

**BURLINGTON TWP. FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE #16**

**WATER/ICE RESCUE**

**Purpose:** This policy establishes the department procedures for a water/ice rescue.

**Scope:** The purpose of this guideline is to provide a standard course of action during a water/ice rescue. The intent is to save lives and keep all members and the public safe at all times. While situations will occur that this guideline will not address, it should provide enough information to enable personnel to make sound decisions.

**Apparatus Response:**

1. 15-21
2. 15-51
3. 15-22

**Definitions:**

1. Drowning- Any report of a person who was seen or is believed to be submerged in a body of water or pool.
2. Missing Person- Any report of a person(s) missing or needing assistance with rescue from an open body of water such as a lake, pond, river, stream, or pool.
3. Open Water- Any lake, pond, river, stream, pool, or similar body of water where the surface is predominantly free of ice.
4. Ice Rescue- Any report of a person or vehicle that has fallen through the ice of any lake, pond, river, or stream.

**Upon arrival at scene Establish Incident Command:**

1. If no officer is available, the most senior Firefighter will be in charge as I.C. If there is a question of seniority, the driver of the engine will be the I.C.
2. Upon command of the I.C. all units will switch to the fire incident channel assigned by Central Dispatch. I.C. will request a fire incident channel if one is not assigned by Central Dispatch.
3. I.C. is to give a scene size up report and request any additional resources that are needed.
4. If/When transferring command, be sure to communicate all information that has been noted and all decisions made.
5. All personnel reporting in will place I.D. tag in its proper location. (Refer to Passport Accountability System S.O.G. #4).

**Procedures:**

1. If a rescue is going to be performed contact Central Dispatch and ask for the closest mutual-aid water/ice rescue unit.

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2. If the victim is easily accessible, then and only then will Burlington Twp. Fire Department perform a rescue. All members will be tied off prior to attempting the rescue. All members must maintain a safe distance from the actual incident, but may utilize an available object (pike pole, ladder, ect.) to reach the victim and pull them from the water/ice. Water rescue throw bags are located on 15-21 and 15-51, and may be utilized to throw to the victim and pull them from the water/ice.
3. All members will wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment as determined by I.C.
4. When a water rescue team arrives on scene Burlington Twp. Fire Department may assist only if directed too.

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