

Cold water survival situation guide

Boating, Sailing, Kayaking and other water activities are becoming enjoyed by more and more people, but with every sport and activity there is a risk that something could go wrong, this fortunately does not happen to everyone but the unlucky few can be quickly throw into a survival situation in the water. This can be made much worse though when it involves cold or even freezing water as anybody could be killed within minutes in this situation if they do not use the correct techniques.

Maintaining body temperature is crucial when in a cold water survival situation. Do not attempt to swim unless there is a near by boat or object that may help you. Swimming and movement in cold water will cause you to lose heat, and maybe even eventually drown. Even the strongest and fittest swimmer can drown easily when in a cold/freezing water situation.

If there is a floating object that is substantial enough to hold your weight, you should grab hold of it and lift out as much of your body out of the water as possible, this will keep your body temperature higher than if you was full submerged in the water, as the human body cools 25 times quicker in cold water than in air.

PDFs can be extremely helpful in survival situation in cold water, as they keep you buoyant and afloat with no movement required and can also keep your core insulated, maintaining your core body temperature.

Water Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Exhaustion or Unconsciousness	Expected Time of Survival
32.5 degrees	Under 15 minutes	Under 15 to 45 minutes
32.5 to 40 degrees	15 to 30 minutes	30 to 90 minutes
40 to 50 degrees	30 to 60 minutes	1 to 3 hours
50 to 60 degrees	1 to 2 hours	1 to 6 hours
60 to 70 degrees	2 to 7 hours	2 to 4 hours
70 to 80 degrees	2 to 12 hours	3 hours to indefinite
Over 80 degrees	Indefinite	Indefinite

There are many positions that can be used in these circumstances, to help keep in as much heat as possible. I shall go threv the main positions below for both circumstances where alone and when in the water with others.

