

	WATER RESCUE OPERATIONS	2014revA
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Procedure:

- Water rescue operations for LFRA are limited in scope to rescue operations in which a confirmed victim has been submerged less than one hour with a reliable last seen location.
- LFRA does not conduct recovery operations.
- LFRA does not initiate a rescue operation without a reliable last seen point.
- LFRA will initiate a known shore based rescue in familiar water with a single diver on scene.
- LFRA requires a minimum of two divers on scene to initiate any operation in water not familiar or for any boat based dive operation.
- LFRA requires a minimum of three divers on scene to initiate any ice diving operation.

Size-Up Considerations

- The first arriving officer for a water rescue operation needs to distinguish if the rescue is currently a dive, swiftwater, or ice rescue. Next, the officer needs to determine if a victim can be identified and located. Once a victim is located, resources need to be committed to establish a last seen point at that location. If no victim is located, investigation needs to determine if a reliable last seen point and downtime can be determined from witnesses. If the findings do not meet the criteria for a rescue operation, the officer should evaluate if a transition to the Larimer County Dive Rescue team is appropriate (recovery operation), or if the scene should be turned over to law enforcement for further investigation.

Incident Action Plan Considerations

- If the first arriving officer determines the incident is a **dive** rescue operation:
 - Secure the scene
 - Isolate and interview witnesses to determine last seen point and downtime
 - Name a location for Dive2 and divers to dress
 - Name a separate location for other resources to stage
 - Confirm a SOT page has been sent to request dive resources
- If the first arriving officer determines the incident is a **swiftwater** rescue operation:
 - Secure the scene
 - Isolate and interview witnesses to determine last seen point and time in water
 - Name a location for Dive2 and divers to dress
 - Name a separate location for other resources to stage

- Confirm an SOT page has been sent to request swiftwater resources
- If the first arriving officer determines the incident is an **ice** rescue operation:
 - Secure the scene
 - Isolate and interview witnesses to determine time in water and victim #
 - Name a location for Dive2 and divers to dress
 - Name a separate location for other resources to stage
 - Confirm an SOT page has been sent to request dive resources
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Company Level Functions

First Arriving Engine/Truck

- For **all water rescue** operations:
 - Secure the scene by keeping bystanders and witnesses in place. Utilize crew members to begin interviewing people on scene. Witnesses should be left in place, identified to command, and interviewed. The specifics of the interview process can be found in the clipboard maintained with the water rescue equipment. Crews should attempt to establish a last seen point and determine the number of victims and time in the water. Bystanders that offer no information regarding a last seen point should be taken to an area away from the immediate scene. Contact information should be requested from bystanders before releasing them from the scene. Law enforcement can be utilized to assist with interviews and securing the scene.
 - Maintain the scene and do not allow additional people in the water.
 - Coordinate with arriving units to help determine the last seen point. Personnel should be placed with key witnesses to create a communication loop to direct the initial position of rescue technicians.
 - Assign a rescue group supervisor.
- For a **dive** operation:
 - A staging area for divers and Dive2 needs to be assigned
 - Qualified personnel should be directed to this staging location to assist with preparing divers and tending.
 - If a victim is present on the surface of the water, a qualified person should be dressed in a cold water rescue suit, assigned a tender, and sent to perform a surface rescue.
- For a **swiftwater** operation:
 - Confirm all members are wearing PFDs and have throw bags.
 - Determine the approximate speed of current by pacing with an object floating in the water. Use the speed and the time in water to determine the maximum distance a victim could have moved downstream. Direct incoming resources to set a downstream safety below this location.

- If a victim is located, communicate this location. If the victim is conscious and able to assist in a rescue, utilize reach or throw rescue techniques. If the victim is not conscious, maintain visual contact and communicate location updates.
- If no victim is located, attempt to place resources on both shores and begin a hasty search.
- For an **ice** rescue operation:
 - Dress a qualified member of the crew in a cold-water rescue suit and assign a tender to this rescuer.
 - If a victim is located on the surface of the water, initiate a surface rescue.

Benchmarks

The following benchmarks are utilized with water rescue incidents to ensure that the incident priorities are being obtained as well as to determine that the appropriate risk profile is being assigned to the incident.

Victim confirmed

This benchmark is critical to initiating a rescue operation. Many reports of people in the water cannot be confirmed. If a reliable witness cannot establish a last seen point and estimate a time in the water, then no rescue can be initiated.

- LFRA does not conduct recovery operations.
- LFRA does not initiate a rescue operation without a reliable last seen point.

Rescue initiated

This benchmark is used when rescuers are placed in or on the water. This benchmark corresponds to a “high risk” level.

Rescue complete

This benchmark is used when all rescuers are out of or off the water.

Revision History

References: