



Roosevelt Fire District

Standard Operating Guidelines

Section:
Operations

Guideline: 25
Marine Unit Operation

Purpose: This standard operating procedure/guideline addresses procedures detailing operation of Roosevelt Fire District boats and watercraft: qualifications of personnel, care and maintenance of watercraft, requests for watercraft support, operating watercraft, and use of special equipment.

This policy defines the operational guidelines for use of the Fire Boat when conducting water rescue, fire suppression, training, and standby activities on the river.

Scope: This SOG pertains to all personnel in the Roosevelt Fire District.

Training: The following details the Qualifications and training required for membership and operations within the Roosevelt Fire District Marine Division

Marine Unit Membership Requirements:

- A. Minimum of 2 years member of Roosevelt FD
- B. RFD Exterior status as a minimum
- C. Boater safety course
- D. Ability to demonstrate proficiency in swimming ability.
- E. CPR card, AED, and RFD Basic EMS Training or higher.
- F. Knowledge of basic Marine knots
- G. Able to throw a life ring
- H. Basic Water Rescue Class (Texas A&M online version or NYS Class)
- I. Be able to drag 100 lb. mannequin 30 feet

Pilot:

- A. Demonstrate proficiency in operation as defined in Operator Skill Sheet
- B. Maneuvering while deck gun is in operation
- C. 5 docking attempts departing and arriving
- D. Demonstrate proficiency operating at night
- E. nighttime navigation test without any navigation aids
- F. proficient in all navigational aids and instrumentation
- G. Proficient in pump operations
- H. Able to rescue victims
- I. Knowledge of basic Marine knots
- J. Basic Water Rescue Class
- K. NYS Boater Safety Class
- L. Ability to demonstrate proficiency in swimming ability

Crew:

- A. Proficient in pump operations
- B. Able to rescue victims
- C. 1 hour of nighttime hour operations
- D. Assist in docking attempts
- E. Knowledge of basic marine knots
- F. Basic operations of instrumentation

- G. Basic Water Rescue Class
- H. NYS Boater Safety Class
- I. Ability to demonstrate proficiency in swimming ability

Procedure: The following are the procedures for operating Roosevelt Fire District Boats and Watercraft

Personal Safety:

- A. TURNOUT GEAR IS NOT ALLOWED AT ANY WATER EMERGENCY**
- B. Personnel are expected to ensure proper safety equipment is available prior to departure from land.
- C. Fire Department personnel shall always wear an approved USCG approved type III (or better) PFD while:
 - a. Riding in or on any watercraft while moving under power
 - b. Engaged in any emergency response within 10' of the water's edge
 - c. Engaged in any operation in the water
 - d. In any situation where the member is at risk for falling into the water
- D. Personnel should expect ambient air temperatures to be much lower while operating on the Hudson River. Wind that is blown across the water surface can significantly lower the air temperature. Personnel should anticipate and prepare for this factor prior to boarding any watercraft. Adequate layering of suitable clothing is the most effective method for combating hypothermia.
- E. Personnel are expected to evaluate each situation and utilize an appropriate level of personal protection to ensure the safety of each individual member. If an appropriate protection level cannot be achieved with the available resources, additional resources should be requested, and alternative measures should be employed until an acceptable protection level can be attained.

General Watercraft Safety:

Fire personnel may operate from fire department or another agency's watercraft (as available and appropriate). Operating from civilian watercraft is strictly prohibited. Personnel must always maintain adequate situational awareness. Wind shifts, wakes & waves, and evasive steering movements may cause the watercraft to shift suddenly throwing riders about (causing injury). Personnel may also be thrown overboard, without warning. Good shoes, sure footing, good balance, and an adequate hand hold should always be maintained.

All deck areas and surfaces should be kept clear and clean. Lines not in use should be properly stowed. Excess water should be cleared when possible. Emergency equipment should be responsibly managed, secured, and stowed when not in use. Adequate deck lighting should be used at night when it does not interfere with operations.

Emergency Operations:

During any operation whether rescue, fire operation, recovery, or mutual aid; the pilot running the Roosevelt Fire District watercraft oversees the vessel and its crew, under the direction of the Incident Commander or his/her designee. The Incident Commander and pilot should limit the number of personnel on the craft to the minimum necessary to safely manage the incident. The operator or fire department member in charge must ensure that all rescue or firefighting operations are conducted in a safe manner. If safety is compromised, the operation must be aborted or modified so that it can be carried out safely.

The minimum crew for the Roosevelt Marine Unit is two (2) members. The maximum crew is four (4) members

EMS/Rescue Operations:

When responding to EMS or rescue incidents, fire personnel will ensure that appropriate EMS equipment is loaded on to the craft prior to departing the dock. This equipment will ensure that proper treatment can be initiated, if indicated, on a patient or victim while on the boat prior to transferring the patient to shore units.

Roosevelt Fire District Personnel are prohibited from entering the water during the incident. Crews should consider less dangerous intervention methods, such as reach, throw, and then go.

A Pointer shall be assigned from the first arriving company on scene whose SOLE RESPONSIBILITY is to watch and monitor status of victim(s) in the water. The Pointer shall maintain constant eye contact with the victim until:

- A. The victim is rescued
- B. The individual is relieved
- C. The victim goes subsurface. The pointer shall note the victim's last position and relay information concerning the victim.

Initial size up should include the following:

- A. Determine if incident is **rescue** or **recovery**.
 - a. If recovery:
 - i. Due to the nature of the incident becoming an Aquatic Crime Scene, The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office **MUST** be notified, and all operations must wait until their arrival.
- B. Who is the Pointer/Pointers?
- C. The following factors are to be considered:
 - a. Access to water
 - b. Proximity to shore
 - c. Number of victims
 - d. Weather conditions/ air and water temperature
 - e. Technical Rescue Team/Dive Team or additional resources
 - f. Other hazards- fire, HazMat, submerged objects

Rescue options from watercraft should be considered and executed from low risk to high risk:

- A. Reach:
 - a. The first method of water rescue is to reach the victim with an object such as a pole, backboard, ladder, etc. Either the victim can pull themselves or be pulled to safety
- B. Throw
 - a. If reach is not possible then throw an item that will float such as a PFD, throw ring, or a rope bag to the victim. The device thrown should be attached to a rope so the victim can be rescued.
- C. Go
 - a. The last resort is to enter the water and swim to the victim. **(Not performed by RFD)**
 - b. If the decision is to "GO" to affect the rescue, the Incident Commander will consider the following factors:
 - i. Need for additional resources (Dive Team)
 - ii. Exposure time of rescuers
 - iii. Debris in water on surface and submerged
 - iv. Distance to victim
 - v. Condition of victim

***Qualified and equipped safety divers should be called to handle submersion incidents, such as a drowning situation.**

Fire Boat Operations:

Personnel responding to on-water fire incidents via Roosevelt Fire District watercraft are expected to know and work within their limitations.

Firefighters will not board a burning vessel unless trained and equipped to do so.

The only time to board a burning vessel is if there is an imminent rescue situation.

The fire operator should make a wide turn toward the burning vessel as they approach it. As this occurs, the crew will be able to survey the water immediately around the burning vessel on all sides for potential victims.

Approach to a burning vessel should ALWAYS be made from UPWIND if possible. This is the only time when a vessel is NOT approached into the wind. Doing so will keep the smoke and heat away from the watercraft and crew and provide for better visibility. A rescue situation, obstacles, and onlookers may prevent this from being possible.

If necessary, the boat operator should advise “on-looking” boats to clear the area on all sides of the burning vessel. It is common for boats to crowd the burning vessel, which makes it difficult to maneuver the fire boat for fire and rescue operations. It is also difficult to account for and locate victims in the water. If a rescue situation is apparent, all actions will be directed toward those efforts until the life safety hazard has been controlled.

Boat fires will be managed in the defensive strategy UNLESS there is an imminent rescue situation, the fire is in the incipient stage, or the fire is already controlled, and the structural integrity of the boat is intact. As the burning vessel is approached, the crew should be ready to apply water. The deck gun should be set on a wide-fog pattern. Foam should not be applied at this time. The operator will need to maneuver the vessel to counteract the nozzle reaction created by the deck gun. A handline may be attached to the deck gun to assist in the fire attack or to complete the overhaul process if indicated.

When the fire is knocked down, suppression efforts should be suspended to keep the vessel afloat. Crews should be ready to reapply suppression agents if the fire begins to burn again. This is common and should be expected.

Responding to a Water Emergency

- A. Pilots will utilize Roosevelt channel 63 to communicate as to who is available to pilot the Marine Unit and what their ETA to the vessel would be.
- B. During a water emergency, communications with IC will be on the designated Fireground channel given by the County. Marine frequencies via the VHF will be utilized for communicating with other vessels on the water during the time of the emergency.
- C. Pilot will assure the boat has a Marine Unit certified EMS member on board before leaving the dock when the emergency is classified as a medical call.
 - a. The Incident Commander reserves the right to instruct the Pilot to depart with a non-Marine Unit EMS member when the incident calls for such a determination.
- D. Crew will make sure the appropriate equipment is on board the boat for the emergency they are responding to, if known.
- E. Once contact is made with the patient, the crew will maintain communication with Incident Commander to keep him/her aware of the patient condition, so the EMS transport unit on shore is ready to receive the patient
- F. At any time during the incident, the Pilot may determine that transport to a different marina is more prudent. He is to notify the Incident Commander of his decision so that updated assignments may be issued.