately \$2,500 of materials to the department. This specialized rescue equipment has been placed in the Pierre Fire Department’s technical rescue trailer ready to respond in the Pierre and surrounding areas if an emergency such as this occurs.

Although the Pierre Fire Department feels they are better trained to respond to trench rescue incidents, in Pierre and the surrounding areas, contractors and others working in trenches are reminded that these types of rescues are not quick, and it may take hours before contact with a victim can be made. “The best thing folks can do when working in a trench is to follow safe working practices to avoid becoming a victim of a collapse,” said Paul. “This includes making sure the trench is properly shored and that workers stay within this safe area at all times.”

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