



Standard Operating Guideline	
SOG Name:	Public Safety Dive Team
SOG Number:	150.5
Standard:	TBD
Guideline Owner:	Special Operations
Implementation Date:	June 10, 2021
Date of Last Revision:	June 10, 2021
Authority:	Larry H. Williams, Jr, Fire Chief

PURPOSE: Provide administrative and operational protocol standards consistent with the Dothan Fire Department’s current Standard Operating Guidelines utilizing the Incident Command System for all operations of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team.

A. DIVE TEAM POLICY

All members of the Dothan Fire Department will provide and maintain, concurrent with its high professional standards and image, an underwater rescue and recovery team, hereafter referred to as the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team.

B. OBJECTIVES

- To provide an organized group of Dive Rescue Technicians and department personnel for rapid response to water related emergencies within the realm of their trained capabilities for the City of Dothan.
- To provide non-emergency diving services for the City of Dothan and the Dothan Fire Department.
- To provide rapid response to water related emergencies and non-emergency diving services to outside agencies through Mutual Aid agreements and on case by case as approved by the on-duty battalion chief.

C. AUTHORITY

SECTION 1

All team members will follow the chain of command of the City of Dothan Fire Department.

SECTION 2

During actual dive operations or training the **Ranking Officer** will have overall responsibilities of all personnel; however, if he or she is not a member of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team, they should extend professional courtesy and with the advice of team members, act on their behalf to make a safe and mutual decision.

D. ORGANIZATION**SECTION 1**

The Dothan Fire Chief shall establish the “Chain of Command” for the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team.

SECTION 2

The following positions must be assigned at all dive team incidents:

- Dothan Public Safety Dive Team Specialist (Dothan Fire & Police Members Only)
- Dothan Fire Department Support Members (Dothan Fire Members who are Dive Team Trained – Awareness Level)

E. SPECIFIC DUTIES**SECTION 1**

All Dothan Public Safety Dive Team Technicians are responsible for the overall conduct of diving operations. Specific responsibilities are to include but not limited to:

- Planning and coordinating team operations
- Safe diving operations
- Complete and accurate reports of the dive operation
- Continuous education and skills training. All Dive Team Captains and Lieutenants will be responsible for safe dive operations, scheduling and coordinating periodic training exercises, continuing education and making sure all team members keep their license current.

Dothan Fire Department dive support members will be chosen from City personnel that have been trained to at least the awareness level and are competent in all aspects and techniques of dive rescue work. These people will be limited to performing tasks that are non-water related during actual dive rescue operations. When the safety of the diver or support personnel is at risk, the Safety Officer or Officer in Charge may elect to relieve either of them from their duties.

F. EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE**SECTION 1**

All members of the Dothan Public Safety Team will be responsible for insuring the Proper management and maintenance of all Dothan Fire Department Dive equipment. Specific duties will include, but not limited to:

- All equipment will be inspected and inventoried by the team members prior to being put in service.
- All equipment, maintenance, testing and calibrating will be done at a reputable dive shop approved by the Dothan Fire Department.
- All members will be responsible for keeping and maintaining spare parts that are subject to failure, such as but not limited to: O-rings (tank), mask and fin straps, batteries, bulbs, etc....These parts shall be assembled in two portable kits and shall accompany each dive rescue operation.
- All equipment will be inspected and properly maintained after each use. All equipment that is damaged shall be reported to the ranking officer and repaired if possible. If the equipment is not repairable, it should be noted and replaced as quickly as possible. This is the responsibility of the Captains and Lieutenants assigned to the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team. All dive team members should check each week the equipment assigned to them. All appropriate paperwork will be completed and initialed upon completion of such. This paperwork will be forwarded to the EMS Chief. Any dive equipment taken out of service should be paged out to all dive team members.
- No equipment shall be loaned out. Equipment may be used for training purposes with such use being noted in Station 4's logbook.
- All tanks and equipment must be kept in a ready status (tanks at 3000 psi minimum, dive suits hanging clean and dry, all diving bags must be checked and ready).

G. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**SECTION 1**

- All training sessions will be conducted with a minimum of three personnel. Two members must be Dive Rescue Technicians. Adequate communications will accompany all training sessions (Mobile radio, Portable radio, telephone, etc.)
- All Dothan Public Safety Dive Team Technicians shall have annual physicals.
- All Dothan Public Safety Dive Team Technicians shall take a part in quarterly training exercises.
- Communications are pertinent to our operations. Each training dive session should be logged with Dothan Fire Department personnel and

communications center. They shall note the time, place and date. If training is taken place out of range of communications, it will be the responsibility of the ranking officer to record this information.

- All diving rules and regulations required by the State of Alabama will be adhered to during training and actual dive rescue operations.
- All members, who join the dive rescue team, will remain on the dive rescue team for a minimum of 3 years from the date of initial certification.

H. DIVE RESCUE TEAM OPERATIONS

SECTION 1

In the event a dive rescue incident is determined, communications will dispatch a command vehicle, an engine company, and/or the dive rescue team to all calls inside the city limits of Dothan. Additional personnel needed to perform dive rescue operations as well as proper staffing of stations will be the responsibility of the Battalion Chief.

SECTION 2

For incidents outside the city limits of Dothan, the Battalion Chief/Battalion 1 will make the decision if the command vehicle responds along with at least two members of the dive team along with the proper equipment and support personnel.

SECTION 3

It is strongly recommended that all dive rescue operations be conducted with a minimum of two dive rescue technicians and one support member (awareness trained level). However, if the need for eminent rescue is called for, proper use of personnel to accomplish the task safely will be allowed and is the responsibility of the ranking officer.

SECTION 4

Dive Team Priorities of Operations:

- Human Body-Emergency – Rescue Mode
- Human Body-Non-emergency – Recovery Mode
- Criminal Evidence – Recovery Mode
- Lost/Stolen Property – Recovery Mode
- Investigation/Photography – Recovery Mode
- Qualifications/skills Check – Training Mode

SECTION 5**Dive Team Modes of Operation:**

- Rescue Mode – Emergency Operations with Safety Officer and Incident Command System in place (Operations commences within 60 minutes from the estimated down of the victim if known)
- Recovery Mode – Non-emergency Operations with Safety Officer, Incident Command System in place and support personnel on scene (Operations commences after 60 minutes of estimated downtime – No possibility of changing the outcome of victim’s survival)
- Training Mode – Non-emergency Operations with Safety Officer, Incident Command System in place, support personnel on scene and structured form of training assignment.

SECTION 6**Dive Team Scene Evaluation:**

- Communications Center shall provide all the information that they have received and relay to dive rescue team members.
- First in unit needs to complete scene survey form, victim information form and witness information form.
- Battalion Chief or ranking dive rescue team officer will determine if dive trailer and additional dive rescue team members and/or support personnel are needed.

SECTION 7

Risk vs. Benefit evaluation is to be done by the first on scene Dothan Public Safety Dive Team member and Battalion Chief: however, the diver shall make the final decision to go or not to go, with regard to personal safety.

SECTION 8

Factors that must be considered in making decisions to dive:

- Rescue or Recovery Operation
- Personnel/Resources on scene
- Depth (Normal working limit –60 feet)
- Type of bottom surface
- Current and other water conditions

SECTION 9

Personnel that are required before dive operations can begin:

- Minimum of two dive rescue team members and one line tender

SECTION 10

Dive equipment that is required before dive operations can begin:

- Two full standard scuba sets – Tank minimum of 3000 psi
- Search line – Minimum of 2 – 100 feet long each
- Proper communications equipment

I. DIVE CONSIDERATIONS DURING AND AFTER RECOVERY**SECTION 1**

- Identify all hazards prior to dive operations
- All recovered victims during Rescue Mode operations shall receive proper spinal immobilization and ALS intervention
- Identify type of vehicle, object, cargo, etc. prior to the initiation of dive operations.
- If extrication is attempted while vehicle is underwater, it shall be done quickly and deliberately with regard to time as a factor but as safe as possible. If victim is trapped and required the use of the Hurst tool or hand tools, this task will be completed after the vehicle has been removed from the water.

J. DIVE TEAM RECOVERY PROCESS**SECTION 1**

Outside the city limits of Dothan, the Battalion Chief and/or at least one member of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team will respond to the scene for size-up evaluation and assess personnel needs.

SECTION 2

Operations not involving the attempt to rescue a human life include the following:

- Victims determined to be down under more than 60 minutes
- Recovery of lost/stolen property or evidence
- Investigation/Photography

SECTION 3

When changing mode of operation from **Rescue** to **Recovery**; all divers shall be removed from the water and a team briefing session will be conducted. When evaluating a dive scene all members must place safety as the first priority. During dives involving recoveries, assure that a more deliberate and methodical evaluation is performed.

SECTION 4

During the recovery mode, the following operational procedures must be performed:

- Risk vs. Benefit analysis
- Factors – Same as Rescue Mode plus consider that nighttime dive may be Necessary
- Personnel required – Same as Rescue Mode plus additional divers
- Equipment – Same as Rescue Mode

SECTION 5

During the recovery mode, the following procedures should be considered to efficiently and effectively conduct a coordinated search and follow-up of the recovered evidence or victim.

- Immediate 6 ft. search area
- Maintain low profile of recovered victim or evidence if possible
- Evidence should be placed in appropriate containers and not exposed to air (Preservation of evidence as best possible)
- Crowd and Press Control
- Have someone attend to the family and friends
- Report all information correctly and properly
- Coordinate with outside agencies that have legal responsibilities/concerns
- Cold water submersion vs. warm water submersion
- Dirty water or hazard materials conditions
- Rehab of all personnel at scene

SECTION 6

All members of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team must attend all scheduled dives and meetings to maintain proficiency in current dive rescue techniques. During dive training sessions, dive evaluations must be conducted in accordance to all Departmental Guidelines. Anytime that dive drills, classes, or sessions are being conducted Special Operations must be notified.

K. FIRST ARRIVING UNIT RESPONSE**SECTION 1**

A successful dive/rescue is highly dependent on the actions of the first arriving unit. The first arriving unit is responsible for collecting information surrounding the incident and properly relaying the information to a Dive Team member.

SECTION 2

The members of the Dothan Fire Department must be proficient in the correct procedures of the first arriving unit. Listed is the dispatch procedure for a water emergency and the capabilities of the first arriving unit at a dive incident:

- Initial response to a water emergency is one battalion chief, one engine company, one truck company, ambulance, and Water Rescue team. See Operations SOG 100.11, technical rescue response and 150.6, Water Rescue Operations
- All personnel may attempt rescues that are within his/her training and equipment limits. If the incident exceeds the training and/or equipment of the rescuer on location, the individual shall gather as much information as possible and assure that the correct type and amount of resources are enroute.

SECTION 3

The first arriving unit should perform the following procedures upon arriving at a dive/water emergency:

- Determine the location/point of where the victim(s) were last seen.
- Collect information about missing victim(s) (number, name, age, clothing, description of the victim, time of disappearance, factors of disappearance, etc.).
- Gather witness information (Name, address, phone number, complete description of what the witness seen, etc.).
- Have witnesses remain on location until the arrival of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team.
- Locate and determine closest access for launching a rescue boat. If the location is different than the immediate location, notify the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team by radio.
- Locate and establish a landing zone for Medevac¹. The Dothan Public Safety Dive Team Commander will notify the Incident Commander when diver is being deployed by MAST.
- Establish a staging location for ambulances that are in close proximity to the incident.
- All incidents must be considered crime scenes until proven otherwise. The Incident Commander will ensure the physical integrity of the scene with special emphasis to personal effects, footprints, vehicles, weapons, or anything deemed suspicious.
- Upon arrival of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team, the Incident Commander will meet with the Dive Team Officer and discuss scene operations and safety.

¹ Hayne's Life Flight, Survival Flight, MAST/FLATIRON, etc.

L. DIVE TEAM STAFFING GUIDELINES**SECTION 1**

The ideal staffing level for dive rescue situations is to recall all Dive Team personnel. The minimum staffing allowed for a dive rescue will be two divers and one support personnel (awareness trained level). The following positions must be filled as soon as possible to safe and effective dive operations: Dive Group Supervisor Dive Group Supervisor, Primary Diver, Back-up Diver, Secondary Back-up Diver, Line Tender, Safety Officer (must be a Public Safety Dive Team Member) and a boat operator (if needed).

SECTION 2

The ideal minimum staffing for dive recovery operations is five public safety diver. This will achieve staffing as followed: Dive Group Supervisor, Primary Diver, Back up Diver, Secondary Back-up Diver/Equipment Man, and Line Tender/Safety Officer. All others will remain on standby.

SECTION 3

The Incident Commander, Special Operations, Deputy Chief, or the Fire Chief may authorize the recall of additional personnel to ensure a safe closure of the incident.

M. DIVE TEAM RECALL PROCEDURES**SECTION 1**

Upon receiving a request for a dive/water emergency, the Communications Center will dispatch the first due company, battalion chief, Engine2/Rescue 4, an ambulance and page out the incident to all members of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team.

SECTION 2

Team members shall report to the incident scene unless otherwise specified by pager from Communications. Dive equipment that is located at Station 4 will be transported to the emergency scene. All equipment in the possession of the diver must be brought to the scene. Communications will advise by pager the type of response and mode (Rescue, Recovery, Standby, etc.), specific location of the incident, and instructions as to response (to scene, Station 4, standby, etc.).

SECTION 3

Once the availability of staffing is determined, the information must be relayed to the on-duty Battalion Chief, Dive Group Supervisor or the responding dive team unit.

SECTION 4

Upon the cancellation of a dive/water rescue response or changes in the response information, Communications shall page all dive team members with the updated information.

N. DIVE RESPONSE UTILIZING MAST**SECTION 1**

The helicopter may be used to maximize the effectiveness of available resources to affect water rescues and near drowning in Dothan and the surrounding community.

SECTION 2

Responses of a helicopter to support the efforts of the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team include, but are not limited to the following:

- Near drowning victims
- Persons with a submersion time less than one hour, regardless of the time of year.
- Water rescues, swift-water rescues, overturned boats with people afloat, vehicles in water, ice rescue, and people or vehicles through or in ice.

SECTION 3

A response from the requested helicopter service may be requested by the Incident Commander. Guidelines to request a helicopter response are found in SOG 200.10, Helicopter Request, once the SOG is updated.

O. REQUIREMENTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY DIVE TEAM MEMBERS**SECTION 1**

The City of Dothan Public Safety Dive Team is response team organized to handle a variety of dive/water incidents. The team is comprised of non-probationary members of the Fire Department. Additional requirements are:

- Maintain current certifications in Dive Rescue.
- Only three drills per calendar year may be missed. Extenuating circumstances may warrant consideration for excused absence.
- Each diver will be required to obtain a minimum of eight hours of bottom time utilizing dive equipment during a calendar year. This will be verified through a diver's logbook.
- Members of the Dive Team may be assigned to companies that best serve the interest of the fire department.
- The Senior Staff will determine appropriate staffing and assignments of Dive Team members.

P. LINE SIGNALS**SECTION 1**

Line signals shall be reviewed prior to the diver entering the water. This will ensure that the diver and line tender are using the same signals to relay information from the surface to the diver and from the diver to the surface.

SECTION 2

The following line signals will be the standard for the Dothan Public Safety Dive Team:

- 1 Tug – Tighten Line
- 2 Tugs – OK
- 3 Tugs – Stop and Turnaround
- 4 Tugs – Found Object
- 5 Tugs from line tender to diver – Come to the Surface
- Continuous pull – **Emergency Problem**

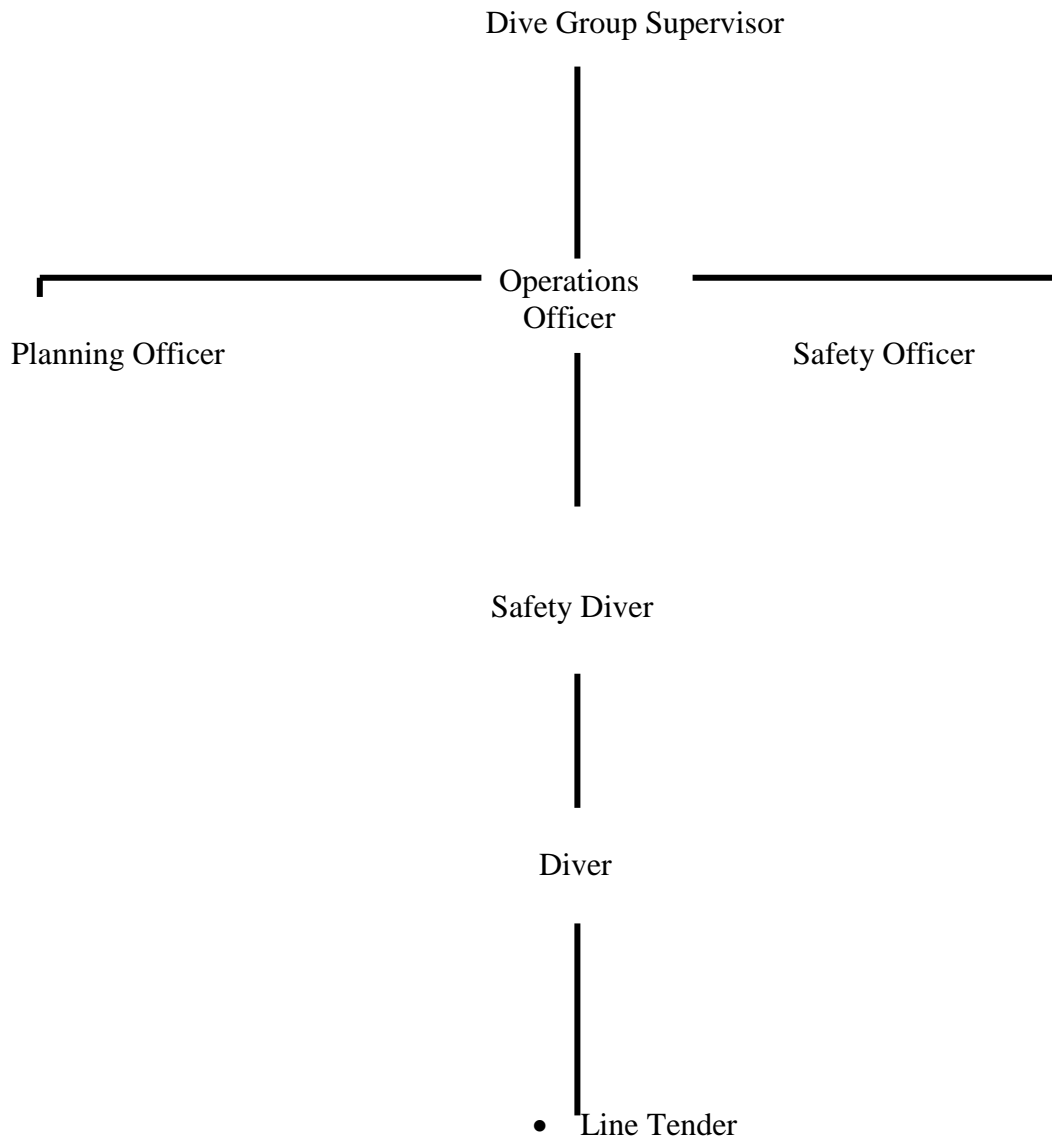
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Larry H. Williams, Jr.

Fire Chief

DOTHAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

ADDENDUM A—Incident Organization Chart



- Denotes a position that can be filled by non-diver that has been trained at the dive awareness/operations level.

Addendum B—Dive Log

Date: _____, CN: _____, Location: _____

Diver: _____, Tank Number: _____

Pre-Dive Equipment Check List

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ___ Scuba System Assembled Properly | ___ Air On, Tank Pressure _____ PSI. |
| ___ Primary Regulator Test | ___ Alternate Air Source Test |
| ___ Low Pressure Inflator Test | ___ Weight Belt LBS. _____ |
| ___ Mask | ___ Fins |
| ___ Watch | ___ Knife |
| ___ Flashlight | ___ Safety Line Attached |

BP _____ / _____, P _____, R _____, Time Took _____

Water Entry Times

Time In _____ AM / PM Time Out _____ AM / PM

Tank Pressure In _____ Tank Pressure Out _____

Bottom Time _____ Min. Surface Interval _____ Min.

Depth: Avg. _____ Ft. Maximum Depth _____ Ft.

Line Tender Name _____

Safety Diver Name _____

Environmental Conditions

Temperature Air: _____ Temperature Water: _____

Wind Speed: _____ Wind Direction: _____

Bottom Type: (Mud), (Silt), (Sand) Visibility: (in Feet) _____

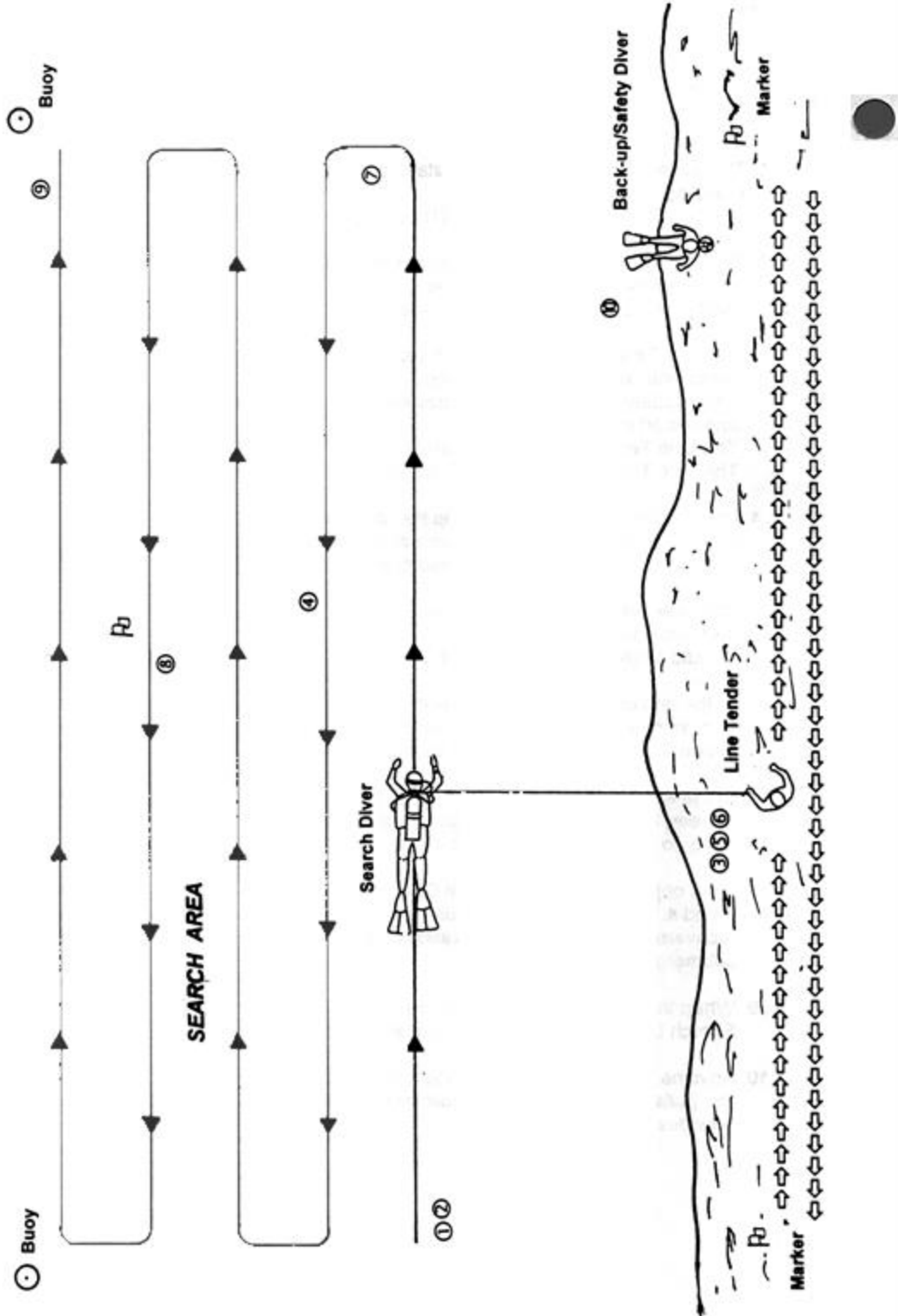
Water Type: (Swift), (Stagnant), (Contaminated)

Type of Contaminant: _____

Addendum C—Shore Based Parallel Pattern

1. The Search Diver moves out to a starting point, submerges and gives two (2) line pulls, signaling OK ready to start.
The Line Tender returns the two (2) pull signaling OK.
2. Tension on the line must be maintained in order to ensure a proper pattern; it is the diver's responsibility to maintain line tension.
The Search Diver swims parallel to the shoreline while he maintains line tension.
3. The Line Tender uses, either team set reference marks (buoys) or natural marks (trees), as boundaries for the search pattern.
If the pattern is not being conducted properly, the he should single the diver to surface, and restart the pattern.
The Line Tender can easily follow the diver by watching the exhaust bubbles. The Line Tender walks along the shore at the same pace as the diver.
4. Underwater obstructions often rap the line, causing a false sense of proper pattern, the diver may not immediately be aware of this. The diver should follow the line back to the obstruction, free the line and reestablish the pattern.
5. The Line Tender may notice a trapped line before the diver, if the diver makes a sharp turn while the line appears straight, this may indicate a trapped line. The Line Tender should single the diver to surface and reestablish the pattern.
6. At the end of the run, the Line Tender give the diver three (3) line pulls, signaling to stop and change direction. The Line Tender pays out a predetermined amount of line depending on water conditions, usually 2-5 feet.
7. At the end of the run, the Search Diver stops after receiving the signal from the Line Tender, he moved out the predetermined distance and gives two (2) pull signaling he is ready to start and both continue the pattern.
8. If the object is found, the Search Diver gives four (4) or more line pulls signaling he has found it. Depending on the pre-dive plan, the object is either marked (buoy) and left or recovered to the surface. The Safety or Back-up Diver may be sent to assist the submerged diver.
9. When the search area has been covered, the Line Tender gives five (5) pulls to the Search Diver, signaling to end the search and to surface.
10. Anytime during the pattern, that the Search Diver needs assistance he gives five (5) line pulls. The Safety diver the follows the search line down to the submerged diver and provide assistance.

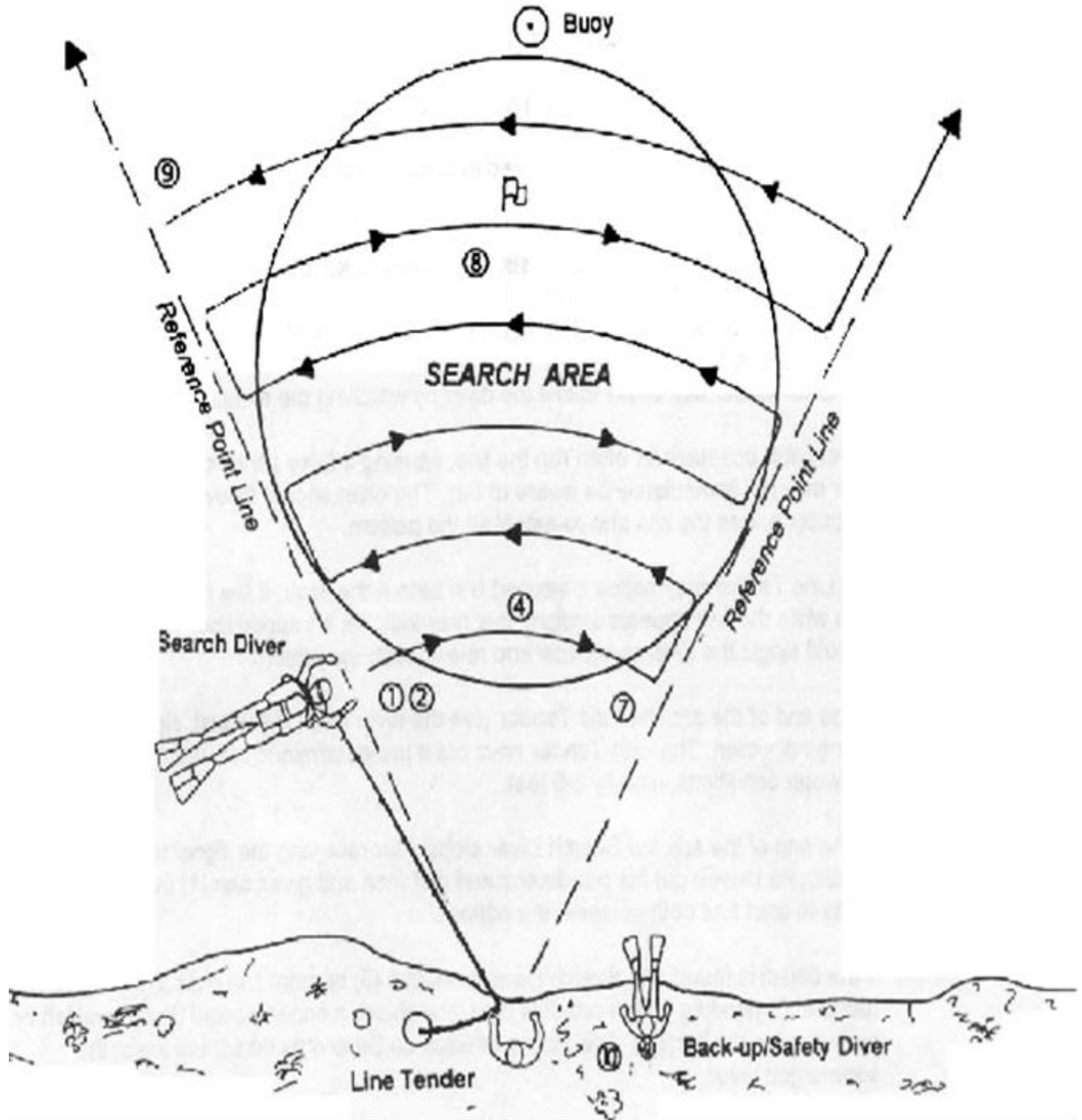
SHORE BASED PARRALLEL PATTERN



Addendum D—Shore Based Sweep Pattern

1. The Search Diver moves out to a starting point, submerges and gives two (2) line pull, signaling OK ready to start. The Line Tender returns the two (2) pull signaling OK.
2. Tension on the line must be maintained in order to ensure a proper pattern; it is the diver's responsibility to maintain line tension.
3. The Line Tender uses either team set reference marks (buoys) or natural marks (trees) as boundaries for the search pattern.
If the pattern is not being conducted properly, the he should single the diver to surface, and restart the pattern.
The Line Tender can easily follow the diver by watching the exhaust bubbles.
4. Underwater obstructions often rap the line, causing a false sense of proper pattern, the diver may not immediately be aware of this. The diver should follow the line back to the obstruction, free the line and reestablish the pattern.
5. The Line Tender may notice a trapped line before the diver₁ if the diver makes a sharp turn while the line appears straight, this may indicate a trapped line. The Line Tender should single the diver to surface and reestablish the pattern.
6. At the end of the arc, the Line Tender give the diver three (3) line pulls, signaling to stop and change direction. The Line Tender pays out a predetermined amount of line depending on water conditions, usually 2-5 feet.
7. At the end of the arc, the Search Diver stops after receiving the signal from the Line Tender, he moved out the pre-determined distance and gives two (2) pulls signaling he is ready to start and both continue the pattern.
8. If the object is found, the Search Diver gives four (4) pulls or more line pulls signaling he has found it Depending on the pre-dive plan, the object is either marked (buoy) and left or recovered to the surface. The Safety or Back-up Diver may be sent to assist the submerged diver.
9. When the search area has been covered, the Line Tender give five (5) pulls to the Search Diver₁ signaling to end the search and to surface.
10. Anytime during the pattern, that the Search Diver needs assistance he gives five (5) lines pulls. The Safety diver the follows the search line down to the submerged diver and provide assistance.

SHORE BASED SWEEP PATTERN



**ADDENDUM E
WITNESS INFORMATION**

1. Complete Name: _____

2. Address (No PO Box): _____

3. Telephone Number: _____

4. Date of Birth: _____ Social Security Number: _____

5. Sex: _____ Race: _____

6. Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____

7. Employer's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

VICTIM(S)² INFORMATION

1. Complete Name: _____

2. Address (No PO Box): _____

3. Telephone Number: _____

4. Date of Birth: _____ Social Security Number: _____

5. Sex: _____ Race: _____

6. Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____

7. Clothes and/or Equipment Worn: _____

8. Known recent use of alcohol, drugs, or last eaten: _____

9. Swimming ability: _____

10. Victim(s) activity at time of the incident/accident: _____

11. Victim(s) past medical history: _____

² Use back of page and/or additional pages as necessary