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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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TRAINING FOR RESCUES FROM COLLAPSING BUILDING

Muscatine Firefighters training to use rope system for high-angled rescue

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The scenario has played out too many times recently with a victim needing to be extricated from a building that has started to collapse. Lessons learned from the partial collapse of a six-story apartment building in Davenport nearly a year ago have been implemented into a new training program for the Muscatine Fire Department.

“When you have a building collapse, such as what happened in Davenport, the debris on the ground and the weakened structure of the building make it impossible to move a ladder truck into position for a rescue,” Battalion Chief Ted Hillard said. “We are now training to use rope lines to lower a person to safety.

Firefighter Ben Barrett attended a CMC School training session at Iowa City that taught technical rescue skills and rope access skills, and earned Technician I and Technician II certifications.



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"We have found it better for us to send someone to classes such as these, complete the certification, and then come back to train our staff," Hillard said. "Having someone with these skill sets on the team is much better than bringing in someone who will be gone after the class is finished."

"The process this shift is learning today is deploying a rope system and using it for a controlled descent of a victim without a rescuer being lowered at the same time," Barrett said. "We utilize a rigging crew, patient care crew, and a command crew to successfully lower a patient to safety from a damaged building."

While the fire department, and the City, hope that collapsing buildings and high angled rescue's of this nature never happen in Muscatine, the value of being prepared is another lesson learned from the Davenport building collapse.

"Safety is foremost on the mind so it takes time to set up the rigging, prepare (package) the victim for transport, and then safely lowering the victim to the ground," Barrett said.

Among the skills taught at the CMC School, and among those that Barrett is now teaching Muscatine firefighters, are equipment selection, inspection and maintenance, knots, anchors, patient packaging, mechanical advantage systems, belay techniques, lowering systems, rappelling, knot passing through rappels, raising and lower systems, system safety factors, litter rigging and tending, and pick-offs.

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