

**OUTLINE SHEET 3.9  
COMBATIVE SURVIVOR**

**INTRODUCTION**

Naval Rescue Swimmers are sometimes faced with situations where the survivor can be categorized as uncooperative. Uncooperative survivors can be categorized into two distinct types; panicked and combative.

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES:**

- 3.15 Describe characteristics of a panicking survivor.
- 3.16 State procedures for survivor emergency floatation of both conscious and unconscious.
- 3.17 Demonstrate emergency floatation procedures for conscious and unconscious victims in a simulated rescue situation.
- 3.18 List procedural steps for a combative survivor.
- 3.19 Demonstrate combative survivor procedures in a simulated rescue situation.
- 3.20 State modified recovery procedures for a combative survivor.
- 3.21 Demonstrate modified recovery procedures for a combative survivor in a simulated rescue situation.
- 3.22 State procedures for providing care for combative survivor while a board the aircraft
- 3.23 Describe appropriate combative survivor hand signals.
- 3.24 Demonstrate appropriate combative survivor hand signals.

**TOPIC OUTLINE**

- A. Survivor Characteristics
  - 1. Naval Rescue Swimmer's are sometimes faced with situations where the survivor can be categorized as uncooperative. Uncooperative survivors can be categorized into two distinct types: panicked and combative.
  - 2. Panicking Survivors
    - a. Some rescues involve panicky survivors (even some \_\_\_\_\_).
    - b. Appearance: Wide eyes, frantic activity, grasping for air and other similar behavior.

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- b. Will attempt to grab and get on top of rescuer in order to keep his/her own head out of the water. Rescuers could be drowned in this manner.
  - c. Best Defense: Do not get too close until you have assessed the situation and decided on the best approach for this survivor.
  - d. It may be possible to calm a panicking survivor by talking to them and explaining who you are and what you are doing.
  - e. Another means of calming a panicked survivor down is to provide flotation.
- B. Procedures for giving up flotation to a conscious/unconscious survivor:

**NOTE**

When the survivor has damaged flotation or no flotation, the swimmer may give up his/her SAR-1 vest. If the swimmer chooses to give up flotation, the rescue swimmer shall use the following conscious or unconscious survivor procedures.

Conscious Survivor:

- a. Approach the survivor and establish communication, using the front surface approach.
- b. Upon reaching a distance of 6 to 8 feet from the survivor, execute a quick reverse.
- c. Remove rescue swimmer's mask, unclip and remove SAR-1, and replace mask.
- d. Inflate SAR-1, hold onto end of SAR-1 strap, and pass to survivor. Instruct survivors to place SAR-1 over his/her head with pocket facing out.
- e. While survivor is donning SAR-1, the swimmer shall swim around to the right and behind survivor with strap in right hand.
- f. Place left hand cross-chest under SAR-1 and grasp buckle. Bring strap under both arms and clip into buckle. Tighten strap.
- g. Perform disentanglement procedures.

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- h. Complete the rescue using normal procedures.
2. Procedures for giving up floatation to an unconscious survivor:
- a. Approach the survivor using the front surface approach and establish communications or determine unresponsiveness.
  - b. Upon reaching a distance of an arms' length from the survivor, execute a quick reverse.
  - c. Remove rescue swimmer's mask, unclip and remove SAR-1, and replace mask.
  - d. Inflate SAR-1 and place right arm through neck hole with pocket facing in.
  - e. Use front surface approach procedures.

**NOTE**  
Remove survivor's oxygen mask/helmet/cranial if applicable.

- f. Place SAR-1 over survivor's head with pocket facing out. This is done with rescue swimmer's right arm, while keeping survivor in a left hand cross-chest carry.
- g. Place left hand cross-chest under the SAR-1, and grasp buckle. Bring strap under both arms and clip into buckle. Tighten strap.
- h. Check for breathing. Give \_\_\_\_\_ breaths if required.
- i. Perform Disentanglement Procedures.
- j. Complete rescue using normal procedures.

C. Combative Survivor:

**WARNING**

Combative survivors may not initially desire to be rescued and may actively resist assistance from the rescue swimmer. The combative survivor may intentionally try to harm the rescue swimmer or themselves when approached. This type of behavior can continue indefinitely, even after repeated attempts by the rescue swimmer to provide assurance and recovery.

- 1. Indications that a survivor might be combative are:

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- a. Prior mentally unstable behavior, suicide attempt, voluntarily jumping into the water.
- b. Suspected or known enemy, foreign personnel demonstrating hostility towards Americans, or suspicious personnel aboard vessels being detained.

2. Combative Survivor Procedures:

**WARNING**

The rescue swimmer shall not be deployed into the water to recover enemy or hostile survivors armed with weapons.

**WARNING**

Recovery of enemy or hostile survivors should only be attempted using a rescue boat or ships J-bar davit with armed security personnel on station in the rescue boat or ship’s forecastle. Helicopter recovery of an enemy or hostile survivor should only be used under operational necessity.

**WARNING**

Direct deployment procedures should not be used on a combative survivor. If direct deployment procedures are utilized, the rescue swimmer shall be deployed to a safe distance from the survivor (6 to 8 feet). If from this “safe distance” the rescue swimmer determines that the survivor is going to remain combative, the rescue swimmer should disconnect from the double rescue hook, reattach the quick strop to the double rescue hook and signal the crew chief “up hoist”. Combative survivor procedures should then be utilized.

**WARNING**

A single rescue swimmer should not attempt the recovery of a combative survivor without assistance from a rescue boat and/or a second rescue swimmer.

- a. Approach survivor and establish verbal communication. Attempt to calm the survivor with verbal reassurance and commands.
- b. If survivor is actively combative, do not attempt to immediately gain physical control of the survivor. The rescue swimmer should remain a safe distance (6 to 8 feet) from the survivor, and assess the situation.
- c. If survivor does not have operable flotation, the rescue swimmer should attempt to provide a flotation device to the survivor while still maintaining a safe distance.
- d. Communicate with the rescue platform and brief the situation.

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- e. Request assistance utilizing radio or hand signals
  - Request rescue boat assistance
  - Request the assistance of a second rescue swimmer. The second rescue swimmer is backup to the primary rescue swimmer and has the following responsibilities:
    - Ensure the safety of the Primary rescue swimmer
    - Assist the primary rescue swimmer as needed.
    - Deploy with rescue equipment requested by primary rescue swimmer.
    - Once on scene, the back-up rescue swimmer may assume/help with communication duties to the rescue platform.
    - Assist the primary rescue swimmer as required.

**NOTE**

There are no dual rescue swimmer procedures. The back-up rescue swimmer should act as a safety observer and assist the primary rescue swimmer as required.

D. Use the following modified recovery procedures:

1. Maintain 6 to 8 feet distance from survivor, remain vigilant and ready to render immediate assistance, and wait for the survivor to tire, calm down, and/or ask for assistance.
2. Be patient. Attempt to calm the survivor and provide flotation to the survivor if needed and/or practical.
3. Assume physical control of the survivor only when deemed safe. Do not attempt to rescue an actively combative survivor unless the following conditions occur:
  - a. The survivor requests assistance.
  - b. The survivor becomes unconscious/incapacitated
4. Ensure the survivor has no weapons.
  - a. If conscious, direct the survivor to maintain hands in view at all times.

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- b. Once physical control is established, the rescue swimmer shall remain vigilant for survivor to become actively combative or the presence of any weapons.

- 5. Recover survivor using appropriate device.

**NOTE**

The rescue boat or ships J-Bar Davit is the preferred recovery vehicle. If a rescue boat or ship is unavailable, recovery may be made to a helicopter.

**WARNING**

In all cases (whether the survivor is determined to be combative, panicked, or cooperative) the rescuer shall not hoist the survivor from an overland or maritime environment without the proper application of the selected rescue device to include any and all safety straps or safety devices per all applicable publications and instructions.

- a. Rescue Strop:
  - The rescue swimmer shall, in all cases, correctly employ the arm retaining straps prior to signaling “up hoist.
- b. Direct Deployment:
  - Shall only be used by a rescue swimmer qualified in Direct Deployment procedures. The Quick Strop shall only be used in conjunction with the TRI-SAR harness.
  - The rescue swimmer shall, in all cases, correctly employ the quick strop crotch strap prior to signaling “up hoist”.

**E. Care and Control of a Combative Survivor onboard the Rescue Platform:**

- a. The rescue platform shall notify the on-scene commander of the situation, survivor’s condition, and request medical and security personnel assistance at the rescue platforms location.
- b. The rescue platform crew shall remain vigilant during transit. A member of the crew or security personnel shall be stationed next to the survivor at all times during transit to provide immediate physical control if required.

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**WARNING**

Restraints will preclude the survivor from being able to egress/swim in the event of an aircraft mishap or rescue boat capsizing during transit. Rescue personnel may need to provide assistance to the survivor to egress the rescue platform in the event of a mishap.

- c. Once onboard the rescue platform, the survivor should be secured into a Rescue or Medivac Litter at the earliest opportunity. If aboard a helicopter, cabin doors and windows should be secured.

**NOTE**

The rescue personnel shall assess condition of survivor and provide medical treatment during transit.

**NOTE**

Once rescue platform is safely aboard ship or ashore, transfer survivor to awaiting medical and/or security personnel.

a. Hand Signals:

1. Request rescue boat assistance:

- a. The rescue swimmer extends both arms directly overhead, palms placed together.

2. Request the assistance of a second rescue swimmer:

- a. Rescue swimmer faces the rescue platform raises one arm from side of body, diagonally (45 degrees), palm down, fingers extended straight out, rotate arm in circular motion.

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Request Rescue Boat Assistance



Request the Assistance of a Second  
Rescue Swimmer

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