

NEW SOUTH WALES FIRE BRIGADES

SAFETY BULLETIN 2008/03

Conducting a rescue in, on or near water



*This Safety Bulletin rescinds Safety Bulletin 2003/4
Response to aquatic incidents*

Firefighters must be aware of the hazards associated with conducting a rescue in, on or near water. Despite good intentions, efforts by firefighters to provide assistance to people or animals trapped or drowning, can result in both the rescuer and victim drowning or being seriously injured.

All NSWFB personnel must apply risk management principles when working in, on or near water. Although different levels of training have been provided to Firefighters that are working on Marine 1, Hazmat boats and swift water rescue specialist, the first priority will always be the safety of firefighters.

Size up

- Locate the victim and determine if it is a rescue or recovery.
- Identify hazards which may include, but are not limited to those associated with electricity, biological agents and other contaminants, water, floating and submerged debris, depth and force of water, edge condition and slope.
[Click here for additional hazards, risks and control measures.](#)

Assistance

- Call for specialist support through the relevant Communications Centre, eg. Police, Ambulance, Helicopter, SES, USAR 1 and Surf Lifesaving Australia.

Conducting a rescue

- Do not enter the water.
- Establish and manage a restricted access zone.
- Only land-based rescue attempts should be made using techniques such as, but are not limited to, an outstretched hand, a stick, broom, ceiling hook or throw line/rope.

Do NOT attach a lifeline or any other rope to a firefighter and enter the water unless specifically trained and authorised to do so by the NSWFB Rescue Section. In running water a rope attached around a rescuer's body may cause the rescuer to be pulled below the water surface and drowned.

Do NOT wear structural firefighting uniform in, on or near water to conduct a rescue. Note: Firefighters performing Hazmat or firefighting duties in, on or near water should dress accordingly to the task or as directed by the Incident Controller.

Noted, Station Commander	A	B	C	D	Other
Station Officer Anthony Waller 02 9742 7339				CHO/ 06178	28 March 2008

Previous Operations Bulletin: 2008/02 – P2a pulley inspection