Code of Safe Practices for the use of Rope Rescue Equipment

Mission

To provide Animal Rescue Training to any agency that would benefit from learning how to save animals using Fire Rescue Standards, and to provide that training in conjunction with other agencies because joint training leads to smooth inter-agency calls.

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Introduction:

This document complies with CCR 3270.1. Animal Fire Rescue (AFR) understands that despite emergency search and rescue operations being exempt from CCR 3270.1, AFR believes that having a Code of Safe Practices that follows CCR 3270.1 and using that Code when ever possible will improve the safe operations of AFR. AFR requires that all personnel or their agencies have access to this Code of Safe Practices by listing this document at animalfirerescue.com.

Standards and Regulations:

AFR adheres to the following standards and regulations during training and calls for service.

NFPA

    1006 Technical Rescue Personnel Qualifications

    1500 Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health and Wellness Programs

    1561 Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety

    1582 Comprehensive Medical Program for Fire Departments

    1670 Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents

    1983 Life Safety Rope and Equipment for Emergency Services

    1858 Selection Care and Maintenance of Life Safety Rope and Equipment for Emergency Services

    1951 Protective Ensembles for Technical Rescue Incidents

    1977 Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting and Urban Interface

Cal-OSHA

    CCR 3270.1 Use of Rope Access Equipment

    CCR 3203 Injury and Illness Prevention Program

    CCR 1670 Personnel Fall Arrest Systems, Personnel Fall Restraint Systems and Positioning Devices

    CCR 5156, 5157 & 5158 Confined Space codes

SFT (CA)

    Rope Rescue Awareness/Operational

    Rope Rescue Technician

    ATR Animal Technical Rescue

    Confined Space

    Trench Rescue

    Building Collapse

CMC
  Rope Rescue Technician Manual (all editions)
  Field Guide
  Online Tool Kit
  Equipment manuals

Animal Fire Rescue
  Animal Fire Rescue Certification
  Awareness Level Rope Rescue
  Rigging Operational Level Rope Rescue
  Rescue Operational Level Rope Rescue
  Technician Level Rope Rescue
  Water Rescue
  Boat Operations
  Trailer Extraction

Equipment:

AFR follows the equipment standards set by NFPA 1983. Equipment is selected based on the size of the load or the number of people on the load. A large animal load or a two person load requires G Rated Equipment. A single person load can use either G or T Rated Equipment. Equipment is inspected before and after each time it is put into service. Equipment is randomly spot checked for wear, readiness and storage placement. Equipment is used and maintained in accordance to manufactures specifications. Damaged or defective equipment is removed from service immediately.

Methods of Emergency Rigging Group:

AFR uses SFT & CMC standards for rigging of rescue systems. These rescue systems include but are not limited to natural and manmade anchors, single and multipoint anchor systems, M/A systems with progress capture, Belay systems with independent anchor systems and the use of AHD devices.

Methods of Emergency Rescue Squad (Rope Supported):

AFR defines Rope Supported as any situation that a rescuer is primarily supported by their own weight with the rope system providing support only. AFR uses a single line of a minimal diameter of 8mm with a 2 size smaller prusik wrap for fall protection.

Methods of Emergency Rescue Squad (On-Rope):

AFR defines On-Rope as any situation that the majority of the rescuers weight is on the rope system or if a fall is likely to cause injury. AFR follows the Cal OSHA standard of 7.5 ft as being a fall hazard but also includes a fall from any height if the landing is likely to cause a serious injury.
AFR uses a two-rope Life Line system with independent Anchor Systems. These Anchor Systems follow the SFT Standards and can be either natural or manmade.

Personnel Selection Criteria:

Pass a Moderate Work Capacity Test that includes a 25 lb. Pac Test for 2 miles, stepping up and down 10 times, drag 50 lb. weight and being able to lift a 25 lb. weight from ground level to above their head or be cleared by their agency for duty and training. All personnel can attend task training if they are supervised by an Operational or Technician Level personnel certified in the level of training equal or above the training level. On-Rope Tasks must be supervised by at least two Operational or Technician Level personnel. Live Scenario Training and Call Outs that require On-Rope work are restricted to AFR Operational or Technician Level personnel with On-Rope training. Qualified On-Rope personnel are required to pass an annual written and practical test that includes set-up of a two line system, repelling, ascending and self-rescue or be cleared by their agency to attend training.

Personnel Roles and Responsibilities:

All personnel regardless of task are responsible for seeing and saying something if a situation is unsafe. On-Rope personnel are responsible for having an Operational or Technician personnel check all harness buckles, straps and connection points.
Safety Officer is responsible for confirming that all anchors and rope systems are constructed appropriately. Edge is responsible for confirming that all personnel are ready before beginning or resuming system movement.

Communication Systems:

All personnel are instructed to use hand signals, verbal communication without radios and verbal communication with radios. Radios consist of 800, VHF and UHF. During the use of radios a comms plan is relayed to all personnel. All personnel are responsible for maintaining communication with Edge, relaying commands and other information related to the incident, packaging and rescue of the victim and aggressive completion of the mission after first mitigating challenges to their own safety.

Training Program:

AFR follows the Training Standards of NWCG, Cal OSHA, NFPA, SFT and CMC Rescue.
AFR uses a Modular Training System to ensure that all training topics are covered and consistently taught regardless of instructor. Training is defined by Awareness, Operational and Technician Levels. Training is further organized into topics that include but are not limited to Safety, PPE, Anchors, Raise & lower, AHD, Ladders, Low & High Angle On-Rope, Human Pick-off, Dog Pick-off, Large & Small Animal Packaging, Human Packaging and Water Rescue.
See training modules for complete list

Rescue and Emergency Protocol:

Although AFR is primarily focused on the Emergency Rescue of Animals, all personnel are additionally trained in human rescue. This allows personnel to provide immediate response if an incident with in an incident

occurs. AFR identifies personnel with advanced EMS training at the training or Call Out scene. A standard Medical Briefing is given before all trainings and Call Outs that includes what to do should an accident occur. This Medical Briefing includes immediately contacting a supervisor to report the injury regardless of size, the closet hospital and the use of 911 if the situation is critical.

Site Hazards:
AFR identifies and notifies all personnel in an on site briefing of any site hazards and any mitigation that has been taken.   This includes but is not limited to putting up signage, caution tape, barricades and vehicle blocks.

Certification:
AFR provides a certification that is reviewed by a Certification Panel comprised of non-paid personnel from the Fire Service, Law Enforcement and SAR.
AFR Certification includes hands-on training, distant learning, skill sheets, work sheets, written testing and practical testing.

Recertification:
AFR provides recertification on an annual biases and to the same standards as the original certification. These topics include but are not limited to Low & High Angle On-Rope, Victim Pick-off, AHD, Ladders, Small and Large Animal Packaging, Human Packaging, Main Line Operations and Belay Line Operations.

Training Documentation:
AFR maintains training sign-in sheets for 5 years. Training Certificates are issued and maintained electronically through Google Forms.

Anchor Systems:
AFR follows SFT standards and Cal OSHA Regulations regarding Anchor Systems.   Anchor Systems are built to safely support a minimum of twice the dynamic load.

Two Line System:
AFR uses a two line system for On-Rope tasks unless a two line would create a greater hazard or the use of a 2nd line is in feasible. When a safety line is used in conjunction with the main line, each line shall be provided with a separate anchor, and shall be separately fixed to the rescuers harness. This shall not prohibit both lines from being attached to a single harness attachment point.

Fall Protection:
AFR follows Cal OSHA CCR 1670. This includes but is not limited to;
Approved personal fall arrest, personal fall restraint or positioning systems shall be worn by those employees whose work exposes them to falling in excess of 7 1/2 feet from the perimeter of a structure, unprotected sides and edges, leading edges, through shaft ways and openings, sloped roof surfaces steeper than 7:12, or other sloped surfaces steeper than 40 degrees.   AFR defines any situation that meets this criteria as a Hot Zone and extends that Hot Zone to 15 feet from the edge. AFR requires a physical or visual barrier to the Hot