

REDWOOD MEADOWS EMERGENCY SERVICES STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

SUBJECT

Number: SOG-01-015-03

Date: November, 1999

Ice Rescue

1. **SCOPE**

- 1.1 This standard applies to all responses by Redwood Meadows Emergency Services.

2.0 **PURPOSE**

- 2.1 To establish a systematic and effective procedure to be followed during an "Ice Rescue" which will optimize the chance of a successful rescue, while ensuring the safety of rescue personnel.

3.0 **POLICY**

- 3.1 The guidelines outlined in this document shall be followed whenever the Department is responded to an incident involving patients on, through, or under ice surfaces.
- 3.2 This SOG shall not relieve department personnel of the responsibility to exercise initiative and independent judgement when conditions warrant.

4.0 **RESPONSIBILITY**

- 4.1 Each member of the department shall understand his or her responsibilities and duties at every incident.
- 4.2 Supervising Officers shall ensure that these guidelines are followed.

5.0 **PROCEDURE**

- 5.1 For any incident dispatched as an "Ice Rescue", the response guidelines shall be as detailed in SOG-01-001-05, except as follows:
- 5.1.1 The first responding unit shall be "50 Emergency", with a minimum complement of four personnel.
- 5.1.2 In addition to the driver, and the person in charge, the additional two responders shall be designated "Rescuers" .

- 5.2 The first members to arrive at the firehall shall mount the Ice Rescue Sled on the brackets located at the rear of 50 Emergency, and secure it with the straps provided.
- 5.2.1 Prior to responding, members must ensure that the exposure suits and mesh duffel bags are inside 50 Emergency.
- 5.2.2 While enroute to the incident, the members designated "Rescuers" shall don the exposure suits, so as to minimize the waiting time after arrival on scene.
- 5.3 As soon as 50 Emergency arrives on scene, the driver shall assist the two rescuers to remove the Ice Rescue Sled from 50 Emergency, and set it up, while the individual in charge does a brief scene assessment.
- 5.3.1 Prior to moving the Ice Rescue Sled onto the water, or ice, rescue ropes shall be secured to both the Ice Rescue Sled and the rescuers.
- 5.3.2 The Ice Rescue Sled shall be manned by only one of the rescuers at a time. While the primary rescuer manoeuvres the Ice Rescue Sled toward the victim(s), the other rescuer shall ensure that the ropes do not become tangled or obstructed.
- 5.3.3 During this phase of the rescue, the driver of 50 Emergency shall attempt to reassure the victim(s) from shore, while constantly maintaining visual contact. This will ensure that if a victim becomes submerged, their last location will be known.
- 5.3.4 Where there is only one victim, the rescuer shall use the rescue harness to secure the victim to the Ice Rescue Sled, at which point he or she shall signal to those ashore to retrieve the sled. Where there is more than one victim, the rescuer may, at his or her discretion, carefully slide off the sled. Depending on the situation, the rescuer may assist an additional victim onto the sled. Optionally, he or she may support the victim out of the water until either the sled may be returned, or until the rescuer and victim may be retrieved by the attached lifeline.
- 5.4 It must be understood by all who participate that cold water induces hypothermia extremely quickly, and that patients rescued from such an incident may be extremely fragile. It is essential that the handling of such patients be as gentle as possible.
- 5.4.1 While the assistance of the patient may be helpful during the rescue phase, it is important that the hypothermic patient's activity be kept to a minimum. Rapid movements may accelerate the flow of chilled blood from the extremities to the heart. This sudden cooling of the heart may induce arrhythmias, or possibly cardiac arrest.
- 5.4.2 During the rescue, it is important that all medical supplies and equipment be kept inside the Emergency, where they may be kept warm.
- 5.5 It is critical to ensure that one or more ambulances, as may be required, are responded as early as possible to such an incident. Rapid transport to hospital and early treatment with a Heart Lung

Bypass machine may be critical to the patient's survival. Incident Command must be constantly evaluate the need for Mutual Aid, or for the need to alert STARS.

6.0 **SAFETY**

- 6.1 The safety of the rescuers shall be the primary consideration at all times. It is the responsibility, not only of the officer in charge, but of every member, to ensure that all rescue activities are carried out safely.
- 6.2 Exposure suits are provided for the members who actually venture onto the ice, or the water, to effect rescue. These suits are insulated to keep the wearer warm, and also provide a significant degree of buoyancy. It is not intended that any member go onto the ice, or in the water, unless they are wearing such suits, and are secured by a safety line. Circumstances may dictate that additional members assist during a rescue. Under no circumstances shall any member venture onto the ice, or in the water. without wearing, as an absolute minimum, an approved Personal Flotation Device, and being secured by a safety line.
- 6.3 The Ice Rescue Sled is intended for use on relatively calm water / ice surfaces. It is not intended for use on fast moving water. Extreme caution should be used when deploying this device to ensure that conditions for its use are acceptable.

7.0 **REVISION LEVEL**

Revision 0 – Original Issue (Personnel Accountability System), March, 1994
Revision 1 – Changed to "Ice Rescue", January, 1996
Revision 2 – Re-issue of SOG's, January, 1997
Revision 3 – Re-format of SOG's, November, 1999