



LEAST RESISTANCE TRAINING CONCEPTS
PROCEDURE GUIDE No. 20-46
**WATER RESCUES INVOLVING LARGE ANIMALS
(FLOOD INCIDENTS)**
Issue Date: 1-14-2020, Revised: 5-23-2023



This Procedure Guide supersedes all previous guides in order to comply with the latest Lyon County, state and national training and operations standards.

Discussion:

Large and small animals can become stranded during high water events. In some instances, they may seek out the most-shallow portion of the body of water where they can stand with their heads above water, but will still need to be removed.

Water rescues can present a number of risks and hazards that must be recognized and mitigated before attempting any extrications.

Responder Qualifications:

IS-100.c, IS-700.b, National Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Certificate, TLAR Emergency Horse Handling Module, TLAR Technical Large Animal Rescue Operational Level, Water Rescue Practices Module.

1. Safety Policy:

- 1.1 Safety is the overarching priority in all responses. No procedure or protocol provided in this Procedure Guide shall supersede the use of sound judgment as may be appropriate to maximize incident safety.
- 1.2 All responders shall wear appropriate helmets at all times, and wear ANSI Class-II or Class-III vests or jackets whenever operating on or near any active traffic lanes.
- 1.3 A qualified Safety Officer shall be designated for all technical rescue responses.
- 1.4 In circumstances where responders cannot reliably communicate by direct voice, portable radios shall be utilized.

2 Response Matrix:

2.1 Minimum responses to evacuation related large animal rescue incidents shall include:

- Closest available TLAR Rescue Unit
- Transport trailer(s) with panels
- Incident Support Unit-1
- Panel trailer (if containment is anticipated.)

2.2 An additional TLAR Rescue Unit may respond if the need for additional equipment is anticipated.

3 Incident Organization / Chain of Command:

3.1 Each response shall have an Incident Commander (IC) who will direct the activities being undertaken.

4 Incident Assessment:

4.1 Upon arrival a complete and comprehensive size-up shall be undertaken, risks and probable rescue activities shall be determined, and information shall be relayed to incoming units.

5 Unified Command:

5.1 When public safety or facility personnel are present, operations should be conducted with the lead personnel from all stakeholder entities functioning by agreement in an ICS Unified Command structure.

5.2 The Commander of Technical Large Animal Rescue operations may be part of the Unified Command structure or be designated as Technical Rescue Group Supervisor in a module subordinate to Incident Command, as incident conditions may warrant.

6 Incident Briefing / Incident Action Plan:

6.1 Subsequent to securing the scene and before initiating definitive technical operations, an Incident briefing shall be conducted including all responders present.

6.2 The Incident Briefing shall include at minimum:

- 6.2.1 The Incident Safety Plan, including identifying the Incident Safety Officer
- 6.2.2 Identified hazards and risks (compliance with NRS 41.519)
- 6.2.3 The Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- 6.2.4 Functional assignments and designation of Functional Unit Leads
- 6.2.5 Success measurements, including benchmarks warranting a change in the IAP

6.3 All members present shall indicate that they understand the IAP and are capable of Safely and effectively carrying out their assignments

6.4 All material changes to the IAP shall be conveyed to all responders before changes take place.

7 General Safety Orders:

- 7.1 Personnel shall not engage in swift water operations, but delegate to a qualified team.
- 7.2 All personnel working in or near the water line shall wear approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) and helmets appropriate for working in non-swift water.
- 7.3 Personnel operating in water shall wear safety vests with tag lines.
- 7.4 Water Rescue Throw Bags shall be deployed for immediate use in the event a responder without a tag line gets into trouble while in the water.
- 7.5 All ropes used in water rescue operations shall be polystyrene (floating rope.)
- 7.6 For horses in water, a Becker Water Rescue Harness shall be utilized whenever practicable.
- 7.7 Provisions shall be made for rehab for responders exposed to water and excessive cold.

8 Critical Response Practices:

- 8.1 The animal shall be protected from drowning when applicable.
- 8.2 Animals should be haltered and led out when practicable, or driven toward the nearest high ground if necessary.
- 8.3 Water troughs can be emptied and used as “boats” to evacuate smaller animals.
- 8.4 Responders must consider that an animal may flail about and try to self-extricate when approached or during the evacuation process.

9 Notification and Documentation:

- 9.1 Whenever practicable, orange identification duct tape shall be conspicuously applied at the locations where all animals known to be present have been removed, with the types and numbers of animals removed and their destination recorded on the duct tape with a black broad tipped marker.
- 9.2 All livestock relocated from an emergency zone shall be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

10 Post-incident Issues:

- 10.1 Horses (and other livestock) must be checked for hypothermia and injuries.
- 10.2 In the event an animal extricated during a technical large animal rescue requires follow-up care, appropriate notifications shall be made as follows:
 - 10.2.1 If a Virginia Range horse, the Range Manager
 - 10.2.2 If domestic livestock where the owner is known or can be identified, the owner
- 10.3 If domestic livestock where the owner is not known or cannot be identified, a Brand Inspector and the Animal Control agency having jurisdiction.

10.4 If operating as an element in a formal incident, incident supervisors shall be informed as to the outcome of the mission, location of the animal(s) and availability status for other calls. Both animals and responders must be evaluated for potential decontamination.

11 Interference by Bystanders:

11.1 Interference by bystanders can create distractions that can impact the safety and performance of field operations. Furthermore, allowing bystanders to interfere can create liability issues. If bystanders encroach into the operational area and refuse to step back or they otherwise create distractions, law enforcement should be called to remove them before continuing operations.

Note: All personnel should review *Water Rescue Practices*
http://whmentors.org/evac/water_rescue01.html