

WEBER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE		POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
SUBJECT: Water Rescues and Recoveries		CHAPTER/SECTION NO.: 33.35, 33.36	
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/7/03		REVIEW DATE:	
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: See attached sheet		APPROVED: <u>** See Master File</u> Sheriff	
STANDARD NUMBER: N/A			

### 33.35 Policy

- 33.35.1 In the event a swimmer is under water, missing, or in distress, a deputy or other member of the Weber County Sheriff's Office on scene must make command decisions that will provide for a reasonable and quick response.
- 33.35.2 The initial deputy on scene, unless relieved by someone of equal or greater authority, will command these response efforts. In all cases, the deputy has the discretion to do what is reasonable and necessary but must evaluate his/her actions and decisions against the risks taken to affect a rescue or recovery of the victim.

### 33.36 Procedure

- 33.36.1 **If the victim can be seen in the water and is apparently unconscious:**
- A. Call WACDC and request assistance from fire, medical and other law enforcement.
  - B. Commandeer water born craft and/or call for assistance of a law enforcement water craft and direct them to the victim. **Be cautious of motor boat operations in the search area to avoid striking the victim or other persons.**
  - C. Bring the victim on board the boat or to shore. **If the victim is in shallow water**

that allows a rescuer to wade in and retrieve the victim, the deputy may consider such an option. It is imperative that the deputies on scene not risk their safety unreasonably and increase rescue needs, causing a delay in providing assistance to the victim.

- D. Administer first aid as soon as is practical and safe for the rescuers to do so.

**33.36.2 If the victim is in the water but can not be seen:**

- A. Call WACDC and request assistance from fire, medical, and other law enforcement.
- B. Attempt to obtain information from witnesses that will help identify the area where the victim was last seen.
- C. Commandeer water born craft and/or call for the assistance of a law enforcement water craft and direct them to the search area.
- D. Notify Search and Rescue and request underwater recovery divers. Once the victim is located an immediate assessment should be made and appropriate first aid measures taken. **If the victim is not immediately located the operation becomes a recovery operation rather than a rescue operation.**

**33.36.3 If the victim is located, conscious and in distress:**

- A. Call WACDC and request assistance from fire, medical and other law enforcement as needed.
- B. It is best to try to get a flotation device to the victim and verbally direct him/her to safety. Ropes, and throw lines may also be thrown from shore or a boat that is large enough for the purpose.
- C. Do not allow the victim to grab another person and pull him/her into the water.

- D. CAUTION: Unless you are a current and certified life guard, with a qualified partner trained and equipped specifically for open water rescue (meeting RED CROSS or other equivalent standards of water rescue), DO NOT go into the water after the victim or encourage others to do so. Water rescues are an extremely hazardous and life threatening undertaking. Unreasonable rescue efforts by untrained personnel may increase rescue needs and unreasonably risk the lives of others as well as delay assistance to the victim.