Purpose:

This SOG outlines incident responses for Ice and Cold-Water Rescue scenarios.

Scope:

This SOG will apply to all personnel of the Pacific Fire Protection District.

Guidelines:

For the purpose of this POG the term victim will refer to any object in need of rescue or recovery from an ice or cold-water situation, this includes but not limited to a person and/or animal.

1. **TRAINING**:
    - **a.** Minimum training for an on-ice rescuer shall be an approved Ice Rescue Technicians course or equivalent training.
    - **b.** A Line Tender shall have an approved course in line tending or equivalent training.
    - **c.** Members of the Ice Rescue Team shall be t rained in the use of all equipment utilized by the team.
2. **RESPONSE:**
    - **a.** Any response within the boundaries of the Fire District will include a minimum of the following:
        - **i.** 2 Pumpers (with ice rescue equipment)
        - **ii.** 1 Ambulance
        - **iii.** 1 Duty Officer
    - **b.** When a rescuer is in the water (person or animal), a full water rescue response will be initiated by the IC.
3. **OPERATIONS**
    - **a.** An effective ice rescue shall have a minimum of 9 (nine) personnel being utilized to allow for optimum safety. The personal participating in an ice rescue attempt shall be as follows:
        - **i.** Incident Commander / Safety Officer
        - **ii.** Primary Rescue team of 2
        - **iii.** Backup Rescue team of 2
        - **iv.** Four-person shore crew
    - **b.** An officer or member on the scene will establish Incident Command (IC). The incident commander should be on shore greater than 15 feet from the water (cold zone) and within view of the rescue operations to monitor the overall safety. The incident commander on the scene should determine the number of victims, their condition and their last known location if they cannot be seen from shore.
    - **c.** Safety of all personnel responding to and operating at the scene of an ice recue is paramount. Safety procedures will include but not be limited to the following:
        - **i.** Animal rescues are at the discretion of the IC and should only be attempted if the safety of the rescuers can be assured.
        - **ii.** Only personnel trained in cold water and ice rescue shall participate in the rescue attempt.
        - **iii.** Both a primary and back-up rescue team approach should be utilized. Both the primary and back-up personnel shall be equipped with cold-water rescue and/or immersion suits. Each team shall consist of two people. Back-up personnel shall be in suit on shore prior to any responder entering the water.
        - **iv.** The area should be divided to the following divisions:

1. Cold Zone – Any area 15 feet or greater from the shoreline
2. Warm Zone – Any area within 15 feet from the shoreline
3. Hot Zone – Any area in the ice and/or in the water

v. All personnel working on shore in the warm zone shall be equipped with an approved personal flotation device.

vi. Tether lines shall be attached to the front D ring harness of the Ice Recue Suit of all personnel engaged in rescues. Appropriate shore crew will control tether lines and ensure that ropes, carabineers and zippers are good to go.

vii. If a stokes basket is used during a rescue, a tether line shall be affixed to it.

viii. Primary and back up rescuers should be equipped with ice awls for their own use or for use by the victim.

ix. Rest and medical monitoring of all personnel in a warm vehicle or shelter should be provided at regular intervals. The team leader or safety officer will declare any rescuer unfit to continue and will notify the IC.

x. Adequate lighting and flashlights should be available for night operations.

d. Rescue methods for each situation will be determined based upon the safety of the rescuer to accomplish an effective rescue; these methods shall include but not limited to:
   i. Talk – Establish voice and visual contact with the victim, provide reassurance and directions to attempt to self-rescue.
   ii. Throw – Use of throw bags or water rescue disk to the victim, attempt to throw the device over the victim; victim must be alert and conscious
   iii. Reach – An attempt to use a piece of equipment and/or tool to retrieve the victim. The tools can include the following but not limited to:
      1. Pike pole
      2. Ground ladder
      3. Inflated Hose
   iv. Row – The use of a boat to access the victim; boats should be limited to an inflatable during ice rescue situations. When using a boat, the rescuers in the boat shall still be outfitted with appropriate cold-water rescue and/or immersion suits.
   v. Go – Placing a rescuer in the water wearing and appropriate cold-water rescue and/or immersion suits including PFD where applicable.
e. At no time will any team member attempt a rescue without proper back up, a cold-water suite and tether line to shore.
f. Prior to initiating a rescue, the rescuer shall assess personnel, equipment, the number of victims and their condition, the ice conditions and the access options. Since survival time after immersion in ice water is short, and since the ability of hypothermic patients to aid in his/her own rescue is significantly dismissed, a rescue shall be initiated as quickly as possible.
g. Rescuers working on ice should use all means to distribute their weight over the surface and be prepared for breakthrough at all times.
h. As soon as possible, communication with the victim(s) shall be initiated. It is important to keep communicating with the victim through the rescue attempt. Immediately determine the number of victims by questioning the victim.
i. If a victim slips beneath eh water or ice surface, denote the location where they were last seen and immediately dispatch divers to that location to initiate a search.