



## Swift Water/Medical Rescue

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**PURPOSE:** This document is intended to establish basic Standard Operating Guidelines and procedures for water rescue response operations. They are designed to be applied generally. They may be modified as situations dictate.

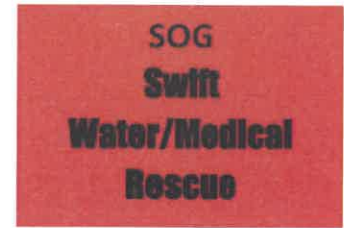
**RESPONSIBLE:** Incident Commander

**SCOPE:** This guideline applies to all water and medical rescue responses.

**BACKGROUND:** Water and medical rescue incidents are known to require large numbers of specialized resources due to unreliable victim location reporting, geographical challenges and the dynamic environment.

### OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. The Incident Commander (IC) will ensure proper resources are responding. The IC will also enter into Unified Command with the agency with jurisdictional authority common communications.
2. Personnel shall wear the proper water rescue personal protective equipment (PPE) within 10 feet of the water's edge. Structural PPE shall NOT be worn within 10 feet of the water's edge unless approved by the Incident Commander.
3. Ensure personnel are qualified to perform their assigned task
4. Attempt to mitigate all water rescue incidents using low to high risk rescue options, considering risk benefit analysis for victims and rescuers. IC should consider rescue versus recovery operations if the victim or victims have been underwater in excess of 1 hour.
5. Ensure safety in the following order: Self Safety, Team Safety and Victim Safety.



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### Minimum PPE:

- Agency approved personal floatation device (PFD) within 10 feet of the water's edge (Type 3, Type 5 or equivalent).
- Agency approved water draining head protection.
- Agency approved thermal protection according to the incident (dry suit and liner or wet suit).
- Agency approved foot protection (water booties or athletic shoes).
- Agency approved and appropriate PPE for medical rescue incidents.

### OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES:

1. Identify and confirm victim or victims' location and conduct victim profile.
2. Provide for adequate downstream protection for victims and rescuers.
3. Ensure qualified personnel are performing the low to high-risk options.
4. Provide adequate upstream protection for personnel on the incident.
5. Be prepared to activate backup plans within the incident.
6. Provide for victim or victims' egress and/or transport.



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### PROCEDURE:

1. Dispatch for Water/Medical Rescue:
  - Engine(s)
  - ALS Ambulance
  - Chief Officer
  - TRT beyond scope/ability of initial response
  
2. Initial Actions
  - Establish Rescue Group Supervisor
  - Determine the location of victim
  - Obtain information from bystander interrogation
  - Determine appropriate point of entry
  - Designate an Incident Safety Officer
  - Designate upstream lookout
  - Designate downstream safety
  - Implement shore-based search
  - Resource request including air resources

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Each agency shall have a certification and qualification process for Swift Water Rescuers and Boat Operators.
  
2. Victim Recovery - AHJ
  
3. Each Agency should use the principles of training and response as outlined in the following Firescope Documents:
  - ICS -SF-SAR-020-1
  - ICS -US&R 120-2
  - ICS -US&R-120-1

These documents also provide definitions and response matrixes for modeling in the event of a large-scale flooding event.



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**References:**

- OSHA

**Review/Revision History:**

- Swift Water/Medical Rescue Created January 2020

The Undersigned Fire Chiefs approve of the content in this document. Dated: November 1, 2021

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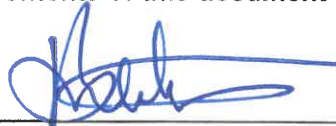
**Swift Water/Medical Rescue**

**AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE DELIVERY OF EXCEPTIONAL FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY SERVICES THROUGH COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK**


**Signature Page**

The undersigned Fire Chiefs approve the contents of this document

  
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