DAYVILLE FIRE COMPANY

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Section: Incidents

Date Issued: 10-27-08

SOG: D-10

SUBJECT: WATER RESCUE

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for conducting water rescue/recovery operations.

DEFINITION:

The purpose of this guideline is to assure the efficient conducting of operation of water rescue/recovery while maintaining the highest level of safety for all personnel.

This guideline will apply to all personnel operating at the scene of any water rescue/recovery.

Phase 1

Arrive on scene. Take command. Size Up.

A. Incident Command System as described by NIMS will be established. Command will appoint all necessary positions.
B. Operation Officer should secure a witness if possible as soon as possible after arriving on scene. This will help in identifying and locating the problem.
C. Command should immediately begin assessing the need for additional resources. If additional resources are necessary, Command should put in an early call for them. If later, it is determine that the resources are not necessary, Command can place them in staging or return units.
D. Safety Officer should do an immediate assessment of the present hazards. The Safety Officer will be responsible for identifying the hazards present and to have them secured if possible. If not possible to secure hazards, the Safety Officer will notify all personnel of the hazards and notify Command so that an action plan can be established. Some hazards associated with water rescue operations would be: volume, velocity, temperature of water, floating debris, unusual drop-offs, hydraulic effects, and depth of water.
E. Based on the conditions present and the hazards to rescuers, Command will make the decision to operate in the rescue or recovery mode. If Command determines that the operation will be run in the rescue mode, rescue should begin quickly.

Phase 2

Pre-Rescue Operations

A. The Safety Officer should begin to make the general area safe. On water rescue operations, this would include securing the area and not allowing civilian personnel in the water.
B. Operation Officer should secure the immediate rescue area. He/she may want to assign an Accountability Officer to account for all personnel working within the rescue area. Personnel working in the rescue area (water edge) shall have personnel protective equipment (PPE), including personal flotation device (PFD). If at all possible, the hazards in the rescue area should be secured. If it is not possible, Operation Officer shall notify all rescuers in the area of possible hazards.

Phase 3

Rescue Operations

After pre-rescue operations are completed, the Operation Officer shall put forth the action plan for the removal of the victim(s). Rescue operations should be conducted from low risk to high risk order. Rescues should be conducted with the least amount of risk to the rescuer necessary to rescue the victim. Low risk operations are not always possible by means of a high risk operation. Operation Officer shall communicate with command the risk/benefit of the operation. The order of water rescue from low to high risk will be:

TALK the victim into self-rescue. If possible, the victim can be talked into swimming to shore or assisting the rescuers with his/her own rescue. If a victim is stranded in the middle of a flash flood, this will be prudent.

REACH the victim by extending his/her hand or some other object, such as a pike pole, to remove the victim from the water.

THROW to the victim if they are too far out in the water to reach, a bag or some piece of positive flotation.

BOAT can be used to rescue the victim. If it is determine that a boat operation shall be run, Operation will assign a person responsible for the operation of the boat. All personnel staged in the boat will wear personnel flotation device (PFD) or cold water rescue suit. All personnel staged in the boat will NOT wear firefighter turn out gear.

GO. If it is not possible for the boat to help the victim, Operation should consider putting a rescuer in the water to reach the victim. This is a high risk operation. Only rescuers with the proper training and equipment should be allowed to enter the water. Prior to the rescuer actually proceeding into the water, he/she shall discuss the action plan, including specific tasks and objectives, hazards and alternate plans. The rescuer shall never be attached to a life line without the benefit of a quick-release mechanism.

Once the rescuer(s) have reached the victim, they should do an immediate assessment of the victim, a quick assessment of the ABC's and the exact method of entrapment. If the victim is conscious, the rescuer should determine if the victim can assist in his/her own rescue. If the victim is conscious, the rescue must be quick.

As soon as the victim is brought to safety, an assessment should be done by ALS personnel. Treatment shall be administered as per local protocol.

Phase 4

Termination

Command should begin termination as soon as possible after the victim has been removed from the water. This shall include securing all the equipment used for the rescue and personnel accountability.

Additional Considerations during the operation:

A. HEAT. Consider rotation of crews.
B. COLD. Consider the affects of hypothermia on victim and rescuers.
C. RAIN/SNOW. Consider the affects of rain or snow on the hazard profile.
D. TIME OF DAY. Is there sufficient lighting for operations extending into the night.
E. Consider the affect on family and friends. Keep the family informed.
F. Consider news media. Assign a P.I.O.

This S.O.G. was last reviewed and/or updated on October 27, 2008.