## PURPOSE

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

## POLICY

According to federal regulations and standards, the Rogers Fire Department's Special Operations Team (SOT) 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 and should require the response of the Rescue Team.

- Non-technical Rope Rescue - In most cases first responders can conduct rescues involving angles of less than 45 degrees. The Rescue Team may be called out to assist if the IC deems it necessary.

### Rope Rescue Assignment (within city limits)

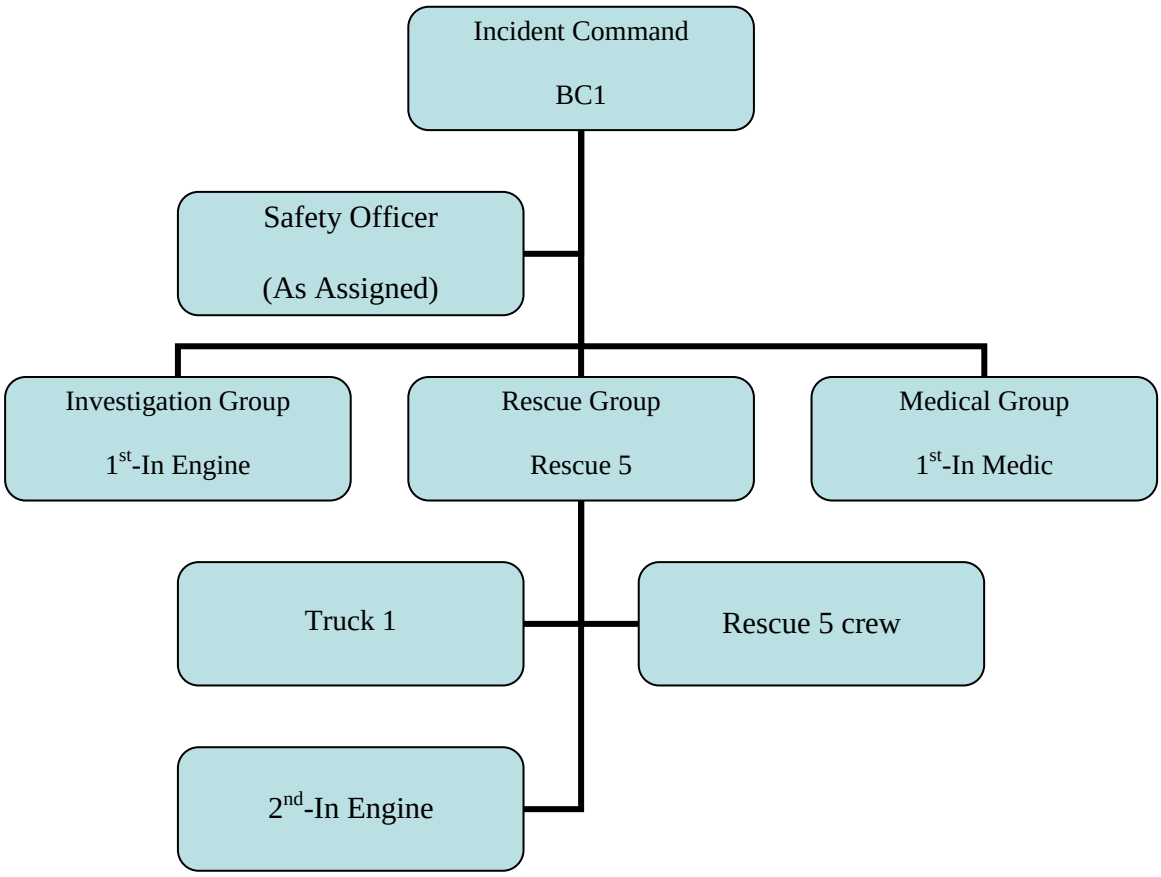
The City Wide Tour Commander (CWTC) shall evaluate incidents dispatched that may have the potential of being a rope rescue incident. Besides the CWTC, any company officer may call for a SOT response for rope rescue in the event they find themselves in a situation requiring additional resources and expertise. The 1st alarm assignment for a rope rescue inside the city includes the following:

- 2 Closest Fire Companies
- Closest Medic Unit
- Truck 1
- Rescue 5
- 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.

- 2nd-In Engine Company: Report to Rescue Group. Be prepared to perform support/supply functions.
- Medic Unit: Establish Medical Group
- Truck 1: Report to Rescue Group. Be prepared to perform rigging functions.
- Rescue 5: Establish Rescue Group. Crew should be prepared to perform victim rescue/recovery functions.
- Battalion 1: Incident Command




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. Most incidents will involve an ICS setup similar to the chart above.

A safety officer shall be assigned by the incident commander utilizing responding command staff or company officers as manpower allows. The Incident Commander shall act as the Safety Officer if manpower dictates.

The Incident Commander may return units they feel are not needed to safely control the incident after a complete size-up has been completed. Other Fire Department units may be requested and

dispatched during the first alarm, as needed. Responding units should ensure that the response to such incidents meet the procedures contained within this document.

**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
   - Request Technical Rescue Response
   - Consider the need for special resources (Crane, scissor lift, or professional experts)
   - Appoint a Safety Officer

**Unit Assignments for Rope Rescue**

The Rescue Group Supervisor shall be responsible for assigning:

1. A crew to perform the rigging function (Preferably Truck 1)
2. A crew to perform the victim rescue/recovery function (Preferably Rescue 5 crew)
3. A crew to perform support/supply functions (Preferably 2nd-In Engine)

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 situation permits, a backup plan should be in place.

**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. A BFR may be used for both the primary and backup anchors.

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