



Jackson Hole Fire/EMS Operations Manual

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Title: **Urban Search & Rescue Guidelines**
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for conducting urban search and rescue (US&R) operations following a variety of emergencies or disasters, including earthquakes, storms, tornadoes, floods, terrorist activities and hazardous materials releases.

SCOPE

JH Fire/EMS will respond to incidents requiring US&R in order to provide for life safety, incident stabilization and property conservation. JH Fire/EMS members will act within their scope of training, providing for safety of responders. JH Fire/EMS will coordinate with local and regional resources identified to achieve Incident Objectives. Guidelines will apply to all JH Fire/EMS personnel operating in US&R incident or recovery.

SECTION 1 – TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Phase I: Arrive On-Scene. Take and Name Command. Size-Up.

A. *First Arrival.* If command has not been established, the first Fire/EMS officer or member arriving on scene shall establish Command until relieved by a higher ranking officer, as outlined in the JH Fire/EMS Command Operations policy. In the scenario of multi-jurisdictional operations, Unified Command is recommended.

B. *If Possible, Secure Responsible Party(ies) or Witness(es).* Command should secure a witness as soon as possible after arriving on scene. This will help in identifying the problem scope and locating any victim(s).

C. *Locate the Victim.* In most cases, Command will have to send a reconnaissance team to the area of the victim to determine the exact location of victim and nature of injuries. Command may wish to designate this as **Recon Group**. **Recon Group** should have EMS equipment to begin to administer first aid to the victim, if safety of responders is established.

D. Decide on Rescue or Recovery. The **Recon Group Supervisor** should advise Command whether the operation should be conducted in the rescue or recovery mode. In the rescue mode, personnel assigned to **Recon Group** will be reassigned to **Rescue Group** and **Recon Group** will be terminated. As additional groups join up with the **Rescue Group**, they shall become part of the **Rescue Group** unless their location or function logically would dictate that they remain a separate group or division with a call sign designated by Command. If the operation is to be conducted in the recovery mode, Command may wish to leave the victim and any related equipment in place for investigative purposes.

E. Assess the Need for Additional Resources. **Recon Group** should provide Command with enough information, or recommend the need for additional resources. If structure collapse, the following resources should be considered by the Incident Commander:

1. Lower Valley Energy for Utility Control
2. Public Works
3. Town of Jackson or Teton County Building Code Official
4. Public Information Officer
5. Teton County Emergency Management (TCEM)

If structure collapse with possible or known victims, the following resources should be considered by the Incident Commander and ordered through TCEM:

1. Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
2. Idaho Falls Fire Department US&R Team
3. Canine Search and Rescue
 - a. WYOMING K9 Search & Rescue
 - b. Jackson Hole Search Dogs
4. FEMA US&R Task Force – Unified Fire Authority (Salt Lake City, Utah)
5. FEMA US&R Incident Support Team
6. Heavy Equipment
7. Lumber
8. Drone

If needed, Command should put in an early call for additional resources. Additional crews sent in by Command to assist **Recon Group** should be designated Group 1, Group 2, etc., to aid in the accounting of personnel. If additional resources are not needed after a call has been put in, Command may terminate request.

F. Assess the Hazards. Command should designate a **Safety Officer** to identify all potential hazards to rescuers. **Safety Officer** will be responsible for securing those hazards or making all members aware of those hazards. **Safety Officer** shall also be responsible for assuring that all safety procedures are adhered to.

Phase II: Pre-Rescue Operations

A. Make the General Area Safe. Command or his/her designee should begin to make the general area safe.

1. Establish an Isolation Perimeter and a Hot Zone
2. Establish LCES – Lookouts, Communications, Escape Routes and Safety Zones
3. Turn off utilities

B. Determine if the Rescue is Within the Scope of Responders. Command or his/her designee should determine if the scope of Rescue Operations is within the scope of responders on scene. Confined Space Rescue, Trench Rescue, Shoring require specialized equipment and specialized responder training. If possible, any overhead hazards should be removed prior to Rescue Operations.

C. Pre-Rescue/Recovery. Rescue Group will be responsible for gathering all equipment and personnel necessary to operate according to the established Incident Action Plan. **Rescue Group** will assign rescue personnel to conduct the rescue, and support personnel to support the rescuers, during the actual rescue phase.

Phase III: Rescue Operations

A. Risk versus Benefit. Risk Management is critical in all phases of rescue operations. Rescuer safety is the number 1 priority. Safety of victims/patients is the next priority. Lowest-risk methods will be utilized first, while setting up higher-risk methods as next alternatives.

The order of rescue from low risk to high risk would be:

1. Talk the victim into self-rescue. If the victim is not exposed to a life-threatening situation, it may be possible to talk the victim into self-extrication. If the victim is exposed to a life-threatening situation, it may be best to advise the victim to stay in place until a rope rescue can be set up.
2. If the victim is ambulatory and rescuers can reach the victim, he/she can walk to safety with the assistance of rescuers.
3. If the victim is injured or unable to assist in their own rescue, he/she should be packaged properly and carried to safety. Details regarding rope rescue systems in Low and High-angle terrain can be found in the JH Fire/EMS Rope Rescue Systems policy.

B. Decide on an Action Plan. With the recommendation from the **Rescue Group Supervisor**, Command will decide on an action plan. The action plan, as well as any alternatives, will be communicated to all rescuers on scene.

C. Rescue Group Supervisor shall ensure the overall safety of the rescue system(s). **Rescue Group** shall designate the tasks of individual rescuers during the operation.

Phase IV: Termination

- A. Personnel accountability.**
- B. Equipment accountability.**
- C. (If a fatality, Command may consider leaving equipment in place for investigative purposes).**
- D. Re-stock vehicles.**
- E. Debriefing.**
- F. Secure the scene.**
- G. Return to service.**

SECTION II – ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ***Heat.*** Consider rotation of crews.
- ***Cold.*** Consider effects of hypothermia on victim and rescuers.
- ***Rain/Snow.*** Consider the effects of rain or snow on the hazard profile.
- ***Time of Day.*** Is there sufficient lighting for operations extending into the night?
- ***Family.*** Consider the effect on family and friends; keep family informed.
- ***Media.*** Consider news media; assign a PIO.