

Search and rescue team adds life-saving device



DUNCAN STEWART, a Level 1 Canadian Avalanche Technician and Organized Avalanche Response Team Member with Terrace Search and Rescue (SAR), practises with the SAR's new RECCO avalanche system.

TERRACE SEARCH AND RESCUE

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TERRACE SEARCH and Rescue is one of the first groups in the north to have a new avalanche

rescue system to help find skiers and others buried in snow.

The RECCO Avalanche Rescue System was given to our search and rescue by a RECCO employee, who was in the area providing them free of charge as they've now been replaced by newer technology.

But that doesn't mean that these devices aren't remarkable.

“These are the first ones in the north and we are quite excited,” said Terrace Search and Rescue member Dwayne Sheppard.

“Now with the new version out, they want to distribute the older systems. It's still great technology.”

The RECCO system consists of a device carried by search and rescue that sends out a search signal, which is echoed back to the device by reflectors that are on many brands of ski clothing, boots and ski equipment.

People can also buy reflectors and put them on their clothing or boots, Sheppard added.

The system allows rescuers to pinpoint a person under an avalanche within a couple metres, said Sheppard.

It's a primary search tool like a beacon and when it pinpoints a person, search and rescue will then use a probe to find how deep the person is, he said.

Search and rescue members are training with the new system by burying some reflectors and practising finding them, said Sheppard.

“It's another tool in the tool box for searching for lost persons buried under an avalanche,” he said.

The systems tend to be found in larger centres where bigger organizations can afford them, said Sheppard.

He said that to his knowledge Terrace Search and Rescue, Shames Mt. ski hill and Northern Escape Heli-Skiing are the only groups to have one of these systems in this area.

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