	West Fargo Fire & Rescue Standard Operating Guideline			
	Subject: WATER-ICE RESCUE			Authorized by:
	Section: OPERATIONS	Date Authorized:	Date Reviewed:	D. Fuller Fire Chief
	Number: 213	8/5/2015	11/1/2017	

Intent

The intent of this Standard Operating Guideline is to establish procedures for; (a) assessing risk at a water or ice rescue incident, (b) organizing a water or ice rescue team, (c) operating in water or on ice.

Guidelines

First and foremost, the safety of all responders is paramount when responding to and operating at a water or ice rescue incident. A risk assessment shall be conducted prior to any rescue swimmer entering the water or operating on the ice.

Risk Assessment

- Is there reliable information that a victim entered the water or broke through the ice?
- Is a witness available to give a last seen point?
- How much time has elapsed since the victim entered the water?
- Asses the water conditions – static or swift water
- Asses the ice conditions – strength of ice, static or swift water under the ice
- Selection of rescue method which provides the least amount of risk to personnel; self-rescue, throw, row, go

Rescue Techniques

Self-Rescue Technique

- Make contact with the victim; use the P/A on the apparatus
- Throw a set of ice picks to the victim; instruct them on how to use them to get up on the ice shelf, and then roll toward the shore or rescuers

Throw


Each front line engine and all administrative vehicles have thrown rings and 100ft waterproof lifeline for throwing to victims on ice or in water. Throw the ring or rope bag to the victim, have them hold onto the line and pull the victim to shore. An air inflated hose line can also be used.

Row

- Team of two rescuers in the boat with PFD’s and line from the boat to the shore
- Using the Rescue boat (Central Station) or Rapid Inflatable Craft (Southside Station) maneuver upstream from the victim and drift toward s the victim. Ensure the engine (Rescue Boat) is shut off when operating near the victim. Pull in victim and return to shore.

Go

Team of two rescue swimmers enters the water to rescue victim(s) * IC may use one swimmer with a backup if exigent circumstances exist

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Rescue Team Organization

Operations Team Leader

Primary Rescue Team: Responsible for entry

Rescue Swimmers (team of two in cold water rescue suits and helmets)
Rope Tenders (team of two)

Backup Rescue Team: Provides backup for primary rescue team

Rescue Swimmers (team of two in cold water rescue suits and helmets)
Rope Tenders (team of two)

Communication

The Incident Commander, Operations Team Leader, and Safety Officer will maintain communications throughout the incident, however the Operations Team Leader will maintain communications with the rescue team only.

Communication between the rescue team and operations team leader will be hand signals or flags in lieu of voice communications.

Operations Team Leader Hand / Flag Signals

Arms extended straight up	Rescue swimmer continues in current direction
Arms crossed	Rescue swimmer STOP
Arms extended to left/right	Rescue swimmer moves in that direction
Arms up and circling	Rescue swimmer turns around to face victim

Rescue Swimmer Hand Signals

Tap head with one hand	Retrieve line
Extend both arms over head	Stop
One arm overhead, side to side	Send backup swimmer into water

Safety

If resources permit, a safety officer shall be implemented to report directly to the IC and stop unsafe acts on scene.



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Fire Chief

All rescue swimmers entering the water shall be secured with an approved life safety knot (figure eight on a bight with safety knot) attached to a locking steel carabiner. Rigging and knots will be checked by the Operations Team Leader prior to entering the water.

All members operating within 15ft of the water shall wear a personal floatation device (PFD)

All watercraft used in rescues shall have a shoreline attached for quick maneuvering

The Rescue Boat shall cut the motor and use manual power when operating around victims and obstructions

Whenever personnel enter the water, a medical group shall be established for rehab. This is in addition to the medical units for treatment of victims.

Any personnel who enter cold water shall be evaluated and treated, if needed, by emergency medical staff.