The V-Shaped Snow Conveyor-Belt

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The excavation of buried subjects takes by far the greatest amount of time during rescue. The V-shaped snow conveyor-belt has been developed and field tested to provide an efficient solution to the excavation of avalanche victims.

The method achieves an efficient snow transport conveyor leading to fast head access, but at the same time provides a work environment which is spacious enough for multiple rescuers to work simultaneously. The constellation of the rescuers and the starting point of the V lead to a significant reduction of the probability of causing further injury to the buried subject or destroying the respiratory cavity.

Work efficiency as an important contributing factor has been investigated by analyzing ergonomic and motivational aspects.

The comparison with uncoordinated shovelling shows that the importance (reduction of burial time) of a strategic approach to the excavation process increases with increasing burial depth.

The V-shaped snow conveyor-belt is a systematic and easy-to-teach approach to excavation of buried subjects. Novice rescuers apply the method strictly rule based, where as more professional rescuers can adapt the method to fit any rescue situation by applying micro management within the V.