



# SOUTH LYON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Manual of Procedures 420

### ICE RESCUE

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Issued: December 2, 2011  
Revised: October 25, 2016  
Approved: Chief Mike Kennedy

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#### I. SCOPE

SLFD shall respond to any incident of a person or animal through the ice.

#### II. RESCUE TEAMS

Four (4) Rescuers

Eight (8) Line Tenders

- A. Rescuer - Each rescuer shall be dressed in an ice rescue suit. The rescuer is to be secured to the water rescue rope with a locking carabineer attached to the ice rescue suit on one end and the other end attached to shore with a non-locking carabineer. A carabineer shall be attached to the water rescue rope, six (6) feet from the rescuer's chest. This equipment provides buoyancy, exposure protection and reduces the chance of head injury to the rescuers. The ice rescue suit harness worn by the rescuer provides the rescuer with a lifeline as well as providing a proper method for the line tenders to pull the rescuer and victim to safety with the water rescue rope.
- B. Line Tender – Line tenders shall be equipped with warm clothing, gloves, boots and hats. Each line tender shall wear a personal floatation device (PFD).

#### III. SIZE UP

Incident Commander (IC) shall set up a safety zone of one-hundred (100) feet. All personnel working within this area shall wear an approved PFD. The area of operations shall be roped or barricaded and only emergency personnel allowed in the area.

A proper size-up of the situation is critical for a safe and effective ice rescue. Size-up shall include, but is not limited to, a survey of the following:

- A. Ice conditions – areas of safe ice, easiest access and shortest distance to the victim.
- B. Victim's condition – possible hypothermia and mental status.
- C. Rescue personnel – available and/or additional personnel needed.
- D. Rescue equipment – available and/or additional equipment needed.

#### IV. OPERATIONAL PLANS

- A. Self-rescue – The first unit on the scene shall attempt to talk the victim into self-evacuation. This method works well when the victim is close to shore, responsive, and is not showing any signs of hypothermia.
- B. Reach – If the victim is in early stages of hypothermia, but is able to understand instructions and hold on, use some type of device, e.g., pike pole, to rescue the victim. This method also works well when the victim is close to shore and is responsive.
- C. Throw - If the victim is in the early stages of hypothermia, but is able to understand instructions and hold on, use a water rescue throw line seventy-five (75) feet to retrieve the victim. Throw the water rescue throw line past the victim, over the victim's shoulder. Make sure that one end of the water rescue throw line is anchored by the rescuer. Have the victim wrap the water rescue throw line around their body and then pull the victim to shore. This method works for distances up to sixty (60) feet.



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If the responsive victim is over sixty (60) feet from shore, a rescuer (equipped as described above) must take the water rescue throw line to within sixty (60) feet of the victim and attempt the rescue as described above.

- D. Go - If the victim is unresponsive, then the rescue team shall have to retrieve the victim using the following procedures:
- i. The primary rescuer, dressed in the proper equipment and tethered to shore, should walk toward the victim keeping a low profile with a shuffling step. When the ice becomes unstable, the rescuer should lay down and roll to the victim. If the rescuer breaks through the ice, the rescuer should continue toward the victim by swimming and/or crawling back onto the ice. When the rescuer reaches the victim, the water rescue rope shall be secured around the victim and the rescuer shall give the okay signal by placing a hand on the head and lifting it into the air.
  - ii. The line tenders shall free rope to the rescuers in a manner that provides no resistance on the line. When the rescuer gives the okay signal, the line tenders should pull in the slack and pull both the victim and rescuer to safety.
  - iii. Okay signal – When the rescuer places a hand on top of their head that is the signal to start pulling. If during the pull the rescuer again places a hand on top of their head, the pull shall cease immediately until the rescuer again signals okay by placing a hand on top of their head.
  - iv. A second rescuer shall be dressed in the proper equipment and ready to respond in the event the primary rescuer has trouble.
  - v. If a victim goes beneath the ice cap, the rescuer shall not enter the hole where the victim was last seen. The rescuer shall approach the holes and do a visual check for the victim. If the victim is seen, a rescue attempt shall be made. If the rescuer is unable to locate the victim, the rescuer shall exit the area. An area of safe ice, in the immediate area must be located so the Oakland County Sheriff's Office divers can work in close proximity to the last known location of the victim.

Approved by  
/s/ Chief Mike Kennedy