

<b>Standard Operating Procedure</b> <b>LAKE PLEASANT</b> <b>RESCUE SWIMMER OPERATIONS</b>	<b>PEORIA FIRE-MEDICAL DEPARTMENT</b> <b>Operations</b> <b>204.16DP</b> <b>Initial 01/27/2017</b> <b>Page 1 of 6</b>
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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the response of fire department personnel and equipment to open water rescue incidents. Because water rescue operations present a significant danger to fire department personnel, the safe and effective management of these operations require special considerations. This procedure identifies some of the critical issues which must be included in managing these incidents

**POLICY**

This procedure establishes a standard structure and guideline for all fire department personnel operating at incidents involving open water rescue operations. The procedure outlines responsibilities for first-responders, Rescue Swimmers, Command Officers, and other fire department personnel responding to such incidents. All other Peoria Fire-Medical Department procedures shall apply to water rescue operations where applicable.

**TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Due to the inherent dangers associated with these operations, the Peoria Fire-Medical Department *Risk Management Profile* shall be applied to all open water rescue operations and shall be continuously re-assessed throughout the incident. A phased approach to open water rescue operations which include; Arrival, Pre-rescue operations, Rescue operations, and Termination, can be utilized to safely and effectively mitigate these high-risk / low-frequency events.

**Phase I Arrival.**

**ESTABLISH COMMAND**

- A. First arriving company officer shall assume *Command* and begin an immediate size up of the situation
- B. Next arriving Company Officer or Battalion Chief will assume command and assign initial arriving Rescue Swimmer unit to *Rescue Sector*. The Rescue Swimmer Company Officer assigned as Rescue Sector should remain with his crew. Rescue Sector responsibilities include:
  - Assuming open water rescue operations control.
  - Identifying hazards and critical factors.
  - Developing a rescue plan and back-up plan.
  - Communicating with and directing crew assigned to Rescue Sector.

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- Informing Command of conditions, actions, and needs during all phases of the rescue operation.
- C. The Rescue Sector Company Officer will designate the following positions within Rescue Sector
- Primary Swimmer- lead swimmer equipped with kickboard and compass wearing USCG Approved Type III (or better) Personal Flotation Device and Fins.
  - Secondary Swimmer- back-up swimmer equipped with kickboard, rescue tube, compass wearing USCG Approved Type III (or better) Personal Flotation Device and Fins.
  - Rescue Safety Officer - Designated Safety officer within Rescue Sector. Sets compass heading and estimated kick cycles for Rescue Swimmers to victim location. Can abort rescue attempt based on factors outside of the risk management profile.
  - Boat Operator- Pilot of the Boat and maintains awareness of the hazard zone
- D. Command will designate a *Safety Officer*. Considerations for Safety Officer include:
- One of the Regional Special Operations qualified Safety Officers.
  - A Special Operations qualified Battalion Chief and/or FIT.
  - RSB liaison with any above qualifications
  - Any experienced Rescue Swimmer Company Officer assigned to the incident.

**SIZE-UP**

- A. Secure a witness to assist in gathering information to determine exactly what happened and the location of any victim(s). if no witnesses are present, Command may have to look for clues on the scene to determine what happened
- B. Assess the immediate and potential hazards to the rescuers.
- C. Isolate immediate hazard area, secure the scene, and deny entry for all non-rescue personnel.
- D. Assess on-scene capabilities and determine the need for additional resources

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## **Phase II Pre-rescue Operations**

*It must be determined if this will be a RESCUE operation or a RECOVERY operation based on the survivability profile of the victim(s) which include factors such as the location and condition of the victim(s), and elapsed time since the accident occurred.*

### **MAKE THE GENERAL AREA SAFE**

- A. Establish a hazard zone perimeter.
- B. Keep all non-essential rescue personnel out of the hazard zone.
- C. Remove all non-essential civilian personnel at least 150 feet away from the hazard zone.
- D. Utilize MCSO for making the general area safe

### **MAKE THE RESCUE AREA SAFE**

*All personnel operating at or near the water shall be in proper personal protective equipment (PPE) which will include at a minimum: aqua lung vest, blunt-tip cutting tool, marker float, 3 mil wetsuit (rescuer's discretion), mask, fins, boots, and snorkel.*

- A. Identify hazards that are present which include but are not limited to:
  - The depth of water
  - Temperature of the water
  - Debris in the water
  - Civilian Boat traffic
  - Law Enforcement Boat Traffic
  - Fire Boat propellers
- B. Assemble all necessary personnel, equipment, and patient packaging equipment that will be required for the rescue operation.
  - All PPE
  - Kick boards with compass
  - Rescue tubes with quick-release mechanism
  - 300' rescue line

## **Phase III Rescue Operations**

*Open water rescue operations shall be conducted under the direction of Rescue Sector by ERDI certified Rescue Swimmers.*

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## **RESCUE SECTOR**

Rescue Sector responsibilities shall include the following:

- A. Ensure that all personnel operating in Rescue Sector are accounted for and wearing appropriate PPE.
- B. Develop a rescue plan and a back-up plan.
- C. Ensure the plan and back-up plan, which include emergency procedures, are communicated to all personnel operating on the incident.

## **THE RESCUE PLAN**

Rescue operations should be conducted with as little risk to the rescuers as necessary to affect the rescue. Low-risk operations such as throw bag or grab hook may not always be possible but should be considered first. Putting a rescuer in the water is the highest risk operation that can be performed and should be performed after all other options have been considered. The order of rescue from low-risk to high-risk are:

- A. Reach – If victim(s) is within arm's reach, grab victim and pull to safety.
- B. Throw – If victim(s) is out of arms reach, use throw bag or grab hook or other appropriate device to pull the victim to safety.
- C. Boat Retrieval – If the victim(s) is out of throw distance the boat can be used to move into that distance or the boat operator can maneuver FB199 to a close proximity where the crew can utilize the drop down doors and pull the victim to safety.
- D. GO - If it is not possible to access the victim(s) by boat, Rescue Sector will insert rescuers in the water to reach the victim. This is a very high risk operation and shall be conducted exclusively by certified Rescue Swimmer personnel. Prior to entering the water, rescue personnel shall be briefed on the plan, the back-up plan and emergency procedures. Rescue personnel shall never be attached to a life line without the benefit of a quick-release mechanism approved for open water rescue or a blunt-tip cutting tool. Rescue personnel are permitted to do a "breath-hold" surface dive in an attempt to locate a victim beneath the surface of the water. The use of a marker float will be implemented at the rescuer(s) discretion. The Line Tender will maintain visual contact with the Rescue Swimmers and will ultimately be in charge of aborting the rescue attempt.

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ASSESS THE VICTIM

When the rescuers reach the victim, if conscious, the primary swimmer will provide the victim his kickboard, while the secondary swimmer will supply the victim with the rescue tube. If the victim is unconscious, the rescue must be completed as quickly as possible. Once the victim has been captured, both the primary and secondary swimmer will signal to the line tender to take in slack.

IV. TREATMENT

- A. Initiate C-spine precautions, if necessary, as soon as possible.
- B. Conduct a secondary survey and correct any life threatening conditions, if conditions allow.
- C. Advise Command of the Patient’s condition.
- D. Command will provide for ALS level treatment and transportation to a hospital as indicated.

**Phase IV Termination**

- A. Ensure personnel accountability.
- B. Consider decontamination of victim(s) and rescuer(s).
- C. Recover all tools and equipment used in the rescue/recovery. In cases of a fatality, consult with MCSO for proper procedures.
- D. Consider a Post Incident Critique (may be more appropriate at a later date).
- E. Return to service after returning all equipment to apparatus.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

COMMAND STRUCTURE

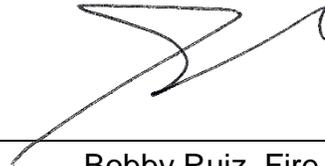
- A. The first arriving unit shall assume *Command* of the incident. This unit shall remain in Command until Command is transferred to improve the quality of the Command organization. A Command Team shall be assembled to include, at a minimum, a Chief Officer and a Safety Officer.
- B. Considerations for the *Safety Officer* include:
- C. A Special Operations qualified Battalion Chief and/or FIT.
- D. One of the Regional Special Operations qualified Safety Officers.
- E. Any experienced Rescue Swimmer Company Officer assigned to the incident.
- F. Treatment Sector should be assigned to any ALS company assigned to the incident.

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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Consider the effects of inclement weather and water conditions on the hazard profile, the victim(s), and the rescuers, with particular attention to the effects of hypothermia and submersion concerns.
- B. Open water rescue incidents attract the news media; consider assigning a P.I.O. and completing a significant incident report.

Approved:



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Bobby Ruiz, Fire Chief

06/07/2018

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Date