

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines
Special Operations

Special Operations, SOG 4.04

ROPE OPERATIONS

1. Intent and Purpose

To facilitate safe UCFD Operations through the proper and appropriate use of Life Safety Ropes, Rescue Ropes, and Utility Ropes during emergencies. Life Safety Ropes shall meet NFPA 1983.

2. Definitions

- a. Life Safety Rope – Rope **dedicated solely** for the purpose of supporting people during rescue, firefighting, other emergency operations, or during training evolutions.
- b. Rescue Rope – Rope **not dedicated solely** for the purpose of supporting people during rescue, firefighting, other emergency operations, or during training evolutions.
- c. Utility Rope – Rope used in any instance, excluding life safety applications, where the use of a rope is required (i.e. hoist equipment, secure unstable objects, cordon off an area, water rescue throw-bag rope, etc.).

3. Policy

- a. It shall be the policy of UCFD's to use Rescue Ropes when it has been deemed necessary by the Officer in Charge for the safety of personnel in the following circumstances.
 - Personnel entering manholes.
 - Supporting people during rescue, firefighting, or other emergency operations.
 - Entering areas of toxic and/or hazardous materials.
 - Search and rescue, where hose lines are not used.
 - Steep embankment operations.
 - Any other situation in which the use of ropes may be necessary for the safety of personnel.
- b. Rescue Ropes shall be a minimum of one hundred fifty (150') feet in length.
- c. Rescue Ropes shall be kept on apparatus in a Lifeline bag. Rescue Rope must meet NFPA Performance Requirements and shall be sealed. **Only Rescue Ropes that are sealed may be used for supporting personnel during rescue, firefighting, or other emergency situations.**
- d. Rescue Ropes shall not be utilized for tool and equipment hoisting or routine type operations. Rescue ropes shall only be used for emergency life safety operations.

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4. Procedure

When it has been determined that a need exists to utilize Rescue Ropes, UCFD's personnel should be guided by the following general principles:

- a. Obtain Rescue Ropes and other equipment as may be required.
- b. Secure to an immovable object (i.e. engine, telephone pole, door, etc.).
- c. Utilize the rescue harness during lowering, hoisting and confined space operations. Utilize safety gear (Helmets, gloves, harnesses, etc.), as specific operations require and per manufacturer's recommendations.
- d. Insure an adequate number of personnel and equipment for backup, support, and communication.
 - Utilize O.A.T.H. signal system:
 - ✓ O. = OK.....1 Pull
 - ✓ A. = Advance.....2 Pulls
 - ✓ T. = Take up Rope.....3 Pulls
 - ✓ H. = Help.....4 Pulls

Note: If possible trained personnel should be utilized for main operations and less trained personnel should be utilized as support.

5. Rescue Rope Inspection

After a Rescue Rope is used an officer must inspect it. Before a Rescue Rope can be reused for supporting personnel during rescue, firefighting, or other emergency operations, all the following conditions must be met:

- ✓ Rope has not been visually damaged.
- ✓ Rope has not been exposed to heat, direct flame impingement, or abrasion.
- ✓ Rope has not been subject to any impact load.
- ✓ Rope has not been exposed to liquids, solids, gases, mists, or vapors of any chemical or other material that can deteriorate rope.
- ✓ Rope passes inspection when inspected by a qualified person following the manufacturer's inspection procedures both before and after each use.

If a Rescue Rope does not pass the above conditions, the officer shall determine if it is serviceable and safe for a utility rope (non-supporting).

NOTE: If unsure of the safety or serviceability of a rope, do not use it and remove the rope from service.