

# Yakima County Fire District 12- Standard Operating Guidelines

## SOG 4-7 – Water Emergencies

### 1. General

**1.1 Purpose.** The purpose of this Standard Operating Guideline is to provide an outline for conducting operations near water.

**1.2 Scope.** This Standard Operating Guideline shall apply to all members of Yakima County Fire District 12.

**1.3 Enforcement.** Enforcement of this Standard Operating Guideline is the responsibility of the District's officers. Any person deviating from the provisions of this guideline may be required, at the discretion of the officer in charge, to submit in writing, within five (5) calendar days, an explanation for such deviation to the requesting officer who will forward the explanation up the chain of command for further review.

### 2. Definitions

**2.1 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).

**2.2 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.

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

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

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

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

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

### **3. Incident Response**

- 3.1** The standard response to any water emergency shall be a Rescue, Engine, Command Officer, and Yakima Sheriffs Office Dive Team.
- 3.2** Upon the confirmation of a water emergency, the alarm shall be upgraded to include an additional Rescue, Engine, and technical rescue squad from the Yakima Fire Department.

### **4. Initial Arriving Company or Officer**

- 4.1** The initial actions of the first arriving company are essential to an effective rescue effort. The first arriving company or officer to a water emergency shall:
- 4.2** Position apparatus to mark scene and utilize any lights or generators needed.
- 4.1.2** Assign a staging officer to establish a level two staging area and direct incoming units to staging.
- 4.1.3** 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

### **5. Rescue Operations**

- 5.1** 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

### **6. Recovery Operations**

- 6.1** Recovery operations shall be performed by qualified rescue technicians (YSO dive team, YFD Tech Rescue).
- Yakima County Fire District 12 personnel may assist qualified rescue technicians in the recovery process in a support role.

## **7. General Safety**

**7.1** Personnel shall not approach within ten (10) feet of the water without proper PPE (helmet, PFD, and attached to a safety line).

**7.2** Personnel shall work in teams of two.

**7.3** The Incident Commander shall appoint a Safety Officer.

**7.4** All personnel shall be briefed on any special hazards upon arrival to the incident.

**7.5** 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.