

STANISLAUS CONSOLIDATED FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ARTICLE: C-55A
SECTION: Operations Division
DATE: 11/18/2008
SUPERSEDES: New
TITLE: Low Angle Rope Rescue Procedures

PURPOSE

These procedures are to be used when a rescue meets the guidelines of the partner policy. As with any procedure, all possible situations cannot be anticipated. Rescuers must be fluid and adapt procedures to fit the situation at hand. These procedures are generally accepted in the industry and should be followed when possible.

Size-up:

The first on-scene company officer should assume “IC” and assess the need for additional equipment, keeping in mind that any over-the-side operation will be labor intensive. Additional units/personnel shall be ordered as needed. Consider involving other agencies. Also consider other options for accessing the victim including water rescue, confined space team, aerial rescue, etc.

The IC shall request appropriate tactical channel for ground operations.

As soon as practical the IC should assign team leaders and a safety officer. Teams should include a rescue team and a rigging team, and an edge person if needed.

Rigging team:

The rigging team should consist of a minimum of a lead person, and several riggers. All riggers including the lead person can also comprise the hauling team. Consider using by-standers as haul team members if needed. If by-standers are utilized, ensure they appear to be physically able to assist and make available appropriate safety gear as needed. Rigging team responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Locating and securing suitable anchor points.
- 2) Setting up systems, lowering and hauling rescuers/victim(s).
- 3) Performing safety checks.
- 4) Using approved and mutually agreed upon commands.

Riggers must employ a standard two-rope system for all rescues, to include at least one main-line, and one belay. The belay line must be constantly “tended” when rescuers are attached to the system. All rope systems shall only employ approved knots and hauling systems.

Rescue team:

The rescue team should consist of a minimum of three members when a rescue litter is employed. One member should be designated as team leader, and one member should be designated as the medical officer in charge of the patient. The other member(s) serve as physical help in carrying the litter. Every member attached to the system shall wear appropriate hand & head protection and an approved pelvic harness. Rescue team members duties also include:

- 1) Loading the rescue litter with necessary medical supplies and rigging needs.
- 2) Performing safety checks.
- 3) Using approved and mutually agreed upon commands.

Edge person:

The responsibility of the edge person is to keep personnel aware of their position relative to the edge and maintain a safe working distance. It is also his/her job to facilitate communications between the rigging team and the rescue team as the rescue team descends out of sight of the riggers and haul team. Because of the proximity to the edge, the edge person must be secured to a safety line using approved methods.

Safety Officer:

The safety officer should be assigned by the IC as soon as possible in the incident, and definitely before over-the-side operations begin. The safety officer will be responsible for the ongoing safety of the incident. As such, he must have a working knowledge of the systems and techniques being used. They must be able to distinguish properly tied knots and properly applied systems. The safety officer will monitor the system to ensure its security/safety while in operation. The safety officer will have the authority to halt operations if necessary until unsafe conditions are corrected.

“Commands” are used by the team leaders to communicate their needs and/or intentions. Commands should be straight-forward and agreed upon before operations begin. During an operation, only team leaders should communicate with other teams. Below are some recommended commands.

“Stop” - This straight-forward command is used to halt operations. This command can be used by anyone at anytime.

“Prepare to haul” - or “prepare to lower”, indicates that the rescue team is ready for the indicated action and advises the haul team of their intentions.

“Haul away” or “lower away” - commands the hauling team to perform the indicated action.

Written by: Engineer Nicholas Meigs

Approved by: _____

Date: December 5, 2008