

# Planning a Rescue

To be sure of success, you must plan a rescue. That is, you need to think before you act. As a lifesaver who happens on a scene, you often won't have much time and you probably don't have the most desirable rescue equipment. Planning must be done quickly to fit the situation. Stay calm and remember your training. The points discussed below may seem complicated, but most situations present only a few obvious choices and require simple plans. Sometimes, you will hardly need to plan or think at all. For example, if a toddler falls into a pool next to where you are standing, you instantly decide to reach out and pull the child to the side. The steps below define a thought process for more difficult cases.



## Recognizing Need

The first step in planning a rescue is to assess the situation. You just read about ways to recognize a person who is in trouble. As part of your evaluation, decide how many victims are present, how urgently they need help (including whether they will help themselves), and if emergency medical services (EMS) are needed. Then determine whether someone else has already begun a rescue.

## Accepting Leadership

if someone already has started a rescue, respond only if you're clearly in a better position to help the victim. For example, you might already be closer to the victim in a boat than a rescuer who is swimming out from shore. Otherwise, stay out of the way and see if there is some way you can help without interfering. Make sure EMS has been called if you think medical help will be needed. If the victim is in a lake and might go under before help arrives, you can pinpoint his position against landmarks. You also may keep curious bystanders from getting in the way.

If no one is attempting a rescue, see if there is anyone in authority, such as a lifeguard or park ranger, who has not yet noticed the problem. If so, inform that person and follow his or her instructions.

if no one else takes responsibility, then it is up to you. Don't hesitate to act because others, including adults, are milling around undecided. They might not know how to respond. If you know, proceed with planning the rescue. That could include asking bystanders to call for aid, go for equipment, help launch a boat, or any other simple task.

## Selecting a Rescue Technique/Order of Rescue Methods

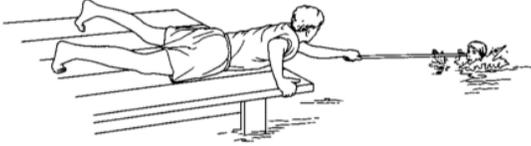
Choosing the proper rescue technique is relatively simple if you remember the *order of rescue methods*: (1) **reach**, (2) **throw**, (3) **row**, (4) **go**. This sequence begins with the easiest and most common methods and proceeds to the more difficult. You already have been introduced to these in your Second and First Class requirements. They'll be discussed in more detail in later sections. Which method you ultimately choose will depend on the victim's condition, how far he is from shore, what equipment is available, and the condition of the water. For example, if the victim is conscious and close to shore, look for a pole or paddle to extend your reach. If nothing long enough is at hand, but an empty ice chest is handy, try a throwing rescue.

If you think about it, all you're really doing for a conscious victim is finding the easiest way to give support. In a reaching rescue, you pull the victim to the side. Otherwise, your goal is to give the victim a float for support. You can do that by throwing it from shore, rowing it out, or swimming it out and pushing it into the victim's arms.

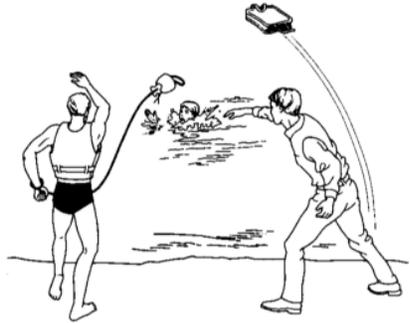
Only when a float is not available, or the victim cannot grasp it, do things get more complicated. It is seldom necessary for you to hold up a conscious victim while swimming. Contact rescues are normally needed only for those who are unconscious. It is for that reason that this text distinguishes between rescues for conscious and unconscious victims.

You also will need to take note of the physical setting as you think through the reach-throw-row-go progression. Can you reach the victim more easily from a different spot? Is someone already there to whom you can shout to extend his fishing pole? Is there a current or strong wind that will affect a throwing device? Is one approach to an unconscious victim less cluttered with trees or weeds than another?

REACH



THROW



ROW



GO



**Order of Rescue Methods**

From fast, simple, safe, and common to more difficult and complex.