



CHARLOTTESVILLE - ALBEMARLE RESCUE SQUAD



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

TOPIC: Water Rescue Team	S.O.P. # 4.3
Approved by: Lair D. Haugh, Chief	Revised: 2/9/2003 Approved:

I. PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of the water/dive rescue team is to provide a nucleus of highly trained special rescue personnel to deal with situations involving water related search, rescue, and recovery without risking the lives of untrained squad members. These situations can range from acquiring evidence for local law enforcement agencies to recovering a drowning victim from a local swimming area. The purpose of the team is to be able to perform these tasks, but to do so in a safe and organized manner.

II. GOALS

- a. The primary goal of the water/dive rescue team involves the successful organization, direction, support, execution, and safety of both surface and subsurface search, rescue, and recovery. Personnel acting in such a capacity may be expected to organize, direct, and personally participate in such operations. They will also be responsible for assuring that all available resources are properly utilized to include untrained personnel with particular attention being paid to the safety of the organization.

III. BASIC ORGANIZATION

- a. Organization
 - i. Water Rescue Captain
 1. The water rescue captain will be responsible for the organization, operation, preparedness, and training of the water/dive rescue team. Duties of the water rescue captain are summarized below:
 - a. responsible for overseeing the organization, operation, and training of the water/dive rescue team;
 - b. handling on-scene operations as needed or appointing another senior member to handle the task;
 - c. appointment and dismissal of assistants;
 - d. representing the team at meetings such as the board of director meetings;
 - e. projecting operational needs and preparing a budget;
 - f. performing other duties as needed or assigning those duties to other members of the team.
 - ii. Dive Operations Officer
 1. The dive operations officer will be responsible for the condition, care, readiness, and maintenance of all dive team gear. This will include:
 - a. responsible for dive equipment maintenance;
 - b. inspects all individual dive equipment and approves for use;
 - c. assures that all dive equipment is fit for operation at all times or taken out of service for repair;

- d. maintains required records on VIPs, HYDROs, yearly maintenance, etc;
- e. maintains adequate spare parts inventory for maintenance;
- f. maintains an up to date inventory of all scuba equipment;
- g. maintains proper tools for routine maintenance;
- h. notifies Fleet Operations Officer about truck problems.

iii. Boat Operations Officer

1. The boat operations officer will be responsible for the condition, care, readiness, and maintenance of all boat/swift water rescue team gear.

This will include:

- a. responsible for boat/swift water rescue equipment maintenance;
- b. inspects individual equipment and approves for use;
- c. assures that equipment is fit for operation at all times or taken out of service for repair;
- d. maintains required records on yearly maintenance, rope tests, rope use, etc;
- e. maintains adequate spare parts inventory for maintenance;
- f. maintains an up to date inventory of all boat/swift water rescue equipment;
- g. maintains proper tools for routine maintenance;
- h. notifies Fleet Operations Officer about boat engine problems.

iv. Competition Team Captain

1. The competition team captain will be responsible for all administrative and personnel management of competitions involving the water/dive rescue team. His/her duties will include:

- a. acquiring information on competitions that the team wishes to enter;
- b. organizing the team members for extra or special training relating to competition;
- c. making arrangements to enter competition including out-of-town arrangements and estimates for costs to present to the board of directors;
- d. choosing water/dive rescue team members to compete;
- e. being team captain at competition.

b. Membership

- i. Membership of the water/dive rescue team will include active, honorary, and full members of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad that fulfill the required yearly training, maintain current certifications, and meet the approval of the water rescue captain. All members must be certified in CPR and should be certified EMT.

c. Composition

- i. The team will consist of four general categories of expertise which are: dive rescue, swift water rescue, boat operations, and ground support personnel. Under no circumstances will any member perform duties beyond his/her training or certification regardless of the situation, whether in training or a

rescue operation. Each area of expertise is described below.

ii. Dive Rescue Personnel

1. Dive rescue personnel are personnel trained specifically to use SCUBA in search, rescue, and recovery situations. Although it is preferred that all divers be certified in Rescue Diver or an equivalent before diving in a rescue situation, divers certified in Advanced Open Water or an equivalent will be utilized if necessary. certifications are accepted from PADI, NAUI, and the YMCA, but all dive rescue personnel are expected to follow the guidelines as expressed by Dive Rescue International. No diver will dive to a depth below his/her certification level, or perform tasks that are beyond his/her area of expertise. It is expressly forbidden that any diver dive alone, and should always dive with a buddy or be line tendered to the surface with a backup diver available and ready. ANY deviations from this rule will result in suspension of the member from the team.

iii. Swift Water Personnel

1. Swift water personnel are personnel trained specifically to perform rescues as related to swift water operations. Members must be VAVRS Swift Water rescue certified or an equivalent and all swift water rescue personnel are expected to follow the guidelines as expressed by VAVRS. No swift water rescue personnel will perform tasks that are beyond his/her level of expertise. It is expressly forbidden that any swift water rescue personnel enter the water of a swift water operation without at least a boat, a boat operator, one other backup swift water rescue personnel present, a helmet and a PFD. ANY deviations from this rule will result in suspension of the member from the team.

iv. Boat Operations Personnel

1. A boat operator is any member of the team who trains and is released to operate and tow one of the squad boats. It is necessary to ensure that all boat operators are capable of handling the craft under extremely adverse circumstances including both day and night, in flood and rapid waters situations. Since there are currently no "boat operator" certifications available, release as a boat operator is at the discretion of the water rescue captain. No personnel will perform tasks that are beyond his/her area of expertise and it is expressly forbidden that any boat operator enter a boat in the water without at least a PFD. ANY deviations from this rule will result in suspension of the member from the team.

v. Ground Support Personnel

1. Ground support personnel is any member of the team who expresses interest and trains to provide surface, shore, communications, logistical, or other support necessary for the accomplishment of the search, rescue, or recovery operations of the team. release is at the discretion of the water rescue captain. No personnel will perform tasks that are beyond his/her area of expertise and it is expressly forbidden that ground

support personnel enter a hazardous water rescue operation without appropriate gear or training. ANY deviations from this rule will result in suspension of the member from the team.

IV. OPERATION

a. Training

- i. There will be 6 team training's per year. Each member is required to attend at least 4 of them to remain active. The only excusable absences are work related absences or squad related activities, with makeup training required. Members are also required to attend at least one water/dive rescue team standby or work detail. Any member that does not fulfill these requirements will be required to appear before a review committee which will consist of the water rescue captain, Deputy Chief of Special Operations, and the Chief
- ii. Further training of particular personnel is required. Each dive member will be required to log at least 4 dives per year. Swift water personnel will be required to keep their certifications current with VAVRS, and boat operators will be asked to participate in at least one scenario per year that shows their boat operator skills.

b. Personnel Equipment

- i. Dive members are required to provide their own masks, fins, snorkels, booties, gloves, hood, wet suit, and weight belt. Any personal equipment must be approved by the water rescue captain or respective assistant. Other team members are not required to provide equipment but are welcome to at any time with approval.
- ii. Any squad equipment used for events other than team training or rescue operations must be approved must be approved by the water rescue captain and the duty officer notified. Any personnel taking equipment out of the CARS response region should also notify the Chief.

V. ACTIVATION'S

- a. In the event of a water/dive rescue activation the team members should follow the following steps to help insure an efficient, coordinated, and safe effort.
 - i. Hook the boat to Support 138. If Support 138 is not available, Car 130 or Car 131 shall be utilized. Water Rescue 136 should be hooked to the boat only as a last resort.
 - ii. The boat should not leave the building until there is an approved driver able to pull the boat on board and a boat operator.
 - iii. The scuba truck should not leave the building until there is at least one driver on board and two dive rescue personnel en route to the scene or aboard the truck.
 - iv. Divers will dive in buddy teams within visual contact of each other and a standby diver shall be available for each diver in the water.
 - v. When a diver is in the water alone, out of view of his/her "buddy", or in a current in excess of 1 knot, he/she shall be line- tended to the surface.
 - vi. A diver shall be stationed at the underwater point of entry when diving is conducted in enclosed or physically confining spaces.

- vii. Each diver must surface when his/her air supply reads 500 psi, or when he/she feels fatigued or hypothermic.
- viii. All boat operators shall have a PFD on at all times while operating the boat.
- ix. Any personnel that does not feel completely confident in the tasks he/she are asked to perform should notify the incident commander and refrain from doing the tasks assigned.
- x. All personnel are required to follow safe guidelines as expressed in their specific area of expertise.
- xi. The incident commander should appoint senior personnel to lead sub-teams that must perform tasks away from the main area of the incident.
- xii. In the event that the water rescue captain is not available the most senior water rescue personnel in the specific area of expertise will be in charge or as appointed by the duty officer.

VI. STANDBYS

- a. Each member of the team will be required to attend at least one stand-by or work detail per year.

VII. CONCLUSION

- a. The purpose of these procedures are to enhance the quality of training of the team and allow the team to operate as efficiently and safely as possible in a water/ dive rescue, search, or recovery situation. The procedures are expected to be followed at all times, if and when possible. Failure to do so will be considered on a situation-by-situation basis, but could result in suspension of the member from the team. As changes to these procedures occur, members of the team will be notified as soon as possible.