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Swift Water Medical Rescue

PURPOSE: To establish basic guidelines and procedures for water rescue response operations, designed to be applied generally and modified as situations dictate.

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

I. Operational Considerations

a) 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.
b) 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.
c) Ensure personnel are qualified to perform their assigned tasks.
d) Attempt to mitigate all water rescue incident 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.
e) Ensure safety in the following order:
    - Self Safety
    - Team Safety
    - Victim Safety

II. Minimum PPE

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

III. Operational Guidelines

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a) Identify and confirm victim or victim's location and conduct victim profile
b) Provide for adequate downstream protection for victims and rescuers
c) Ensure qualified personnel are performing the low to high-risk options.
d) Provide adequate upstream protection for personnel on the incident.
e) Be prepared to activate backup plans within the incident.
f) Provide for victim or victim's egress and/or transport.

Dispatch for water and Medical Rescue

a) Engine(s)
b) ALS Ambulance
c) Chief Officer
d) TRT beyond scope/ability of initial response

Initial Actions

a) Establish Rescue Group Supervisor
b) Determine the location of the victim
c) Obtain information from bystander interrogation
d) Determine appropriate point of entry
e) Designate an Incident Safety Officer
f) Designate upstream lookout
g) Designate downstream safety
h) Implement shore -based search
i) Resource request including air resources

IV. Additional Considerations

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

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WESTERN PLACER COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

SOG SWIFT WATER MEDICAL RESCUE

Swift Water Medical Rescue

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

RESPONSIBLE: Incident Commander

REFERENCES:
OSHA

REVISION/REVIEW HISTORY:
SOG Created……..January 2020
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The undersigned Fire Chiefs approve the contents of this document.

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