



Standard Operational Guideline

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES River Rescue & Tactical Services



TITLE
RRATS Response Operations v9

DATE

- 1.0 PURPOSE: To provide operational guidelines and procedures for RRATS personnel on incidents to which they may be dispatched .
- 2.0 APPLICABILITY: All RRATS personnel
- 3.0 DEFINITIONS
- 3.1 Water Rescue PPE: As defined by NFPA 1670 includes a water rescue helmet, appropriate type gloves, a type V personal flotation device with a whistle, a cutting tool and strobe device attached. Also included are appropriate thermal and contamination protection as needed.
The fire suppression coat, pants, fire boots and helmet are specifically excluded, as they are inappropriate attire.
- 3.2 Emergency Response Search: Searches dispatched by ECC for reports such as someone lost or fallen in the water.
- 3.3 Routine Response Search (RRS): Searches for a victim previously searched for and not found. These searches have no expectation of recovering a live person.
- 3.4 Warm zone: The shoreline area within 10 feet of the water's edge. The size of this area may be increased by a variety of conditions such as steep or slippery slopes near the water's edge.
- 3.5 Hot Zone: The water is considered the hot zone.
- 4.0 PROCEDURE
- 4.1 Road Flooding
- 4.1a The first arriving RRATS personnel will report to command and offer technical assistance. This will include ensuring that
- 1) All public road access to the water has been completely blocked.
 - 2) The water level has been marked
 - 3) Only personnel with Water Rescue PPE are in the Warm Zone.
 - 4) Only technician level swiftwater trained personnel are in the Hot Zone.
 - 5) A team of rescuers is placed downstream as a safety.



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6) A team of rescuers is placed upstream as spotters.

4.1b The Senior RRATS personnel on scene will report to command and offer technical assistance relating to forming an Incident Action Plan for resolution of the incident.

4.1c For all cars in the water (if conditions safely permit) RRATS personnel will ensure that the vehicle has been marked as searched and its body type and color has been relayed to ECC.

4.2 Potomac River

4.2a *The first arriving unit will*

- 1) *Establish command*
- 2) *Indicate command mode*
- 3) *Ensure that accountability is established*
- 4) *Complete victim ID & victim location sheets with any and all information available (ECC, calling party, witnesses).*
- 5) *Begin formulation of an Incident Action Plan for resolution of the incident.*

4.2b The initial on scene boat will not depart the launch sites until a second boat is arriving on scene.

4.2c An exception to 4.2b may be made if a known life hazard exists, i.e.; priority one patient, multiple persons in the water. This is similar to the SSFF policy of immediate entry for a known rescue.

4.2c1 Boats will strive to remain in visual contact with each other during operations on the water. This will allow them to provide assistance to each other should the need arise.

4.3 Billy Goat Trail

4.3a *The first arriving unit will*

- 1) *Establish command*
- 2) *Indicate command mode*
- 3) *Ensure that accountability is established*
- 4) *Complete victim ID & victim location sheets with any and all information available (ECC, calling party, witnesses).*



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5) *Begin formulation of an Incident Action Plan for resolution of the incident.*

4.3b *For incidents involving an unknown location on the "A" loop under optimum conditions the following assignments will take place.*

- 1) *Two boats will launch from Anglers.*
- 2) *Two ground personnel will enter the Billy Goat Trail from the south end, designation Billy Goat South.*
- 3) *If there are adequate personnel two ground personnel will enter the Billy Goat Trail from the north end, designation Billy Goat North.*
- 4) *If there are adequate personnel A ground crew with four personnel will access the Billy Goat Trail from the Emergency Access Trail (Spitzbergen Trail). Once at the Billy Goat Trail two personnel will go north; designation Billy Goat center right and two personnel will go south, designation Billy Goat center left.*

4.4 Ice Rescue

4.4a The first arriving RRATS personnel will report to command and offer technical assistance. This will include ensuring that

- 1) Only personnel with appropriate attire are in the Warm Zone.
- 2) Only properly equipped personnel are in the Hot Zone.
- 3) Spotters are positioned with intersecting lines of sight to the victim so as to maintain a point of reference should the victim submerge.

4.4b The Senior RRATS personnel on scene will report to command and offer technical assistance relating to forming an Incident Action Plan for resolution of the incident.

4.5 Dive Incident

4.5a The first arriving RRATS personnel will report to command and offer technical assistance. This will include ensuring that

- 1) Only Fire Rescue personnel with appropriate attire are in the Warm Zone.
- 2) Only technician level personnel are in the Hot Zone.



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- 3) All witnesses are identified, separated and retained.
 - 4) A Dive Group is established
 - 5) A URT staging area is defined
 - 6) Communications are established with any Fire Department boat that might be on the water.
 - 7) Spotters are positioned with intersecting lines of sight to any Fire Department boat on the water so as to maintain a point of reference should the boat locate the suspected victim location.
- 4.5b The Senior URT personnel on scene will report to command and offer technical assistance relating to forming an Incident Action Plan for resolution of the incident. This will include ensuring that
- 1) Witness interviews are conducted by the RRATS team.
 - 2) A Point Last Seen is identified
 - 3) A dive operations site is established based on items 1 & 2.
 - 4) A plan is formulated to stage divers and equipment.
 - 5) A rehab sector is established
 - 6) A gross decontamination area is established. If the dive operations site is remote a brush truck will be requested for this operation.
 - 7) A plan is formulated for lighting the dive area if operations are conducted at night.
- 4.6 Night Operations
- 4.6a Light sticks will be utilized at any time operations are conducted after sunset.
- 4.6b Light sticks will be placed on the boats such that at least two are visible from any direction the boat may be viewed.
- 4.6c Boat light sticks will be the same color as the designation of the boat they are placed on.
- 4.6d Personnel operating in a boat will wear two light sticks during any operations after sunset.
- 4.6e Personnel will attach one light stick to their helmet and one to the top area of their PFD.



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- 4.6f Boat crews will wear the same color light sticks as that of the boat they are operating in.
- 4.6g White light sticks will be utilized on land only. Their uses may include marking boat launch sites, marking trails or general illumination.
- 4.6h Strobe lights will be utilized only as an emergency PASS type device. This may also include it's activation by rescuers to indicate that a rescuer needs assistance with a victim.
- 4.7 Safety / Accountability
- 4.7a When checking on the air as responding each Strike Team will indicate it's number and type of operational personnel (ie STxx responding with 3 water and two ground personnel).
- 4.7b Upon arrival at the scene, each Strike Team will advise command that they are on scene and will report their number and type of operational and land personnel.
- 4.7c When initiating operations on scene, each Strike Team will report it's number of personnel, destination or assignment and group color if at night.
- 4.7d The initial on scene boat will not depart the launch site until a second boat is arriving on scene.
- 4.7e An exception to 4.7d may be made if a known life hazard exists, i.e.; priority one patient or multiple persons in the water. This is similar to the SSFF policy of immediate entry for a known rescue.
- 4.7f Heat exhaustion and dehydration should be anticipated if.
- Personnel are utilizing drysuits and the air + water temperature is over 150 degrees.
 - Personnel are operating in their drysuits out of the water for extended times in temperatures above 65 degrees.
- 4.7g Dry suits must be worn for all water activities any time the water + air temperature is below 120.



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4.7h Dry suits will be considered as part of the minimum PPE for all personnel entering floodwaters.

4.8 Searches

4.8a Emergency Response Search

4.8a1 Personnel will follow all applicable guidelines for emergency response.

4.8b Routine Response Search (RRS)

4.8b1 All RRS will take into account the safety and welfare of personnel. As such the RRATS Duty Officer & Duty Leader will consult with the DOC and appropriate Battalion Chief on the appropriateness of and resources required to conduct a RRS. Considerations will be weather, water level and other apparatus activity.

4.8b2 A RRS will be conducted in the 24 hour period immediately following the initial search.

4.8b3 A subsequent RRS will be conducted if water levels change plus or minus by one foot or more.

4.9 Decontamination

4.9a On any incident involving floodwaters there will be a gross decontamination area set up at the waters edge.

4.9b Gross decontamination will be considered to be rinsing with a fog hose stream.

4.9c Further decontamination needs will be determined as needed.

4.10 Required reports: On any incident that active RRATS operations are conducted a Firehouse & RRATS After Incident Report must be completed by the leader for each Strike Team involved. These reports must be completed no later than 6 days after the incident.