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Effective Date: 08/07/2010

Last Review Date: 05/24/2020

# Waterloo Vol Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

## Water Emergencies

**Purpose:** The purpose of this standard operating guideline is to provide an outline for the conducting operations near water.

### 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 30 minutes).

**Recovery:** A recovery is a situation where a victim has been submerged for 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 is a swimming pool more than 3 feet deep, lakes ponds, rivers, streams, creeks, low head dams, and water treatment facilities.

**Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment:** Helmet, gloves and a personal floating device (PFD) attached to a safety line. Note: Structural Firefighting turnout clothing is not acceptable.

**Ice Incidents:** Ice incidents involve partially or completely frozen bodies of water.

**Safety Line:** Rope that is solely for the purpose of supporting people during rescue, firefighting or other emergencies operations.

**Throw Bag:** A weighted floating bag containing fifty feet of static rope.

### Incident Response:

- The standard response shall be 1642 with the ice water equipment, the rescue and either the Border City Water Rescue/dive team.
- An Advance Life Support EMS response.

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### Initial Arriving Officer:

The initial actions of the first arriving officer are essential to an effective rescue effort. The first arriving officer to the water emergency shall:

- Position apparatus to mark the scene and utilize any lights or generators needed.
- Assign a staging officer to establish a staging area and direct incoming units to staging.
- Determine if a water emergency situation is present:
  - Identify witnesses to the incident
  - Approach the site wearing the appropriate protective equipment
  - Identify victim location and the number of victims
  - Determine if a rescue or recovery operations is needed

### Rescue Operations:

- 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
  - Enter --- Proper tethered and suited rescuers enter water.

Additional information is available in SOG 2019-029 - Cold Water Rescue

### Recovery Operations:

- Recovery operations shall be performed by qualified rescue technicians from Border City Water Rescue/Dive Team.

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- Additional resources may be available from the Sheriff's Dept and Seneca Falls Fire Dept.
- Waterloo Fire Department personnel may assist qualified rescue technicians in the recovery process in a support role.

### General Safety:

- Personnel shall not approach within ten (10) feet of the water without proper PPE (helmet, PFD and attached safety line).
- Personnel shall work in teams of two.
- The Incident Commander shall appoint a Safety Officer.
- All personnel shall be briefed on any special hazards upon arrival to the incident.
- 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.