

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Fire Department

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DATE: 12/11/2023 12:00:00 AM
SUBJECT: Dog Rescue Video
BY: Assistant Chief Brent Consie

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Fire Misc
CASE NO.: 14541
INCIDENT DATE: 12/7/2023 12:00:00 AM

Releasing link to video of a dog rescue that occurred on 12/07/2023. A press release for this incident was generated previously. The narrative from that press release is re-released below and was written by Assistant Chief Daniel Lattner, who was on duty the night of the incident.

The link sends you to a Google Drive with four videos taken by the Aerial Lift Bridge Engineer at the time of the rescue.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15QMX6v3UvcQGWISjmQ7OCVBkG-ENmpTq?usp=sharing>

On Thursday, December 7th at 18:20 the Duluth Fire Department was dispatched for a report of a dog who had escaped off his leash and jumped into the water near the Duluth Aerial Lift Bridge. Units responded from headquarters fire station to assist. Rescue 1 and the Assistant Chief responded to the area of the call while crews from 1 Engine and 1 Tower responded to Pier B resort with Marine-3, the department's 14-foot inflatable rescue boat. At this time of year, the department's Marine-19 and Marine-1 units usually staged at the pier are not available due to the ice and cold temperatures. En route crews were trying to get a more exact location of the dog and the callers. Saint Louis County Dispatchers were able to use cameras on the lift bridge being controlled by the bridge operator to help locate the call. Upon arrival crews found the callers on the south pier on the lake side of the bridge. Rescue 1 crew members met with the owners of the dog who pointed out where the dog was. The dog was struggling in 8-foot plus waves in the middle of the ship canal. Crew members entered the water in ice rescue suits that are designed to work in the extreme cold water and ice of Lake Superior. Rescue 1 crew members fought their way through the waves to find the dog but were struggling to see him due to the large waves and limited light. The dog was also dark in color and kept slipping below the surface making him difficult to find. DFD personnel on the pier along with the dog's owner used portable lights and shouted directions to the crew to help locate the dog. The firefighters were finally able to get a hold of the dog by his collar but were not able to do much more against the heavy waves other than help keep him from going under again. The dog was large, scared and was struggling which added to the difficulty. The crew and dog were being swept in towards the bay and as they were passing under the bridge Marine-3 arrived on scene. DFD crew members in the boat and in the water struggled in the waves but were able to get the dog and the firefighters into the boat. The boat was driven to the back side of the South Pier Inn where the water is calmer and more protected. The dog who was completely exhausted was reunited

with his owners and was treated by DFD crews for exposure. The owners and dog were transported to their vehicle by Duluth Fire and the dog was showing marked signs of improvement. He had stopped shivering, was able to walk on his own and was wagging his tail as he jumped into his owner's car.

The Duluth Fire Department is often asked why we would respond to calls like this and put firefighters at any level of risk for an animal. The Duluth Fire Department understands how important pets are to their families. We have learned in the fire service that if we do not respond to help in these situations that bystanders and owners likely will take action on their own. Without the proper training and equipment this most often results in the firefighters now responding to a call for a person in harm's way. On this call one of the notes taken by Saint Louis County Dispatchers and transmitted to fire crews stated "The female reporting party is threatening to jump in." Other bystanders on scene informed us they were having to convince the owner not to go in after the dog. The Duluth Fire Department wants to stress to the public the importance of not putting yourself into a situation you are neither trained nor equipped to handle. This will not only put you at risk but the emergency responders as well. It will also greatly limit the options we have to try to save your pet as all efforts will now be directed at saving you. Given the wave and temperature conditions in the canal last night, anyone entering the water without the proper training and equipment would most likely have ended in tragedy.

The Duluth Fire Department wants to thank our partners at Saint Louis County Dispatch and the Aerial Lift Bridge Operator for their assistance in this call and remind everyone to stay safe this holiday season.