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Standard Guide for Performance of a Water Rescuer—Level I¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers minimum requirements for the scope of performance of a water rescuer I who may be responsible for the initial on scene evaluation, performing land based water rescues, and providing initial patient care at a water rescue incident.

1.2 This guide is one in a series; water rescuer I is only a beginning level designed for a water rescue responder. Duties and responsibilities at water rescue operations vary according to the water rescuer's skills and knowledge. As the water rescuer level I progresses and becomes more proficient, the individual will move from responder to in-water rescuer to rescue boat operator.

1.3 *This standard may involve hazardous materials, operations, and equipment. This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

- 2.1 *American Red Cross Standards:*
Standards and Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Cardiac Care
Standards and Guidelines for Standard First Aid
- 2.2 *American Heart Association:*
Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *water rescuer I, WRI, n*—an individual competent to perform on scene evaluations, water rescues only from land, and provide initial care for victims.

3.1.2 *basic life support cardiopulmonary resuscitation, BLS/CPR, n*—a set of skills which includes airway management, artificial respiration, and chest compressions.²

3.1.3 *drowning, n*—death due to submersion and usually suffocation in water or other fluid media.

3.1.4 *near drowning, n*—a resuscitated drowning victim who survives, at least temporarily, following a submersion injury.

3.1.5 *cold water near drowning, n*—a complex series of physiological reactions which occur as a result of being immersed in cold water (21°C or 70°F and below) which may allow a person to survive up to an hour, possibly more, under water.

3.1.6 *floating tether, tag line, n*—a water rescue technique which stretches a line across a body of water. This line has a flotation device attached to it to keep the rope on the surface of the water and to provide a buoyant object for the victim to grab and hold.

3.1.7 *heat-related illnesses, n*—conditions consisting of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke which develop from an overexposure to heat.

3.1.8 *hypothermia, n*—reduction of the body core temperature to 35°C (95°F) and below.

3.1.9 *h.e.l.p. position, n*—heat escape lessening posture is a single person water rescue technique for heat conservation when immersed in cold water. This technique conserves heat by using personal flotation devices, clothing, and body posture to limit exposure of the body's major heat loss areas to the cold water.

3.1.10 *huddle position, n*—a multiple person water rescue technique for heat conservation when immersed in cold water and the majority of the rescuers are wearing personal flotation devices. This technique conserves heat by using personal flotation devices and clothing, group body contact, and body posture to limit exposure of the body's major heat loss areas to the cold water.

¹ This document is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.03 on Personnel, Training, and Education.

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² Available from your local American Red Cross Chapter or your American Heart Association Chapter. Reprinted from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Copies are available from the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Ave., Dallas, Texas 75231.