

Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guidelines

SUBJECT: WATER EMERGENCIES

SOG 821

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Standard Operating Guideline is to provide an outline for conducting operations in or near water.

SCOPE: This policy shall apply to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

DEFINITIONS

Rescue. A rescue is a situation where a victim is stranded, floundering, or has been submerged for a short period of time (usually less than thirty (30) minutes).

Recovery. A recovery is a situation where a victim has been submerged for such a long period of time that the victim is most probably dead, and the goal of the operation is to recover the body.

Water Incidents. Water in swimming pools more than three (3) feet deep, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, creeks, low head dams, and water treatment facilities.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. Helmet, personal flotation device (PFD), attached safety line. Note, structural firefighting turnout clothing is not acceptable.

Ice Incidents. Ice incidents involving partially or completely frozen bodies of water.

Safety line. Rope dedicated solely for the purpose of supporting people during rescue, firefighting, or other emergency operations.

Throw Bag. A weighted floating bag containing seventy- five (75) feet of static rope.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

1. The standard response to any water emergency shall be Ladder 21, Engine 6, and Jacksonport Fire.
2. Upon the confirmation of a water emergency, the alarm may be upgraded to include any additional Mutual Aid.

UPON ARRIVAL

1. The initial actions of the first arriving personnel are essential to an effective rescue effort. The first arriving apparatus or officer to a water emergency shall:
 - a. Position apparatus to mark scene and utilize any lights or generators needed.

- b. Assign a staging officer to establish a level two staging area and direct incoming units to staging.
- c. Determine if a water emergency situation is present:
 - Identify witnesses to the incident.
 - Approach the site wearing the appropriate personnel protective equipment.
 - Identify victim location and number of victims.
 - Determine if a rescue or recovery operation is needed.

RESCUE OPERATIONS

1. The following methods can be used to rescue a victim:
 - **Reach-** Extend a long handled tool to the victim
 - **Throw-** Throw the throw bag to the victim
 - **Support-** Assist qualified rescue technicians in a support role (Jacksonport Fire's rescue boat)

RECOVERY OPERATIONS

1. Recovery operations shall be performed by qualified rescue technicians.
 - Egg Harbor Fire Department personnel may assist qualified rescue technicians in the recovery process in a support role.

GENERAL SAFETY

1. Personnel shall not approach within ten (10) feet of the water without proper PPE (helmet, PFD, and attached to a safety line).
2. Personnel shall work in teams of two.
3. The Incident Commander shall appoint a Safety Officer.
4. All personnel shall be briefed on any special hazards upon arrival to the incident.
5. All personnel operating within ten (10) feet of the water shall remain in visual and audible contact with the person tending to their safety line.