

**Portage County
Water Rescue Team**

**Standard Operating Guidelines
(Revised January 2005)**

These operational guidelines have been compiled so that we may more effectively serve the public and promote maximum water rescue and recovery operation safety within Portage County.

There is considerable difference between SCUBA diving for sport and SCUBA diving as a member of a public safety dive team. Sport divers generally go out in fair weather, in water with good visibility, and at times of their own choosing. While rescue divers are called upon in any weather, day or night, and often with ice, current, contaminants, and/or near zero visibility. Sport divers are usually self-motivated about such things as: the serviceability of their gear, their physical conditioning, and keeping up to date on diving techniques. All of these things are of the utmost importance to a dive rescue specialist, and are obligations of no petty nature. The rewards for the services a public safety diver provides are rarely of a nature to inspire him/ her, and on occasion will be criticized and possibly ridiculed by those who are either self-styled experts or individuals who know nothing of the problems and risks involved.

I **Qualifications of Team Membership**

- 1.1 Shall be a member of a public safety department within Portage County.
- 1.2 Shall be certified in CPR in accordance with recognized standards.
- 1.3 Shall submit to a comprehensive physical examination specific to SCUBA diving by an approved physician prior to appointment to the team as a diver. A pulmonary function test should be completed for all divers with each physical. Physicals will be required for all team members annually or when determined by the Dive Control Officer as prescribed in the Medical Section.
- 1.4 Divers shall have met the requirements of a Public Safety Diver in accordance to the proposed NFPA 1670 Standard. Team members shall not be permitted to dive in rescue mode until certified as a Public Safety Diver.
- 1.5 All Active team members shall complete an annual physical fitness evaluation. The diver evaluation will include a 10-lap pool swim, a fifteen - minute survival float and diver tow exercises.
- 1.6 All team members must be approved by their departments Chief Officer and a letter (on department letterhead) shall be submitted to the Dive Officer Group listing each approved member. Pay and insurance coverage is up to each individual department.

II Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Team Commander shall supervise and direct all PCWRT (Portage County Water Rescue Team) operations. The Team Commander shall work cooperatively with the Assistant Team Commander to direct all team personnel, training and equipment duties. The Team Commander reports directly to the Portage County Emergency Management Agency and the Portage County Fire Chiefs Association. The Team Commander shall give periodic reports of team status and complete a year-end report. The Team Commander must be an active Public Safety Scuba Instructor (PSSI).
- 2.2 The Assistant Team Commander (ATC) works cooperatively with the Team Commander to complete all team personnel, training and equipment duties. The ATC shall directly supervise the duties of the Dive Coordinators. The ATC shall give periodic reports to the TC. The ACT is also a Command level position and will be expected to function as the Dive Control Officer during team operations. It is recommended that the ACT be an active Public Safety Scuba Instructor (PSSI).
- 2.3 The District Coordinator (DC) shall direct and supervise the assigned Zones in his or her district. The DC shall supervise each assigned Zone Coordinator and will report directly to the Assistant Team Commander. The DC is a Command level position and will be expected to function as a Dive Officer during team operations. The DC need not be a Public Safety Scuba Instructor (PSSI).
- 2.4 The Zone Coordinator (ZC) shall direct and supervise a designated group of team members or Zone. The ZC shall be responsible for each assigned team member's training and team requirements. The ZC shall also be responsible for designated equipment maintenance and repair. The ZC will enforce the PCWRT Standard Operating Guidelines and report directly to his or her assigned District Coordinator. The Zone Coordinator is a command level position and will be expected to function as a dive officer (RCO, Safety, PIO) during team operations. A ZC need not be a PSSI but it is preferred.
- 2.5 The PCWRT Medical Director position is an optional but very preferred position to have filled. The PCWRT Medical Director is preferably a licensed Doctor with Emergency Medicine and Dive Medicine history. In the absence of a Doctor to fill the Medical Director position, a Dive Coordinator shall be designated to temporarily fill the position.
- 2.6 The PCWRT Medical Director shall be responsible to provide direction and leadership in the safety and medical treatment of the PCWRT. The Medical Director shall be responsible for dive medicine education for the PCWRT and those agencies that provide medical treatment to the PCWRT.
- 2.7 Dive Officer Meetings shall be scheduled bi-monthly by the TC. Dive Officers shall attend at least three of the six meetings.
- 2.8 The PCWRT Organizational Chain of Command is listed in Appendix B.

2.9 Each Dive Officer with the exception of either Team Commander shall be assigned one of the following responsibilities:

- A. Operations (S.O.G.'s)
- B. Training
- C. Equipment

Once assigned, each dive officer is responsible to create and maintain a committee to regularly monitor and evaluate the merits of each responsibility. Each committee may recommend changes to the Dive Officer Group.

2.10 PCWRT membership will be classified as either a "Diver" or "Support".

2.11 A PCWRT Diver is a team member who's primary objective is to function as a SCUBA diver during dive operations. The PCWRT Diver will work to achieve Dive Rescue Specialist (DR-1) and Ice Diver certifications. The PCWRT Diver shall fill the role of Support at any time.

2.12 A PCWRT Support is a team member that is trained to assist dive operations on the shore or boat. PCWRT Technicians will be expected to function as Witness Interviewers, Medical Support, Equipment Support, Line Tenders and Boat Handlers.

2.13 All team members will be designated as either Active or Reserve. The Dive Officer Panel shall decide designations for each member and has the power to revoke, re-instate or demote all member designations.

2.14 Active status denotes a team member that has obtained the minimal required training for his/her classification (Diver or Support), has maintained a satisfactory training attendance and has been approved by the Dive Officer Panel.

2.15 Reserve status denotes a team member that cannot function in his/her classification during actual rescues or recoveries. Lack of required training, need for more experience and health considerations are reasons for Reserve designation. A Reserve Status member may attend team trainings but may be limited in activity. A Reserve Diver may be permitted Active Support Status during rescue or recovery operations.

2.16 Each public safety department with personnel participating in the PCWRT shall make a standard operating guideline with the following information included:

- A. Department response and operations to water emergencies within their own jurisdiction.
- B. Personnel requirements for PCWRT membership.
- C. Department and personnel response out of jurisdiction for PCWRT operations.

2.17 The Standard Operating Guidelines referred to in 2.13 must be reviewed and approved by the Dive Officers Group prior to a department's participation in the PCWRT. A list of approved participants must also accompany the proposed Standard Operating Guidelines.

- 2.18 Upon approval the Chief of each participating department shall receive a letter from the PCWRT Dive Officers Group acknowledging PCWRT membership with a list of approved participants from their department. A letter will be sent out annually to each participating department confirming PCWRT membership. The status of each PCWRT member will be denoted in this letter.
- 2.19 The Dive Officer Group shall contact the Chief of a participating department anytime the following happens to a PCWRT member:
- A. Illness or injury
 - B. Training or membership conflict
 - C. Disciplinary problem
- The Chief of the members department will be expected to be involved in any of the above situations and be present for all meetings concerning the event.

III Training

- 3.1 Members shall receive ongoing training in the techniques of water rescue and recovery techniques. All PCWRT members shall attend fifty percent of the monthly training drills (five out of twelve). PCWRT Divers will be required to complete a minimum of 6 Public Safety Open Water dives per year. A dive shall be a minimum of 10 feet in depth and 15 minutes in duration. PCWRT Divers who have the opportunity to complete dives with their individual departments must complete a minimum of 4 of the 6 required dives during PCWRT trainings. All non-PCWRT training dives must be approved by either the TC or ACT.
- 3.2 Public Safety Open Water Training dives shall have a trained line tender, primary diver, safety diver and a Dive Officer or senior team member to be the Dive Control Officer.
- 3.3 Free diving shall be limited to times when skill check-offs must be completed for annual skill check-offs or during certification courses. Free diving should be limited to a controlled descent, down time in same general area, ascent in same area as ascent. Divers shall dive with Buddy and remain in contact by either the following methods:
- A. Visual (No less than 2 foot visibility).
 - B. Physical (When less than 2 foot visibility).
- Swimming distances under water while free-diving shall be discouraged, unless required for certification.
- 3.4 The safety diver shall be an experienced Active Diver.
- 3.5 Pool training shall be conducted with a diver and safety diver, or divers operating as a "buddy team".
- 3.6 Advanced Life Support equipment with Oxygen shall be on-site during all PCWRT dive trainings. ALS set-ups are to be dedicated to each dive site when multiple dive training sites are in use.

- 3.7 A Advanced Life Support level squad shall be on-site and dedicated to the PCWRT when conducting Public Safety Open Water Training dives.
- 3.8 The RCO shall contact (a designated dispatch center) and advise the PCWRT is currently training and the location of the training. The RCO shall maintain radio communication with (a designated dispatch center) during the training in the case the PCWRT is needed for an actual operation.
- 3.9 Team members shall report to all PCWRT training drills either in their department uniform or approved PCWRT apparel. Members shall also bring with them their assigned PCWRT Notebook and Data Log if they are a Diver.
- 3.10 PCWRT Divers shall complete a Basic Scuba Skills Review once a year to remain on Active Status. The Basic Scuba Skill Review will be given in a pool environment with standard SCUBA equipment and each divers personal mask, fins and snorkel.
- 3.11 PCWRT Divers shall complete annual skill check-offs for the AGA mask, Viking dry suits and SCUBAPRO buoyancy compensators. The check-offs will be in both pool and open-water environments. PCWRT Divers must have current check-offs for each required skill to have Active status.
- 3.12 PCWRT Support Personnel shall complete required annual skill check-offs covering line tending, boat operations and SCUBA support skills. Support Personnel must complete assigned check-offs to remain on Active status.
- 3.13** Public Safety Scuba Instructor (PSSI) shall be present at all PCWRT training drills. All Diver skill check-offs shall be evaluated and completed by a PSSI. Support skill check-offs may be completed by a team member designated by either the TC or ATC.
- 3.14 PCWRT Divers are responsible to log all dives they complete. The dives should be logged in their assigned Datalog.

IV Deviation from Established Safe Practices or Procedures

- 4.1 A PCWRT member may deviate from the requirements of this document to the extent to prevent or minimize a situation, which is likely to cause death, serious physical harm or major environmental damage.
- 4.2 Members who deviate from established safe practices shall submit a written report detailing the event to the Dive Commander.

V Medical

- 5.1 If any PCWRT member is injured or needs treatment of a minor nature, he/she shall use their preferred physician or medical facility.
- 5.2 If a PCWRT member is injured or has a illness of a serious nature, transport to the nearest appropriate hospital, using the member's preference when possible.
- 5.3 Each member shall, as soon as possible, notify the Dive Control Officer of any illness or injury. The Dive Control Officer will keep the appropriate officers apprized of any illness or injury as reported to them.

- 5.4 An Advanced Life Support squad shall be on-scene at all PCWRT operations and assigned solely for PCWRT medical support. In RECOVERY mode the ALS squad shall be appropriately staffed with at least one EMT-A and one Paramedic. In RESCUE mode the ALS squad can be en-route. The Aurora Fire Department is the primary Medical Support provider for the PCWRT and should be contacted immediately whenever the PCWRT is activated.
- 5.5 A PCWRT member shall be assigned by the DCO as Medical Support and shall report to and inform the ALS crew of PCWRT Medical functions and responsibilities. The PCWRT Medical Officer shall be an experienced EMT-P with dive injury training. The PCWRT shall lead all treatment of injured or ill PCWRT members when feasible.
- 5.6 When a PCWRT member is transported to a medical facility due to injury or illness, the DCO shall appoint a fellow team member to accompany that member to the destination facility. An effort should be made for the designated member to accompany the fallen member throughout transport.
- 5.7 Each team member shall submit a copy of their most recent physical to the TC. All copies of physicals shall be sealed in a large envelope and placed into a locked storage box on (a designated vehicle). Access into the Physical Storage Box will be for emergency use only.
- 5.8 When a PCWRT member is ill or injured the Dive Medical Officer shall remove his/her physical packet and be given to the destination facility. The physical packets can be used to compare normal vital signs and body functions.
- 5.9 Medical Helicopter service should be considered when:
 - A. A team member has a serious injury or illness.
 - B. A team member is suspected of having a diving injury.
 - C. Any time the team is operating in Rescue Mode.
 - D. Cold Water Near Drowning situations.
- 5.10 Metro Life Flight (1-800-233-LIFE) shall be the preferred medical helicopter service.
- 5.11 When a diving injury is suspected, transport to Akron General Hospital shall be the primary destination facility, unless requested otherwise by the member. When transport to AGMC is confirmed the DCO shall contact John Carney (330-714-8851 (C) or 330-873-5861 (P)) the AGMC Hyperbaric Dive Injury representative and advise him of the situation. The Divers Assist Network (D.A.N.) should also be consulted anytime a dive injury is suspected. The D.A.N. emergency numbers are 919-684-8111 or 919-684-4DAN (4326).

- 5.12 Any PCWRT Diver who will don equipment to enter the water will be required to have a pre-dive physical. The pre-dive physical may be abbreviated during the initial rescue response. The following will be recorded on the physical log sheet;
- A. Baseline vital signs to include blood pressure, pulse and respirations.
Any abnormal vital signs may disqualify a diver from entry. This will be at the discretion of the Dive Control Officer.
 - B. Documentation of level of consciousness
 - C. Current medical history and medications
 - D. Any history of alcohol ingestion in the past 24 hours.
 - E. Rapid Field Neurological Exam
 - F. An abbreviated exam in Rescue mode, may consist of oral history only.
For example, recent illnesses, injury or medication, any alcohol ingestion and any problems incompatible with equalizing. This may all be accomplished as the diver is dressing.
- 5.13 After a diver has completed his/her dive and has had their gear doffed, shall be given a post dive physical examination. The following shall be completed and recorded on the physical log sheet;
- A. Vital signs shall be recorded with differences from baselines noted.
 - B. Any complaints, injuries or illnesses occurring during the dive.
 - C. Repeat documentation of level of consciousness.
 - D. Repeat Rapid Field Neurological Exam and document any changes.
- 5.14 After completion of the post-dive physical, divers will be sent to the rehabilitation area (REHAB) for rest and adequate re-hydration. The REHAB shall be a protected environment (heat/AC) staffed by at least one EMT and supplied with non-caffeinated hydrating fluids. Divers will be required to remain in REHAB until vitals return to baseline levels.

VI Response

- 6.1 At the request of an Incident Commander (IC) for the PCWRT, Fire Com Dispatch will page the "Dive" group on the county Alpha Mate system and will use the following information in the page;
- A. Title the page as "PCWRT Response Requested"
 - B. The agency or department requesting the PCWRT.
 - C. The address or location of the response.
 - D. Reason for response or nature of call.
 - E. Any additional information vital to activation of the team.
- Example:" PCWRT response requested by Ravenna City Fire at Lake Hodgson for a possible drowning, boats will be needed."
- 6.2 PCWRT member departments shall dispatch their members according to their own Standard Operating Guidelines.
- 6.3 PCWRT members should assemble at their own departments as much as possible and bring their equipment to the staging area.

- 6.4 Arriving PCWRT members should check in with the Staging Officer, then return to the staging area until assigned a task. A PCWRT member is preferred to function as the staging officer. Unless needed the 3rd Due PCWRT unit shall fill the Staging Officer role unless filled already. The Staging Officer shall maintain contact with the Dive Control Officer on the Fire-ground frequency.
- 6.5 Fire-ground (154.280) shall be the main operating radio channel for PCWRT operations.
- 6.6 PCWRT members should respond in the uniform of their department or approved PCWRT apparel whenever possible.
- 6.7 Each department responding shall contact Fire Com Dispatch with the following information:
 - A. Unit(s) responding
 - B. Number of divers responding
 - C. Number of support personnel respondingAfter fifteen (15) minutes has passed from the page time, Fire Com will Alpha Mate Page the Dive Group with the above information for the departments that have called in. Fire Com should also include any pertinent information acquired since the initial page (directions, confirmation of drowning, Incident Command designation).
- 6.8 PCWRT members should respond in department owned vehicles. If the situation requires a PCWRT member to drive their personal vehicle to the scene, his or her Zone Coordinator should be advised as soon as possible. No PCWRT member shall respond with lights and sirens in their personal vehicle when responding to PCWRT operations.
- 6.8 When the PCWRT is requested out of the county for mutual aid, the following should be done:
 - A. A staging area in the county should be designated and all responding PCWRT members report to that designated location. No PCWRT members should respond individually to another county, unless given permission from the PCWRT Dive Control Officer for that operation. If an individual department has been requested, the staging area should be the main fire station for that department. The requested department may send their divers prior to a PCWRT response, but should remain in communication with staging.
 - B. At the staging area, equipment should be collected and organized and loaded onto vehicles designated by the DCO for the mutual aid response. Team members should then be assigned to each vehicle.
 - C. When a large number of team members report for the response, the DCO should designate equipment and manpower to remain in the staging area for Portage County response or for future incident circulation.
 - D. Upon arrival at the mutual aid site, the DCO shall meet face to face with the Incident Commander to receive orders for the PCWRT. During this meeting the PCWRT response should remain in a designated staging area or stage near the scene.

- E. PCWRT members are to operate under PCWRT supervision and PCWRT guidelines at all times.

VII Equipment

- 7.1 PCWRT recommends that all equipment brought by responding members be packaged and used according to the S.O.G. See the Standard Equipment List in Appendix A.
- 7.2 Ideally, all PCWRT Divers will use dive equipment approved by their department, however, by not designating a standard ensemble to be used by all equipment they are not familiar with what should be avoided. Standard Equipment List- See Appendix A.
- 7.3 All equipment shall be inspected and maintained according to manufacturer standards. Any service should be performed by a certified technician. Equipment should be routinely inspected to insure proper operation.

VIII SCENE CONTROL

- 8.1 Upon arrival at the scene, a senior member should assume the role of Dive Control Officer if one has not already been designated. The assigned DCO shall determine the feasibility of PCWRT operations based on water conditions, weather, personnel, water speed, depth, daylight, etc.
- 8.2 All witness should be immediately be located and interviewed. Interviews should be done privately to avoid witness collaboration.
- 8.3 The RISK/BENEFIT evaluation should be analyzed and the type of operation determined:
 - A. RESCUE Mode- Shall be used when there is a chance a life may be saved. Generally within an elapsed time of one hour maximum from the last time seen. Planning must be rapid. Divers should be in the water quickly.
 - B. RECOVERY Mode- Shall be used when saving a human life is no longer feasible, when a body has been submerged in the water for over one hour. Planning and operations should be slower and more deliberate.
 - C. SALVAGE Mode- Shall be used when recovering articles, evidence, vehicles, etc. Should follow the same guidelines as RECOVERY mode.
- 8.4 The scene should be secured and the operation area roped off. All persons in the roped off area must be authorized by the Dive Control Officer. The water operation shall be monitored for security and patrolled if necessary. Liberal assignment of the secured area is recommended.

8.5 Once the DCO has decided upon the type of operation, he/she should contact Fire Com Dispatch (on either County Fire 1 or County Fire 2) with the following information:

- A. Type of operation (Rescue, Recovery, Salvage).
- B. Location of staging area.
- C. Number of divers on-scene
- D. Main Operating Radio Channel
- E. DCO designation

The Operating Dispatch shall repeat the above information on both County Fire Radio Channels and Alpha Mate Page the Dive Group. (Example- "The Portage County Water Rescue Team is currently operating in Rescue Mode with three divers at Lake Hodgson in Ravenna City. The staging area is the boat ramps. Lt. Roosa has Dive Command).

8.6 Responding PCWRT members shall only respond "lights and sirens" in approved vehicles when the operation mode is unknown or in Rescue Mode. Responding PCWRT members should monitor either County Fire Band while in en-route. No PCWRT member shall respond "lights and siren" to operation designated as Recovery Mode.

8.7 An appropriate entry and exit point should be determined and water conditions assessed.

8.8 Once all the necessary information is collected, an operational plan with distinct goals and objectives should be formed. A pre-operation briefing should be given to all members prior to any member entering the water.

VIII OPERATIONS

9.1 PCWRT members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner with respect for the situation and for the friends and family of the victim(s) at the scene.

9.2 Diving Operations

- A. PCWRT Divers must have a pre-dive physical.
- B. Divers should assemble their own gear and perform an initial safety check.
- C. Divers shall receive a briefing prior to entering the water at which time they will be given their objective, water conditions, special hazards and the approximate length and depth of the dive.
- D. For each dive, there shall be a Primary diver with Dive Tender and a Safety diver with a Dive Tender.
- E. The Safety diver shall be at the entry point of the dive in a complete state of readiness including all safety and communications checked.
- F. Prior to the Primary diver entering the water, the Dive Tender should do a final safety check. The Dive Safety Officer should do an overall safety check of the Primary and Safety divers prior to allowing entry.
- G. Divers should report by communications system any important objects found, changing or different conditions, and air pressure to the Dive Tender at regular intervals.

- 9.3 The decision to dive rests with the individual diver. A diver may refuse to dive, without fear of penalty, whenever he/she feels it is unsafe to make the dive.
- 9.4 Safety, the ultimate responsibility for safety rests with the individual diver. It is the diver's responsibility, privilege and duty to refuse to dive or continue to dive if, in his/her judgment, conditions are unsafe or unfavorable, or he/she would be violating the precepts of his/her training or regulations of their public safety department.
- 9.5 All PCWRT members operating on the scene shall wear Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFD). The exception will be divers in zipped dry-suits (no weight belts) transitioning to or from the operation area.
- 9.6 Dive Control Officer (DCO)
- A. Shall be a certified Public Safety Diver
 - B. Shall be responsible for the operation of the team members at the scene.
 - C. Shall be responsible to maintain accountability of all PCWRT members.
 - D. Shall evaluate the situation based on information given by the Incident Commander and other parties involved.
 - E. Shall hold a pre-dive meeting to describe the task to be undertaken and any special considerations or hazards that divers should be aware of.
 - F. Shall be available to the Incident Commander at all times and advise him/her of any progress or change in conditions or goals. The Incident Commander is ultimately responsible for the scene.
 - G. Upon termination of a dive incident, shall hold a post incident review for all participants in the dive operation.
 - H. Shall submit a report to the Chief of the department having jurisdiction and the Dive Officer Panel detailing the dive operation.
- 9.7 Scribe
- A. Shall maintain constant contact with the DCO.
 - B. Shall record the time of arrival of all team members and their assignments. Time of departure should also be recorded for any member who leaves the scene prior to termination of the operation.
 - C. Shall have a written record of the goals, objectives and the progress being made in the operation.
 - D. Shall record any items or victims found along with the position and time.
 - E. Shall collect and maintain all diver records from the dive tenders.
 - F. Shall submit all records to the DCO upon incident termination.

- 9.8 Dive Safety Officer (DSO)
 - A. Responsible for the safety of all PCWRT members participating in the operation.
 - B. Shall have the authority to stop any action he/she feels is an immediate threat to life.
 - C. Shall verify that diving conditions are safe and the RISK/BENEFIT factor is appropriate prior to divers entering the water.
 - D. Shall verify that each diver has had pre and post dive physicals as necessary.
 - E. Shall verify that a Safety Diver is at the entry point and equipped with a tender, prior to authorizing a diver to make entry.
 - F. Shall report changing conditions to the DCO.
 - G. Shall submit all records to the DCO upon incident termination.
- 9.9 Tenders
 - A. Must be qualified to independently tend divers and operate surface support systems.
 - B. Tenders will keep the DCO and DSO informed of the progress of the dive and/or emergencies.
 - C. Shall check divers for proper equipment and proper operation of the same.
 - D. Shall report the divers name, time on and off air, depth, beginning and ending air pressure and any important details of the dive. The tender shall forward this information to the Scribe for safekeeping.
 - E. Shall be responsible for constantly knowing the position of the diver by location of air bubbles and amount of rope out.
 - F. Tenders will record, by use of reference point and rope out, the position of located items or victims.
 - G. Shall know all appropriate line signals in the event of communications system failure.
 - H. Shall be familiar with diver emergency procedures.
- 9.10 Divers
 - A. Shall submit to pre and post dive physicals as required.
 - B. Shall notify the DCO and DSO of any alcohol consumption in the last 24 hrs. and exactly how much in the last twelve hours. The DCO shall make the determination of the divers status using the information provided and the current situation.
 - C. Divers shall complete the assigned search task and search type to the best of their ability and follow the directives of the line tender. It is the responsibility of the diver to maintain tension while using line searches.
 - D. Divers shall maintain accurate records of all training and operational dives they complete. This information shall be furnished by their assigned Dive Coordinator upon request.
 - E. Divers shall be certified for the conditions present at the scene of each dive incident.

X EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 10.1 An EMERGENCY declaration can be issued by a team member that is witness to a life-threatening event of a fellow team member. The member declaring an EMERGENCY shall make direct contact with either the DCO or DSO and advise them of the situation. In turn the DCO shall immediately notify the Incident Commander.
- 10.2 Upon the receipt of an EMERGENCY declaration the DCO shall cease all operations and direct all available manpower and equipment to the emergency site. Any time a team member is injured or becomes ill, a review of the current operations must immediately take place between the DCO and DSO.
- 10.3 The DCO shall notify Medical Support of an emergency and direct immediate ALS personnel and equipment to the emergency site. If the ALS equipment is not immediately needed it should be staged nearby, out of the way of the emergency operation.
- 10.4 If not already on-scene, the DCO should strongly consider requesting LifeFlight to the scene. The DCO shall communicate with the Incident Commander on the use of LifeFlight and make arrangements for a landing zone.
- 10.5 The Safety Diver shall be an experienced and rescue trained diver. In most cases the Safety Diver will be the most experienced diver.
- 10.6 The Safety Diver shall be located at the entry point near the Tender and ready for immediate deployment. The Safety Diver must be fully dressed with the full-face mask either in place (GILL or ABV unit activated) with straps tightened or on the divers head but with the mask straps loose as to allow the diver to breath by pulling the mask away from the divers face.
- 10.7 The Safety Diver must also verify proper weighting prior to the insertion of the primary diver.
- 10.8 A pony bottle set-up and bolt cutters should be made accessible to the Safety Diver.
- 10.9 The Safety Diver should also be connected to the communication system. The Safety Diver can then receive information and directives from the Tender in the event the Primary Diver needs assistance or has an EMERGENCY.
- 10.10 With the communication system in place the Safety Diver once deployed can talk directly with the Primary Diver.
- 10.11 When a Safety Diver is deployed for a Primary Diver EMERGENCY and no verbal communications (hardwire/wireless) are present, location of the Primary Diver is the utmost priority. The quickest and easiest means to locate the Primary Diver is to follow their search-line down. When the search line is found to be detached from the primary diver an aggressive search should start immediately in the area the Primary Diver was last seen. The Tender can direct the Safety Diver to the area of bubbles, if present.

- 10.12 When the Primary Diver in distress is located the following should take place quickly:
- A. The Safety Diver should stretch out his secondary air device or pony bottle regulator in the direction of the Primary Divers head.
 - B. Assess consciousness, alertness and breathing.
 - C. Insure no entanglements or entanglement hazards exist.
- 10.13 If the Diver is found unresponsive, the priority is to bring the diver to the surface using a controlled ascent. Once on surface, the Safety Diver shall insure the downed diver is positively buoyant by immediately releasing his/her weight belt. Once buoyant the Safety Diver shall start to tow the diver to the shore/boat.
- 10.14 Anytime the Safety Diver is called to duty, another diver (90% Diver) should take his/her place and prepare to quickly assist in the EMERGENCY.
- 10.13 The role of Safety Diver is the most honorable and important Diver position during any operation and should never be taken lightly.

XI COMMUNICATIONS

- 11.1 Dive operations should utilize hardline or wireless communication for safety and quality of dive operations and shall be utilized when ice diving or at high risk incidents.
- 11.2 If the communication (wireless or hardline) is lost, the dive should be terminated immediately. In rescue mode, the diver may continue searching using line signals, if both the diver and tender are comfortable with the situation.
- 11.3 Line signals shall be used regardless of the use of underwater communication equipment.
- 11.4 The following Rope Signals should be reviewed before each dive between the Tender, Primary Diver and Safety Diver. Rope Signals should be coordinated and deliberate in nature as not to confuse signals with the rope hitting obstructions or the movement of the diver.

Number of Tugs	Tender to Diver Rope Signals	Diver to Tender Rope Signals
1 Tug	Are you OK?	I'm OK
2 Tugs	Stop, change direction and take in/out line	Need more line (Pre-designated amount)
3 Tugs	Come to the surface	Found object
4 Deliberate Slow Tugs	Stop, stay on bottom, danger on surface	Need assistance from Safety Diver (Non- ER)
4 or more rapid tugs	No meaning from Tender	EMERGENCY, Life threatening event has occurred.

- 11.5 When a Tender receives four (4) slow coordinated tugs the Safety Diver should still be deployed without delay. In this case an EMERGENCY may not be immediately declared if the Safety Diver and Primary Diver have the situation under control (For example- Minor entanglement and Primary Diver has adequate amount of air).
- 11.6 When a surface danger exists and the Primary Diver is given a 4- tug, the Tender shall signal the Diver to surface after the danger is clear or removed.
- 11.7 Any time a Tender does not receive a response to two consecutive signals, the Safety Diver shall be deployed to investigate and should bring the Primary Diver to the surface.

XII BODY RECOVERY

- 12.1 When a body is found, the diver will inform the tender by voice communication or line signals. The tender will mark the location and discretely notify the Dive Control Officer.
- 12.2 The divers should not bring the body to the shore when operating in recovery mode, until a reasonable attempt has been made to clear the area of family, media, etc.
- 12.3 If a Public Information Officer (PIO) has not been assigned, a PCWRT member should be recommended to the Incident Commander to keep him/her informed of the situation.
- 12.4 In Recovery mode an effort should be made to place the body in the body recovery system or body bag while in the water.
- 12.5 PCWRT members shall respect and recognize potential evidence.

XIII TERMINATION OF INDIVIDUAL DIVE

- 13.1 The DCO shall terminate the dive when one of the following happens:
 - A. The dive objective has been achieved.
 - B. The diver requests termination.
 - C. The diver fails to respond to voice and line communications.
 - D. A predetermined time limit (15 minutes) and PSI (1000 psi) has been met.

XIV TERMINATION OF INCIDENT

- 14.1 The DCO should terminate the operation when:
 - A. The mission objective(s) have been achieved.
 - B. Recovery operations have been ongoing and thorough for up to 24 hours without results.
 - C. Conditions no longer support safe operations (Nightfall, Inclement weather).
 - D. Incident Commander desires termination.

- 14.2 The DCO should hold a post incident review for all on-scene personnel involved prior to leaving or as soon as practically possible.
- 14.3 The DCO will collect all notes and forms from assigned Officers and Tenders for the final operational report form the incident.
- 14.4 Advise IC to consider a security watch for possible re-float and review contingencies.
- 14.5 The DCO should advise the IC when operations are temporarily terminated and when operations will be resumed.
- 14.6 The DCO should consider CISD team involvement and de-briefing when conditions warrant.

XV FAMILY AND MEDIA

- 15.1 As soon as there is enough manpower available, the DCO should assign a PCWRT member to the victim(s) family and friends. This member should remain with the family throughout the operation to obtain victim information and provide approved operational information to the family. This member should coordinate any needs of the family and/or friends as to make them the most comfortable (for example- food, shelter, restroom location, etc.).
- 15.2 The PCWRT member assigned to the family should inform and work with the Incident Commander of the needs and status of the family.
- 15.3 The family and/or friends should be assigned an area away from the immediate operation area and their privacy protected from the media and onlookers.
- 15.4 When a body is recovered, the family should be prevented to view the body on the scene and arrangements made to transport the family to the facility the body will be taken to.
- 15.5 A PCWRT member should be assigned as the PIO or to assist the assigned department PIO with the media. The media should be assigned an area away from the immediate operation area but with a clear picture of the general operation area. Regular updates should be given by the PIO to keep the media from leaving the assigned area.
- 15.6 Anytime PCWRT operations are postponed, suspended or terminated, the DCO and PIO should meet with the family and media (with the Incident Commanders permission).
- 15.7 A concerted effort should be made at every PCWRT operation to work with the family and media involved and provide a respectful, informative and professional service.

XVI VEHICLE RECOVERY

- 16.1 Divers should have Light Salvage certification to operate on the recovery of a vehicle.
- 16.2 The standard "Lift-bag Kit" should consist of the following equipment:
 - A. One 2,000 pound Lift-bag (pillow type) with multiple attachments.
 - B. One 100 foot section of ¼" Air Line.
 - C. Four 2" Double-ply 6 foot recovery straps.
 - D. Two 2" Double-ply 12 foot multi-attachment recovery straps.
 - E. Six large steel locking carabiners.
 - F. One search-line bag with 200 ft of polypropelene line.
 - G. One search-line buoy with one non-locking aluminum carabiner.
 - H. One two port air manifold with SCBA fill.The Kit should be contained in a large plastic bin or heavy duty equipment bag with a posted inventory list.
- 16.3 The Lift Bag Kit shall be maintained and inventoried to insure uniformity and safety when operating or training on light salvage operations.
- 16.4 Departments that wish to purchase lift-bag equipment different than those listed in the "Lift-bag Kit" must present the differences to the Dive Officer Group for approval. Without approval, the equipment will not be allowed for use on any PCWRT operations.
- 16.5 When a vehicle is located, a quick search of the interior should be completed. Divers should avoid penetrating the vehicle, instead using windows and doors to access the interior.
- 16.6 A search of the immediate area around the vehicle should also be completed.
- 16.7 Vehicle(s) that are to be recovered shall have a polypropelene search line attached to it (preferably the steering wheel) with a searchline buoy secured taunt at the surface.
- 16.8 Once the submerged vehicle has been located and marked, the following evaluation must be completed:
 - A. Location of object.
 - B. Depth
 - C. Size of object
 - D. Weight of object
 - E. Center of gravity
 - F. Attachment point availability
 - G. Positioning
 - H. Distance from shore
 - I. Current
 - J. Document License or Registration numbers.
- 16.9 The divers shall work in teams of two and a safety diver for each. The surface personnel shall closely monitor the air bubbles of the divers and the search line float. A bobbing search line float signals an EMERGENCY (See the EMERGENCY section for further details).

- 16.10 Divers and boats shall be cleared of the area when the vehicle is being lifted (Final Lift).
- 16.11 Divers may use the following simple communication signals by banging on the submerged vehicle:
 - A. One bang- "Diver Okay" or "Objective Completed"
 - B. Two Bangs- "All Objectives Completed"
 - C. Three Bangs- "Meet up" (meet in pre-designated spot- Hood)
 - D. Four Bangs- " Need assistance, no emergency"
 - E. Constant Rapid Banging- "EMERGENCY!!"
- 16.10 When an "EMERGENCY" signal is received the other diver(s) in the water shall tug repeatedly on the attached search line to signal the shore/boat personnel, then proceed to the diver in distress.

XVII BOAT BASED DIVE OPERATIONS

- 17.1 A minimum of two (2) boats shall be used when dive operations are required to be boat based. One boat to operate from and one to serve as a safety and shuttle.
- 17.2 The "Dive Boat" vessel refers to the boat being used as the secure (anchored) base of search operations. The minimum manning for the "Dive Platform" shall be a Rescue Control Officer, Line Tender and Boat Operator. The radio designation shall be "Dive Boat" and followed by a number if multiple boat-based searches are operating (for example- "DCO to Dive Boat 1).
- 17.3 The "Dive Boat" vessel can be a PCWRT owned boat (preferably Kent Fire's Flat Bottom) or any acquired vessel that has been approved by the Dive Control Officer (for example- West Branch's pontoon boats). The "Dive Boat" vessel must be large enough for all the required personnel and equipment (communication gear), as well as being a stable platform in the water.
- 17.4 The "Dive Boat" must be adequately anchored before any prolonged dive operations begin. The minimum anchoring system for any PCWRT Dive Boat shall be one bow anchor, one port side stern anchor and one starboard side stern anchor. During rough weather and/or water an additional bow anchor may be added. The bow anchors then will be placed on either side of the boat just as the stern anchors are placed.
- 17.5 The first diver in shall inspect and set any/all anchors that cannot be verified to be already set.
- 17.6 A dive flag float should be attached to the bow anchor. A dive flag should always be flown any time when divers are operating in navigable waterways.

- 17.7 The "Shuttle Boat" vessel refers to the boat used to shuttle divers and equipment from the shore to a designated "Dive Boat" and/or search area. The minimum manning for the "Shuttle Boat" is one boat operator and one assistant. The radio designation shall be "Shuttle Boat" followed by a number if multiple shuttles are in operation.
- 17.8 The "Shuttle Boat" shall act as an emergency transport if a "Safety Boat" has not been assigned. When this policy is in effect the "Shuttle Boat" shall not leave the search area when a diver is in the water.
- 17.9 When a "Safety Boat" has been assigned and operational, the "Shuttle Boat" may leave the assigned "Dive Boat" area under the following circumstances:
- A. There is a need for shuttling equipment and/or manpower.
 - B. The designated RCO approves.
 - C. The "Shuttle Boat" stays clear of the search area.
 - D. The primary diver is advised by verbal communications.
- When not moving the "Shuttle Boat" shall be moored off the "Dive Boat" opposite of the search area.
- 17.10 The "Safety Boat" refers to a vessel designated to a "Dive Boat" to provide the following:
- A. Emergency transport of an injured diver to the shore base.
 - B. Immediate dive area security (from other boats).
- 17.11 The "Safety Boat" shall be minimally staffed with a boat operator and a Dive Medic. Two Dive Medics are preferred.
- 17.12 The "Safety Boat" shall be equipped with one backboard with straps and a Basic Life Support pack with Oxygen.
- 17.13 The "Safety Boat" may patrol the immediate area outside of the dive area or may raft off either the "Dive Boat" or "Shuttle Boat". It is imperative that the "Safety Boat" remain ready to respond.
- 17.14 Once a sick or injured diver has been brought to the surface by the Safety Diver the "Safety Boat" shall slowly approach them, upon the bow reaching the divers the motor shall be turned off. The "Safety Boat" crew shall then assist or lift the down diver into the boat. If the diver is unconscious, the BCD shall be removed prior to moving the diver into the "Safety Boat". The BCD shall only be removed after the weight belt has been ditched. Once the downed diver is loaded into the boat, the safety diver shall swim away from the "Safety Boat". The boat operator must insure that the Safety Diver is clear before starting the motor and moving the boat.