



## PENNSYLVANIA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION

# PA SWIFTWATER RESCUE COURSES FACT SHEET



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<b>PURPOSE</b>	The courses in the PA Fish & Boat Commission's Swiftwater Rescue programs are designed to train water rescue personnel in the most current techniques of swift water rescue and safety. The program's purpose is to familiarize the rescuer with personal and team safety and the proper procedures used in water/ice safety and emergency boat operations. The rescuer will develop and demonstrate proficiency in water rescue techniques relative to his or her individual capabilities. This results in the rescuer developing a greater sense of competency in dealing with on-the-water emergencies.
<b>STUDENTS</b>	The program is designed to train fire, rescue, police, park and other emergency services personnel. The minimum age for attending any water rescue course (except Water Rescue for the First Responder 1670 – Awareness Level) is 18 years-of-age.
<b>INSTRUCTORS</b>	Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission employees and Commission certified instructors teach these courses. Instructor training can be arranged by contacting the Commission's Bureau of Boating and Access at 717-705-7834, or by visiting the Commission's website at <a href="http://fishandboat.com">fishandboat.com</a>
<b>COURSE OUTLINES</b>	<p><b>Water Rescue for the First Responder (1670 – Awareness Level) (2 - 2.5 hours)</b> Classroom course covers: scene assessment, activation of the Emergency Response System, evaluation of potential and existing water hazards, scene management, rescue vs. recovery, and personal safety measures. Meets or exceeds NFPA 1670 Awareness-level guidelines.</p> <p><b>Water Rescue &amp; Emergency Response (16 hours)</b> – Covers valuable swiftwater rescue techniques. Classroom and practical hands-on training includes: planning, medical considerations, rescue equipment, self-rescue and shore-based rescue techniques. Meets or exceeds NFPA 1670 Operations-level guidelines.</p> <p><b>Emergency Boat Operation &amp; Rescue (16 hours)</b> – Must-have course for any rescue unit involved with on-the-water operations. Includes classroom and practical hands-on training in: boat selection, recommended equipment, boat handling, moving-water tactics, and boat rescue techniques. Meets or exceeds NFPA 1670 Technician-level guidelines. Pre-requisite: Water Rescue &amp; Emergency Response.</p> <p><b>Ice Rescue &amp; Emergency Response (12-16 hours)</b> – An essential course for any rescue unit involved with ice rescue. Includes classroom and practical hands-on training in: identifying ice conditions, using ice rescue equipment, and practicing shore, boat, and direct contact rescue techniques. Meets or exceeds NFPA 1670 Technician-level guidelines. Pre-requisite: Water Rescue &amp; Emergency Response.</p> <p><b>Advanced Line Systems Rescue (16 hours)</b> - Includes classroom and practical hands-on training. Students learn to select the appropriate line system for the situation, establish and operate the system, effect the rescue or recovery, and to tear down the system. Subjects include line and hardware equipment, knots, and advanced line systems techniques. Meets or exceeds NFPA 1670 Technician-level guidelines. Pre-requisite: Water Rescue &amp; Emergency Response.</p>

**Special Note:** Students enrolled in Commission swiftwater and ice rescue programs must be prepared to engage in strenuous activities in extreme weather and water conditions. If a student has a known medical condition that could foreseeably jeopardize his/her safety during participation or be aggravated by participation, the student should not participate. All rescues contained in Commission water rescue programs are based on simple and effective techniques. A U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD), water rescue helmet, and appropriate clothing for water and weather conditions must be worn by the student at all times when practicing or attempting any of the recommended rescues.

Persons with disabilities who wish to participate in a PA Fish & Boat Commission program and anticipate the need for special accommodations should contact the Bureau of Boating & Access at: 717-705-7834.

**NFPA 1006 Technician Level:** Students who complete the Water Rescue and Emergency Response, Emergency Boat Operations and Rescue, Ice Rescue and Emergency Response, and Advanced Line Systems Rescue, have met the requirements for NFPA 1006 Professional Qualifications for Swiftwater Rescue-Technician Level.

**WHERE CAN I** PA Fish & Boat Commission web site: [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com)  
**FIND OUT MORE?** Bureau of Boating and Access (717) 705-7834 FAX: (717) 705-7901  
E-mail: [ra-be@state.pa.us](mailto:ra-be@state.pa.us)