

Galveston Fire Department

Standard Operating Procedure

#1400.06 Offshore Rescues

Fire Chief _____

Implementation Date: August 2011

Review Date: February 2013

GFD/USCG MOU

The GFD has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with USCG station Galveston. This MOU includes fire response, medical first response and offshore rescue response. The USCG is responsible for the upper Texas Coastal waters spanning a region from High Island, Texas southwest to San Luis Pass and 30 miles offshore which includes the Houston Ship Channel north to the entrance of Clear Lake. On occasion, they are requested to provide medical assistance to persons on vessels. Many times these incidents require that the patient be removed from the vessel and transport to shore to allow for treatment & transport by EMS to a medical facility. The USCG does not have the training or equipment to perform these patient removals and have asked GFD to assist when needed.

Responses

Once the USCG determines that they need GFD assistance, they will contact Dispatch via 911 and request GFD for a rescue assist. The closest available GFD unit will be dispatched to the Coast Guard station at Fort Point. Three GFD personnel (EMT has priority) with one GFD portable radio, will board the rescue boat with USCG crewmembers to proceed to the scene and perform the patient removal. The remaining GFD member will report to the Radio room on the second floor of the USCG building to monitor and possibly coordinate all communications between GFD personnel and Dispatch.

At the USCG station, there will be a locker inside the building next to the pier. In this locker you will find a rope rescue bag. It will be the responsibility of the Officer in charge to ensure the bag is taken with the crew on the USCG boat. Anything used from the bag needs to be replaced once the incident is completed. Once a month, Engine 2 will inventory the bag to ensure it is complete and accessible.

Once the response crew arrives at the vessel of the incident, GFD personnel will determine the need for medical care and rescue. All GFD personnel are limited to Basic Life Support level care. GFD personnel will work with USCG personnel to determine the best method to employ in moving the patient from the vessel to the USCG boat. If a USCG helicopter is used to airlift a patient from a vessel and patient care has been initiated by GFD personnel, it will be necessary for a GFD EMT to relay patient info to the

rescue swimmer/EMT on the flight crew. If requested, the GFD Medic can fly with the patient to the medical facility.

It will be necessary for the GFD personnel to transmit a radio report of patient conditions and an estimated ETA back to the USCG Galveston Station once that information becomes available. In the event that the GFD radio is not functional, the information can be transmitted via the USCG radio back to their communications room. The GFD person assigned to communications will ensure that all necessary information is relayed to the appropriate person or facility.

GFD will be assisting the USCG in these rescue operations. The USCG Officer in charge will rely on GFD personnel to manage and coordinate the care and removal of the patient. The USCG OIC will be responsible for all operations during any mission. After each response, the GFD officer will need to submit an e-mail to their Battalion Chief describing the actions taken, any concerns that the crew may have or any other matters related to that response that need to be reported. This will enable us to learn from each of these events and become better prepared for future responses.