High Angle Rescue

PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to give general guidelines to be used by rescue personnel conducting a rope rescue.

It is the responsibility of all RFD personnel to be familiar with this policy.

POLICY

According to federal regulations and standards, the Russellville Fire Department shall act and perform as the city's rope rescue response unit and provide:

- Technical expertise
- Assistance
- Appropriate equipment
- Response for the protection of life, property, and the environment

Rope Rescue Definitions

It is imperative in any technical rope rescue situation to be aware of the following definitions:

- Rope Rescue - Any rescue that requires rope and related equipment to safely gain access to and remove patients from hazardous geographic areas with limited access, high rise buildings, above or below grade structures, or areas requiring rope systems.
- Technical Rope Rescue - Any rescue involving angles of 45 degrees and greater is considered a technical rescue.
- Non-technical Rope Rescue - In most cases first responders can conduct rescues involving angles of less than 45 degrees.

Rope Rescue Assignment (within city limits)

The On Duty Battalion Chief shall evaluate incidents dispatched that may have the potential of being a rope rescue incident. Besides the BC, any company officer may call for a response for rope rescue in the event they find themselves in a situation requiring additional resources and expertise. The 1st alarm assignment for a rope rescue inside the city includes the following:

- 2 Closest Engine Companies
- Closest Medic
- Ladder 1
- Battalion 1

The standing orders for these first alarm companies are as follows:

- 1st-In Engine Company: Establish Investigation Group. Perform scene assessment, immediate control actions, and locate witnesses and maintenance personnel.

Approved

Fire Chief

- 2nd-In Engine Company: Establish Rescue Group. Crews should be prepared to perform victim rescue/ recovery functions. Be prepared to perform support/supply functions.
- Ladder 1: Report to Rescue Group. Be prepared to assist with rigging functions.
- Battalion 1: Incident Command
- Medic: Establish Medical Group

All technical rescue incidents shall have a structured intervention system. This system, under NIMS, shall be group based and have the responsibilities listed in this document. In large multi-strategy incidents, a technical rescue branch may be enacted.

Scene Size Up

1. During the initial stages of an incident in which rope rescue may be necessary, it is important for first arriving companies to obtain certain key information. The following information should be gathered and relayed to the Incident Commander:

- Is this a rescue or body recovery mode? Once determined, the mode should be announced. If recovery mode is confirmed, a non-emergent response for all incoming units is recommended.
- What is the victim(s) location?
- What is the nature of the victim's situation?
- How can the victim be reached?
- How far from the roadway is the victim?
- Are there electrical lines involved or nearby?

2. If the information gathered suggests that technical rope rescue is the only method possible to reach the victim, complete the following steps:

- Initiate the Incident Command System
- Consider the need for special resources (Crane, scissor lift, or professional experts)
- Appoint a Safety Officer
- Consider reinforced Technical Rescue Response (Callback of Off-Duty Rope Technicians)

Unit Assignments for Rope Rescue

The Rescue Group Supervisor shall be responsible for assigning:
1. A crew to perform the rigging function
2. A crew to perform the victim rescue/recovery function
3. A crew to perform support/supply functions

The rigging crew is responsible for rigging, belaying, rope minding, etc.

The rescue/recovery crew is responsible for making entry to locate and remove the victim.

The support/supply crew is responsible for ensuring that both the rigging crew and rescue/recovery crew have all necessary equipment.

All Rescue Group members will be fully briefed on their assignments after the Rescue Group Supervisor has consulted with the IC, a rescue plan has been formulated, and prior to the commencement of rescue operations. If the situation permits, a backup plan should be in place.

Approved

Fire Chief

Rescue Operations

Because of the broad range of variables that exist in technical rescue, there is no hard and fast rule for conducting one. The format used for organizing a successful rescue is referred to as L.A.S.T. (Locate, Access, Stabilize, and Transport). The specific method for accomplishing any of these steps will differ with each rescue and should be selected based on experience and the multitude of factors unique to the current rescue scene. Below is a list of guidelines and rules designed to minimize the danger to rescuers as they perform their duties.

Order of Rescue

Because of the inherent risks involved in high angle rescue, the method of rescue offering the least risk to the rescuer will be used. The following methods are listed in increasing order of risk. Factors influencing the selection include patient condition, rigging time, available manpower and/or equipment, and terrain conditions.

1. Talk victim into self-rescue
2. Walk or climb with a belay line
3. Rappel or lower with a belay line
4. Pick-off with an independent belay

- Raise victim with a belay
- Raise victim and rescuer with a belay
- Proceed with the stretcher evacuation

Safety

Rescuer safety is paramount in any rescue situation. Prior to conducting any high angle operations, a Safety Officer and Rescue Group Supervisor will be clearly identified. The 1st -In Engine will establish a warm zone around the rigging and operations area as soon as possible. Additionally, all rescue personnel shall adhere to the following safety guidelines.

Helmets and rescue gloves shall be worn at all times
Edge protection shall be used anywhere that a rope comes in contact with a hard surface
All life safety ropes shall be double anchored prior to loading
An independent belay shall be used
NFPA 1983 Standards on Life Safety Rope will be followed whenever possible

Anchors

Anchors are a mixture of equipment, knot tying, and judgment. With this said, all lifelines shall have two independent anchors.

Anchors may be natural (trees and boulders), structural (buildings, bridges, and towers), or vehicles.

Approved
T Kirk Stone
Fire Chief