

POLSON City/Rural FIRE DEPARTMENT

Operating Guidelines

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325.00 – Ice and Cold Water Rescue

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Purpose:

To establish guidelines and procedures for the safe and efficient conduct of ice and cold water rescue operations of the Finley Point and Polson Fire Departments.

Scope:

These procedures and guidelines will be used during any cold water or ice rescue operation within the response area and on mutual aid calls with other departments.

Procedure:

Upon receipt of an alarm for a cold water or ice rescue emergency, the Polson, Ronan, and Finley Point fire departments will respond with all available resources and the Rescue Alive sled.

1. The senior officer or member on the scene will establish Incident Command (IC). The incident commander on scene is responsible for the following actions.
 - A. Determine the number of victims, their condition, and last known location if they cannot be seen from shore, and time of immersion.
 - B. Notify the dispatch center to establish radio control and the location of the command post.
 - C. Assign a rescue worker to make and maintain contact with the victim until the rescue is complete.
2. The communication center should notify the following immediately:
 - A. Polson, Ronan and Finley Point fire department(s).
 - B. Tribal FWP (Advise to bring second Rescue Alive sled and additional ice rescue suits).
 - C. Local Ambulance service and Advanced Life Support (If not available from local service).
 - D. Lake County Sheriff Department Dive Team.
 - E. Appropriate law enforcement agency for traffic and crowd control.

3. Safety of all personnel responding will be paramount. Safety procedures will include but not be limited to the following:
 - A. These procedures are for the safety and protection of human life. Animal rescues are at the discretion of the IC and should only be attempted if the safety of the rescuers can be assured. (Dog snare should be used)
 - B. Trained personnel who are familiar with and physically capable of performing duties and tasks required will perform all operations. Only personnel who have successfully completed the approved training program and maintain annually certification will be allowed to use the ice and cold water suits and participate in off shore tactics.
 - C. Primary rescuers and back up personnel will be equipped with ice rescue suits, helmet, self-rescue picks and marker light.
 - D. All personnel working off shore (on ice or water) will be equipped with an ice rescue suit or a type III or V USCG approved PFD.
 - E. Tether lines will be attached to the front D ring harness of the Ice Rescue Suit of all personnel engaged in Go or Contact rescues. Appropriate shore crew will control tether lines and double check that the suit and harness system is good to go.
 - F. Tethering procedures for the Rescue Alive sled will include the use of one red rope attached to the tether hitch of the sled and one yellow rope attached to the front D ring of the Ice Rescue Suit. This is referred to as the **Two Line** system.
 - G. When it is necessary to travel further than the Two Line system will allow, connect the two lines together with a locking carabineer and connect this line to the sled. A 9 foot sling should be used to tether the rescuer's D ring to the sled tether point. This is the **One Line** system.
 - H. No rescuer is authorized to disconnect from the tethering system while in a hazardous location.
 - I. The time limit for rescuer immersion in freezing water while wearing an Ice Rescue Suit will be 30 minutes. If the rescue cannot be completed in that the time, the rescuer must leave the water and a back up rescuer will be used.
 - J. Each person involved in the rescue operation should have a similarly equipped back up person available to take over and perform rescue operations if needed.
 - K. Rest and medical monitoring of all personnel in a warm vehicle or shelter should be provided at regular intervals. The EMS team leader or safety officer may declare any rescuer unfit to continue and will notify IC if this occurs.
 - L. Adequate scene lighting, flashlights and personnel marker lights will be available for night operations.
4. Initial response equipment will include the Rescue Alive sled and all equipment stored in the Ice Rescue Cache.

This includes:

- 6 - Ice rescue suits equipped with self-rescue picks and marker lights.
- 4 - Helmets
- 2 - 300-foot rope bags with water rescue rope
- 2 - 150-foot rope bags with water rescue rope
- 1 - 300-foot rope bag containing
- 2 - 150 technical climbing ropes

- 1 - Set water rescue jaws
- 1 - Submersible spotlight
- 1 - Ice auger
- 2 - Ice screws
- 1 – Rigging bag with carabiners (6), pulleys (2) descender (figure 8) (1), ascenders (2), prussik cords, tubular webbing.
- 1 - Climbing harness
- 2 – Ice rescue carabiners
- 1 – Ice rescue board and cover
- 1 – Life sling
- 1 – Pair cold water fins
- 1 – Pair cold-water fin keepers
- 1 - Dog snare
- 6 - Life Jackets

5. When radio communications with the rescuer are not possible, hand signals will be used for communications with the GO rescuer.

Standard hand signals shall include.

- A. Retrieve line: Tap one hand on top of head.
- B. Stop: Clinch hand (Fist) raised above the head.