

# **Led By Battalion Chief Matt Fischer, Alton Firefighters Train In Icy Conditions At Gordon Moore Park**

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter  
February 12 2021 6:44 AM





ALTON - Alton Fire Department personnel train constantly at the highest levels, perhaps to standards as high as any fire agency its size across the country. Another example came this week on some frigid days at the Spencer T. Olin Golf Court Pond.

Alton Battalion Chief Matt Fischer coordinated the ice rescue training. Chief Jesse Jemison said Fischer is the department's resident expert on ice rescue. He trained some time back in New England, Chief Jemison said.

"The past few winters we haven't been able to train on the ice because it wasn't cold enough," Jemison added. "When it became cold this winter, I talked to Mary Campbell at Spencer T. Olin and she allowed our people to train on the ice. We have 18 or 19 new guys with less than four years of experience and they had never done any training like this. East Alton Fire Department also brought some of their guys over. East Alton has multiple ponds and it is important for them to have this type of training."

Chief Jemison said Fischer had on a yellow rescue suit that was nearly new and well insulated, but the Alton Fire Department is in need of replacements for its used water rescue suits, now 18 years old. He hopes the replacement of the suits can happen soon because they are sorely needed.

"Matt used self-rescue techniques and rescue throws as part of the training," Jemison said. "Chief Fischer made a bodyboard, himself, that works very well. We also use ladders for traction or to reach a victim if they are still conscious. There are a variety of techniques to get people out of the water. This was our third day of training, with one more day on Friday."

Alton Mayor Brant Walker said he is extremely proud of the department for its training efforts.

"Our fire department always does many training hours," he said. "The Gordon Moore lake provides a great place to train. I don't know any firefighters or paramedics more capable than ours. We have the riverboat and we do have the busiest Lock and Dam near Alton of any on the Mississippi. The firefighters put incredible effort into the training and go through a wide variety of water rescue tasks. Our firefighters are phenomenal overall."





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)