



Rogers Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Title:	Life Safety Rope Maintenance and Care		
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a guideline for the use, care, storage, inspection and logging of life safety rope.

POLICY

It is standard procedure to use life safety rope during Special Operations functions such as high and low angle rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, swift water rescue, and incidents involving hazardous materials. During these operations rope can be used as rappel line, lowering line, safety belay line, Stokes basket tag line, and in mechanical advantage systems. Life safety rope is not intended to be used as a tow line, utility line, or any other use that is not directly related to life safety.

Cleaning

When life safety rope is used in rescue functions it will likely become soiled. When this is the case the rope must be cleaned. At a minimum, the rope shall be cleaned and dried according to the manufacturers specifications prior to storage.

When the rope is excessively dirty it shall be soaked in water and cleaned in a front-loading clothes washer. The washer should be run through an empty cycle first to rinse out any contaminants or detergents. After soaking, double the rope over and “daisy chain” it before placing it in a front loading clothes washer. Wash rope in cold water on the gentle cycle with mild detergent. During the rinse cycle a small amount of Downy fabric softener may be added (1 oz. per 3 gallons of water) to replace the lubricants that are lost during repeated use and washing (if in doubt refer to the manufacturer’s recommendations). After washing the rope it should be hung loosely in a cool, dry area and allowed to dry completely. Make sure the rope is NOT placed in direct sunlight.

Storage

Life safety rope should be stored in rope bags in a cool dry place and out of direct sunlight. It should also be kept away from chemical atmospheres such as those found near batteries, engine exhausts and gasoline. Rope should be stuffed or “piled” into the bag, not coiled. After each use the rope ends should be switched so that the end that was used is put in the bag first. The end of the rope that goes in first should be threaded through the grommet in the end of the bag and tied in a figure eight knot.

Inspection

Inspection of life safety rope should be done before each rope is put into service as well as before and after each use. In addition, all life safety ropes will be inspected on a quarterly basis and logged accordingly. The rope should be inspected by at least two people. After each inspection, the inspector is responsible for record keeping and documentation. It will be the Rescue Company Captain(s) responsibility to ensure that all inspections and documentation are assigned and completed quarterly.

During inspection the rope should be visually checked for cuts, chafed areas, glazed surfaces, discolorations and other sheath damage as well as dirt and/or mildew. The inspectors should also look for any unusual or uneven wear on the rope. The rope should also be inspected by holding it firmly in one hand, pulling the rope between your thumb and index finger about 18 inches at a time, while feeling for broken fibers, soft or hard spots, and variations in diameter. This process is performed without gloves on so that the inspector can inspect the rope more thoroughly.

If any of the above imperfections are found, the rope should be taken out of service and the Rescue Company Captain notified as soon as possible. Also, if the rope has been subject to shock load, fall arrest, or any abuse other than normal rappel or rescue training, the rope should be taken out of service.

Record Keeping

In order to accurately track the history and use of life safety rope, record keeping must be accomplished. A rope record will be maintained on each rope within the Rogers Fire Department from the date of purchase until the date of retirement from service. The rope log for all life safety rope used by the SOT of the Rogers Fire Department shall be kept in the cab of Rescue 5. The rope log is form 110 Life Safety Rope Log and shall be maintained for each rope within the Rogers Fire Department.

The use of life safety rope shall be logged for training evolutions, actual incidents, and quarterly inspections. It is essential to always verify that the rope used matches the log on which you are entering the information. Make sure all applicable information is filled out as accurately as possible.

This should include the following data:

- date the rope was used
- location
- type of use
- exposure
- date the rope was inspected
- who inspected the rope
- any unusual circumstances or events that occurred during use including any damage, shock loads, or use over sharp edges
- any additional comments

Inventory

An updated inventory shall be maintained by using the appropriate Rogers Fire Department network resources. It will be the responsibility of the Training Captain - SOT to maintain this inventory.

This inventory will include but not be limited to the following information:

- Date of purchase
- Inspection dates
- Maintenance or repair issues
- In-service date
- Out-of-service date