



# POLICY MANUAL

## Emergency Operations Policy Operations In/Around Water

Revised: 09-22-03

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Book Chapter Subject

10.0 Purpose: Establish Policy and Procedures Relating to Water Rescue Operations.

10.01 Scope: All Emergency Response Personnel.

### 10.02 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Clovis Fire Department when conducting operations around canals, ponding basins, moving water or water in an area which egress from the water is hampered due to steep or slippery walls, that all shore-based personnel shall wear Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs). Unless UN-usual circumstances dictate otherwise, personnel shall not wear turnout gear in or near canals, ponding basins, moving water or water in an area in which egress from the water is hampered due to steep or slippery walls.

When performing water rescue operations in or around moving water a safety person should be posted upstream of the incident to warn of moving objects that are floating down that may cause injury to rescuers or victims or that may hamper rescue operations. A person should also be posted down stream with a throw bag in the event that a rescuer or victim is swept or carried down stream.

When performing operations around water a throw bag shall be kept in such a location that it can be quickly utilized.

Anyone not wearing a PFD around the rescue operation shall stay a safe distance back from the water, banks and/or operations taking place as determined by the Safety Officer or Incident Commander.

### 10.03 GENERAL SAFETY

1. All first responders Personnel must wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) while near the water and should wear a water rescue helmet if available. PFDs are optional by the rescue team entering the water.
2. Any time first responders are working near the water, a first responder with a safety throw rope should be posted. If on moving water, he/she should be posted downstream of the other first responders.
3. All decisions and actions shall incorporate and evaluation of, and allowance for, the hazards of working around water.



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### 10.03 GENERAL SAFETY (Cont.)

4. When working around water, personnel shall not wear turn-out coats or boots unless UN-usual circumstances dictate otherwise. If responding after hours, turn-out bottoms might be your only option.
5. A rescuer must always be prepared for self rescue in the event he/she is pulled or falls into moving water.
6. Safety for water rescue personnel must always be a prime consideration.
7. The final determining factor of whether to become directly involved with a rescue, i.e. entering the water, steep angle rescue etc., lies with the individual selected to perform the task.
8. Bank search teams shall consist of two people, one with a PFD to search the water's edge, the other equipped with a throw bag, PFD and portable radio to stay in sight of the searcher, but away from the water's edge.
9. The Incident Commander shall provide personnel to assist dive/rescue members in shuttling equipment to the water's edge.

### 10.04 SIZE-UP

1. Locate witnesses, if any, and interview separately to prevent collaboration.
2. Ascertain whether any victim(s) came to shore or any other above water point.
3. If victim(s) is/are on shore:
  - a. Locate them
  - b. Keep them at scene (if medical conditions allow)
  - c. Determine:
    - 1) How many victims were involved?
    - 2) What was the victim wearing?
    - 3) Are the others on shore or in the water, do they have PFDs?
    - 4) Locations of victim's vehicle (if any) and belongings.



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### 10.04 SIZE-UP (Cont.)

4. If victim(s) is/are stranded in a secure location:
  - a. Establish communications and identify yourself.
  - b. Determine victim's condition.
  - c. Request necessary rescue resources.
  - d. If victim appears medically stable, reassure him/her and advise the rescuers that are in-route.
  - e. Do not take unnecessary risk in attempting to reach the victim.
  - f. If possible, wait for proper rescue resources.

### 10.05 RESCUE PROCEDURES

1. Establish last seen point (if victim(s) is/are still in the water).
  - a. Ascertain where each witness was located when they observed the accident.
  - b. Flag or other wise mark the observation point, if possible.
  - c. Establish last seen point for each witness and triangulate to identify the search area.
  - d. mark the search area if it can be done safely and accurately.
  - e. Identify hidden or non-obvious hazards and inform first responders and dive team leader.
2. (Simultaneous) initiate a bank search. If moving water is involved, the search should be made in ¼ mile increments.
3. If a vehicle is in the water, ensure that a heavy duty tow truck (Class "C") has been dispatched. A list of suitable tow trucks shall be maintained at the Command Center.
4. Ensure that EMS personnel are available and will remain available for at least one hour after the victim(s) went in.
  - a. Medic unit personnel shall remain out of the water and available to render patient care, unless they are members of the STAR rescue team, preferably near the Command Post.



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#### 10.05 **RESCUE PROCEDURES** - (Cont.)

5. Determine possible access routes for:
  - a. Divers: If necessary, make a path, rig ropes, and/or provide personnel to assist transporting gear to water.
  - b. EMS
  - c. Trucks (if applicable).
6. Determine if divers/EMS/tow truck will need a guide to the scene.
7. Secure or control the scene:
  - a. The scene at any water rescue type of emergency must be secured immediately.
  - b. Rope or tape off the scene if possible and post a watch to keep people out of the scene area
  - c. Assign personnel to “security” function until law enforcement arrives.
  - d. Provide a private and secure space for family members away from other bystanders.

#### 10.06 **CHECK LIST FORMS**

- A. See Insert Sheet A1---[1-2-10 for the Witness Interview Check List](#).
- B. See Insert Sheet A2---[1-2-10 for the Water Rescue Check List](#).