

**SOUTHERN STONE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

Subject: Special Operations - PERSONAL WATER CRAFT
Effective Date: 7-1-2002

S.O.G.# 19.1

Revision Date:

Applies To: All Personnel

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Purpose:

The purpose of the Standard Operating Guideline is to provide a safe and effective response to selected aquatic emergencies. The fire district has several waterways that would require the use of special rescue tactics in the event of an emergency. Those waterways include Table Rock Lake, Railey Creek, the James River other areas that might be prone to high water. Table Rock Lake has large occupancy vessels, which depending on the emergency would require a rapid response to assess and ultimately mitigate the emergency. The use of Personal Water Craft is an adjunct that can be very useful in such situations.

Procedure:

All members of the Special Operations Team will follow the intent of this guideline when responding to an emergency or when involved on training missions involving the watercraft. *Horseplay or misuse of the watercraft, as well as all emergency equipment, will not be tolerated. Persons violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.*

Required Training:

Personal Watercraft used in the emergency services special training and mastering of unique skills. Use of the personal watercraft for rescue is different than that of recreational use. Safe and efficient use of the watercraft requires specific training that must be documented prior to being approved to operate the craft. That training includes:

Preventive Maintenance	1 hour
Orientation	1 hour
Safe Handling/Laws and Regs.	1 hour
Watercraft Operations	5 hour
Victim Pick-off	2 hours
Adverse Weather Conditions	1 hour

Deployment

All applicable laws and regulations will be adhered to. Personal watercraft will be dispatched on selected aquatic responses. They are deployed with a minimum of two specially trained responders. This can either be done as two personnel on one craft or one of each craft. There must be two personnel in order to deploy the craft. If two responders go, there will be a team leader and a rescuer. If 4 responders go, there will be a team leader and 3 rescuers. A Chief Officer will be dispatched as well and will assume

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command of the incident. Under the Incident Management System, the Team Leader will assume *Water Operations*.

Arrival On Scene

Vehicles will remain upwind from the incident if at all possible. Personnel safety is the first priority of all aquatic responses. Approved arm/hand signals will be used for operator/rescuer communications.

The first watercraft to arrive on scene will communicate in a standard size-up the following information:

- Location
- Type of vessel
- Situation found
- Surface conditions
- How many victims
- Immediate hazards
- Current and Operation Mode

Command will advise Central and EMS of additional resources needed.

Order of Rescue / Incident Mitigation

Rescue of victims of water related emergencies would be rescued in the following manner:

- Communicate actions to Operations or Command
- **Life Safety of rescuers is of primary concern.**
 - o Rescue victims in the water without PFD's or on a jeopardized vessel.
 - o Rescue victims in the water with PFD's.
 - o Rescue victims on disabled vessels.
- Rescued persons are taken to shore or stable platform or vessel.
- Injured persons are transferred to EMS personnel.
- No patients will be transported without an attendant/rescuer.
- An operator without a rescuer may transport equipment and personnel.

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Post Incident Operations

Personal Watercraft is very expensive and must be taken care of. The following items must be done immediately after the mitigation of any water incident or training session:

- after transferring victims to EMS or safe place, prepare to place watercraft on trailer or lift.
- Inform Incident Commander that all personnel are out of the water.
- Check all personnel and report any injuries.
- While on ramp or lift, pull rear drains and drain any water that has accumulated. After water is drained, re-insert plugs.
- Pull all compartment drains.
- After water has drained, start engine for 10-15 seconds to expel any further water, and then shut off.
- Check water intake and impeller for loosening of screws on the grate and damage to impeller.
- Check steering nozzle for any debris and clean.
- Thoroughly rinse machine, steering nozzle and bilge area.
- Start watercraft again for 10 – 15 seconds to remove any more water from the exhaust system.
- Inform team leader of any watercraft difficulties or problems found during the inspection.
- Check fuel and oil level in watercraft.
- Check for hull damage. Check all hoses, clamps, and nuts and bolts for loosening.
- Make sure watercraft is response ready, then inform Incident Commander.
- Complete all incident reports or give information to Incident Commander.
- Complete incident critique