

<b><i>WATER RESCUE</i></b>		<b>TROY FIRE DEPT. TACTICAL PLAN 203.04</b>	
<i>Issued</i>	<i>03/08</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>09/14</i>
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**SCOPE**

This plan outlines basic operational procedures to be followed for situations where victim(s) are in water/ice or near water hazards, including lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, flooded roadways, and similar situations.

**HAZARDS**

Water rescue presents unique hazards to rescuers. Water temperature, air temperature, distance from shore to victims, and actions of well-intended bystanders can affect the outcome of the incident.

Hypothermia can occur whenever a person is immersed in water. The lower the water temperature, the quicker the effect will be for the victim. Hypothermia can cause the loss of motor skills in minutes resulting in a victim being unable to hold on to a flotation device or rope, or otherwise assist with their own rescue.

**RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS**

- **Type of incident.** Person(s) through the ice, swimmer in distress, person in moving water such as a river or drain, or motorist trapped inside the vehicle in deep water.
  - If not already dispatched, consider calling for Brush 2 with the boat.
  - Animal rescues may be performed only if firefighters are not placed at risk. Consideration, however, must be given to the actions or intentions of bystanders and their safety, as well as public perception.
  - The Oakland County Sheriff Dive Team should be called for victim(s) submerged under water or beneath ice.
  
- **Location of incident.** Lake or pond, river or drain, or flooded roadway. Access to the victim(s) and / or vehicle, as well as accessibility to equipment, must be considered as part of the response plan.
  
- **Potential hazards.** Hypothermia, bystanders or other emergency responders attempting to assist, weather conditions, thin ice and unstable footing all present hazards to rescuers.

**ARRIVAL AT AN INCIDENT**

When arriving at the scene, apparatus shall be located to provide access for water rescue and related equipment. The apparatus should be close enough for access to equipment, and far

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enough so that engine noise and exhaust fumes are minimized in the working area. Apparatus should not be taken off-road unless the ground can support the weight, nor into deep water on roadways above the level of the apparatus bumper. Fire fighters' personal vehicles shall be staged to prevent congestion at the scene and to allow access for responding units such as additional fire apparatus and EMS vehicles.

### **SIZE-UP**

The Incident Commander (IC) shall perform a preliminary size-up including coordination with Police and EMS if they are on scene; determination of the number of victims to be rescued; and an assessment of actual or potential hazards to victims and/or rescuers.

The IC shall give a size-up over the radio, establish command, include a location for staging, and assign a tactical channel.

### **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

- **Locate and identify victims.** Determine the number of victims, where they were last seen, and if any rescue attempts were made prior to the Fire Department's arrival. Witnesses and bystanders may be the only source of information available.
- **Minimize personnel committed.** The number of personnel committed to the incident should be the minimum required. This will prevent personnel not actively participating in the operation from unintentionally entering the water. Staging and accountability must be implemented.
- **Protect personnel.** All personnel operating on the shore within 10 feet of water, or on ice, or in flooded roadways shall wear an approved personal flotation device. (PFD) Personnel entering the water shall be secured to a safety line.
- **Control crowd.** Crowd control is the responsibility of the Police Department. The Incident Commander shall coordinate with the on-scene Police Commander in order to keep onlookers at a safe distance from operations. Barrier tape may be utilized to create a visible perimeter.

### **PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

- **THROW** - Utilize the rope throw bag or rope rescue disc to reach the victim.
- **GO** - Personnel in water rescue suits or PFDs go into the water to perform the rescue, securing victim(s) with PFD and safety line.

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**ASSIGNMENTS**

- **Rescue Crew.** A minimum of two (2) fire fighters are needed to don water rescue suits and enter the water to perform the rescue. Personnel on ice or in water shall be attached to a safety line at all times tended by firefighters on shore.
  - For flooded roadways, the rescue crew(s) need not don water rescue suits but must don PFDs and be tethered to tended safety lines, using pike poles to probe the surface beneath the water along the way.
- **Line Tenders.** A minimum of one fire fighter shall be assigned to each member of the rescue crew to tend the safety line attached to the rescuer. Each tender shall wear a PFD.
- **Support Crew.** Fire Department personnel are needed to provide support activities such as lighting, if necessary, staging of equipment, and other tasks as assigned to support the rescue process.
- **Safety Officer.** It shall be the Incident Commander's responsibility to assign a Safety Officer to insure that all personnel operating at the incident are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment including PFDs.
- **Staging.** In order to facilitate operations, a salvage cover or runner shall be placed on the ground and all water rescue equipment placed on the cover. Fire fighters not directly involved in the water rescue shall remain behind the equipment line so as not to interfere with line tenders. The Staging Manager shall maintain personnel accountability.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

- The power of moving water can be deceiving. Use extreme caution when entering any water rescue operation.
- DO NOT take apparatus into water deeper than the bottom of the front bumper. This is to protect the air intake of the apparatus from injecting water into the engine.
  - Other apparatus/vehicles: Do not let water go past the wheel hubs.
  - Any city-owned vehicle that enters or operates in standing water should be identified so the Motor Pool can schedule any required maintenance.
  - Firefighter privately owned vehicles (POV's) enter the water at their own risk. This IS NOT a recommended practice, unless deemed necessary by the IC. Any POV that enters or operates in standing water equal to, or higher than the wheel hub, should be

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inspected by a qualified mechanic before responding in an emergency mode. This is to insure proper operation after being submerged.

- When entering deep water to remove vehicle occupants:
  - Wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). You don't know how fast the water may be moving, or how deep it may become. Also, covers may have come out of manholes, creating a serious drowning risk.
  - Use a safety line. Personnel should never enter water without a safety line.
  - Take a spring-loaded center punch to break vehicle glass if necessary.
  - Use a pike pole to feel the ground ahead of where you are walking. If you cannot see the ground, you need to feel your way.
- Consider requesting Brush 2 and the rescue boat.
  - B-2 also carries extra PFD's and safety lines.
- When entering structures to investigate electrical hazards:
  - Do not enter a flooded basement without first securing the electrical supply to the building.
- When responding for downed wires:
  - Consider your approach. Be aware of multiple lines down in the area.
  - Protect crews.
    - Use the hot stick.
    - Consider using the Thermal Imaging Camera.
    - Use auxiliary lighting as much as possible, at night.

## **INCIDENT TERMINATION**

When terminating an incident, personnel shall account for all equipment and mitigate all hazards prior to leaving the scene.

## **WATER RESCUE BOXES**

Water rescue boxes have been placed at Sylvan Glen Park and the three community beaches at the Emerald Lakes subdivision – 6328 Sandshores, 1872 Lyster Lane, and 6809 Little Creek.

Each box contains the following water rescue equipment:

# ***WATER RESCUE***

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- 2) Personal Floatation Devices
- 2) Rope Throw Bags
- 2) Rope Throw Discs

Each box is secured with a 0464 lock.

The intent of this equipment is to offer fire fighters, police officers, or public works employees with a 0464 key the ability to throw a rope to victim(s) who are in the lake in an attempt to secure them until the arrival of the fire department with additional rescue equipment. Employees will don a PFD and throw the rope bag and/or rescue disc to the victim(s) from the shore.



*Typical Water Rescue Box and Equipment*