

# WEST PALM BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## IV-27 UNDERWATER SEARCH AND RECOVERY (DIVE) TEAM

**EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2005**

CALEA Standards: 46.2.5

CFA Standards: 21.01, 21.02, 21.04

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**I. POLICY:** The West Palm Beach Police Department has established guidelines for the operation and responsibilities of the members of the Underwater Search and Recovery or Dive Team. It shall be the policy of the agency to maintain the Underwater Search and Recovery team for the purpose of safely conducting underwater search and recovery operations.

### **II. DEFINITION:**

A. Dive Team Commander - A supervisor holding the rank of Sergeant or above who is specially trained in the Dive Team function and the coordination of all pertinent training. Ensures the Dive Team follows safe diving practices of all assigned divers to include proper use of safety equipment (i.e., Dry Suits and Full Face Masks) in the presence of contaminated or polluted waters. Ensures the Dive Team performs only those functions for which it is trained and equipped.

B. Dive Team Leader - Responsible for coordination with local, state, and federal agencies when further equipment or expertise is required. The Dive Team Leader will also assume the responsibilities of the Dive Team Commander in his/her absence.

C. Dive Team Training Coordinator - A member trained as an instructor for a nationally recognized public safety diving association. The instructor shall be responsible for advanced training for all Dive Team Members and can act as the team leader on diving situations.

D. Dive Team Member - Designated officers who have received specialty training in underwater search, hull search, body recovery, vehicle recovery and underwater crime scene investigation. Dive team members shall have obtained a basic SCUBA diver certification from a nationally recognized organization prior to selection for the team. Each member will maintain a dive log of all dives. Each team member is responsible for reporting any hazardous diving conditions to the dive team leader or commander on scene.

### **III. UNDERWATER SEARCH AND RECOVERY TEAM FUNCTION AND DUTY:**

A. The administration, supervision and control of the Dive Team will be the responsibility of the Dive Team Commander or Chief of Police designee. An officer of the rank of Sergeant or higher will be designated as the Dive Team Commander.

B. Duties of the Dive Team will include, but are limited to:

1. Underwater Search and Recovery
2. Hull Search
3. In water vehicle/evidence retrieval
4. In water body recovery

### **IV. PROCEDURE:**

A. When a Dive Team call out is determined, the on-duty Shift Commander will contact the Dive Commander or designee. The Dive Commander will review the known facts then decide if the team will be deployed.

1. If deployment is necessary, Dispatch Operations will notify all appropriate command and supervisory personnel.

2. The responding supervisor on the scene of a drowning, submerged vehicle, or other situations potentially requiring the services of divers should:

- a. Have witnesses available for interview upon arrival of divers.
- b. Secure the area for responding divers.

3. A minimum of two (2) divers shall respond to requests for diver services. It is the responsibility of the senior diver at the scene to notify Dispatch Operations for the call out of additional divers if needed.

- a. Routine calls shall be attended to by available on-duty divers with appropriate training.
- b. If no on-duty diver is available, the scheduled call-out list of divers shall be utilized.
- c. Requests for divers for situations which do not need immediate attention shall be requested through the Dive Team Commander.

4. The dive team commander or designee shall complete the Underwater Recovery Report (Appendix A) at the conclusion of a diving incident. This report will be submitted as a supplement to the original police report with the original form being routed to records and a copy to the Criminal Investigations Division. A copy of the underwater recovery report shall be maintained by the Dive Team Commander to evaluate needed training for members of the team.

#### **V. TRAINING:**

A. All members of the Dive Team must obtain all retraining necessary to maintain certification as a Police Officer.

B. Members of the Dive Team will receive technical training in the areas of underwater search and black water diving.

1. All newly assigned Dive Team members will complete the Underwater Police Science and Technology course.

C. Ongoing training will be conducted a minimum of one (1) day each month. The location and curriculum will vary for each training session. Instructors will be selected in accordance with training needs.

D. Training to maintain physical fitness is the responsibility of each team member in conjunction with the standards established by the Dive Commander. Areas of fitness include endurance, strength and swimming ability.

1. Team members will take part in annual physical fitness and diving skills tests to ensure that personal levels of fitness and diving competence are maintained.

#### **VI. DIVE TEAM EQUIPMENT, ISSUED:**

A. Due to the specialized nature of diving operations, the Department will provide Dive Team members with specialized equipment.

1. The type of specialized equipment issued to the Dive team will be determined by the Dive Commander.

B. Equipment to be used in all dive operations includes, but is not limited to:

1. Regulator with alternate air source.

2. Tank
3. Buoyancy Compensator.
4. Mask and fins.
5. Weight belt
6. Submersible pressure gauge
7. Exposure suit and gloves.
8. Dive tool or knife.

C. Equipment which is designated for use in unusual occurrence situations will be inspected monthly for operational readiness. Any equipment deemed inoperable will be removed from use and a supervisor will be notified.

**VII. REFERENCE:**

- SOP # I-8 Assignment to Specialized Positions/Components
- SOP # II-8 Training.

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**Delsa R. Bush, Chief of Police**

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Job Title Task Files: Dispatch Operations, Criminal Investigations Division, Shift Commander