


Mustang Rescue Stick

A man in a red jacket and sunglasses is shown from the side, holding a yellow Rescue Stick high in the air. The stick is a long, cylindrical device with a black handle and a yellow grip. The background shows a body of water and a city skyline under a clear blue sky.

MOB flotation aid goes the distance.

Among the range of products available for MOB emergencies is the Rescue Stick, a new item from Mustang Survival. Mustang explains that this club-like device, weighing 1.5 pounds and measuring 20 inches long, enables rescuers to accurately deliver 35 pounds of flotation to victims 100 to 150 feet away.

The fact that the Rescue Stick is the only product tested lacking a way of connecting the rescuers to the victim gave testers pause—and reason to separate it from the test group, however, it was tested following the same protocol. The Rescue Stick is intended purely as a rapid means of getting flotation to a victim in the water and of marking an MOB's position. The manufacturer explained that adding a rope to the device would significantly reduce the distance and accuracy of the rescuer's throw. Not having a rope means not having control of the device once it's thrown, and if the victim can't get to it right away, it's likely the wind will move it farther away.

Using a metal, pressurized CO₂ canister to inflate a horseshoe-shaped life ring, the Rescue Stick comes with a Halkey-Roberts 6F auto-inflation valve, an oral inflation tube, and a manual inflation rip cord. The flotation chamber is coated nylon with heat-sealed seams; there is no clasp across the open end of the horseshoe.

The relative heft of the canister, which is encased in a plastic



The Rescue Stick, which delivers 35 pounds of buoyancy, performed well across the board.

tube covered with a neoprene grip, makes this product easy to throw. Attaining accuracy was easy as well. On land, our testers' tosses averaged 72.8 feet. On the water, throws reached 65 feet.

The Rescue Stick comes in a flexible, waterproof, plastic storage bag with an instruction card. Re-arming and repacking instructions are screened on the horseshoe buoy.

During our test, we learned that Mustang Survival had recalled the first five production lots of the Rescue Stick. Company spokesman Rob McMahon told us that only a few of those recalled (3 percent) had defective valves in their oral inflation tubes, and under certain conditions that might "result in the valve remaining open and causing the inflatable cell of the Rescue Stick to deflate." Neither of the two Rescue Sticks that *PS* tested suffered this problem. McMahon said Mustang will replace the product (free of cost) for anyone who purchased Rescue Sticks from those lots affected by the faulty valve.

At *PS*, we commend that kind of product support and follow-up. The Rescue Stick appears to be superior to the other devices tested in terms of buoyancy, distance and cost, and equal in terms of accuracy of throw. Re-arming and repacking instructions are in the owner's manual and screen-printed on the device.

In our opinion, the Rescue Stick could serve as a good backup to other rescue aids. But because it offers no way of making a connection between the boat and victim—our major reservation here—we wouldn't rely solely on it in a rescue situation. It cannot be re-thrown, so the first toss better be a good one.