



**ARCADIA FIRE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

**WATER RESCUE**

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**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a guideline for conducting safe and efficient water rescue/recovery operations.

**RESCUER SAFETY:**

- **DO NOT** wear turnouts, work boots, or fire fighting helmet while engaged in any water related incident. It is recommended to keep tennis shoes with you during periods of predicted rain. Wear a flotation vest and helmet designed for water rescue operations within 10 feet of the waters edge.
- The force of water traveling at 9 MPH will exert 151 pounds force to your legs and 302 pounds to your body!

**PROCEDURE**

**TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. One unit to the reported point of entry - Gather information, relay description of clothing, age, time of entry, physical condition, etc. and number of victims to responding units.
2. Assign a Tactical Group: Down stream of the point of entry
  - A. Deployment of throw rings, flotation devices, tension diagonal, throw bags and/or inflated fire hose are some of the options, depending on time.
  - B. Secure responsible party or witness.
  - C. Request additional resources as needed.
  - D. Assess the hazards.
    - a. Hazards associated with water rescue operations would be: volume, velocity, and temperature of water, floating debris, unusual drop-offs, hydraulic effects, and depth of water.
  - E. Assign a Safety Officer

- F. Assign a Safety Group: Down stream of the tactical unit.
  - a. This group will set-up as a safety. Deploy tension diagonal and/or throw bags as a back up-safety if the upstream attempts fail or a rescuer falls in.
- G. Assign an Upstream Division to spot floating debris and notify down stream personnel.
- H. Request a helicopter for aerial recon and spotting hazards.
- I. Implement Personnel Accountability System.

3. The order of water rescue procedures from low risk 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.

REACH: If possible, the rescuer should extend his/her hand or some other object, such as a pike pole, to remove the victim from the water.

THROW: If the victim is too far out in the water to reach, rescuer(s) should attempt to throw the victim a throw bag or some piece of positive flotation (i.e., PFD, rescue ring). Downstream personnel should be in position during the rescue operation. If the victim is able to grab the throw bag, the rescuer can pendulum belay or haul the victim to the nearest bank.

TERMINATION

1. Personnel accountability.
2. Equipment accountability.
3. Consider debriefing.
4. Secure the scene. Return to service.