

Shelter Cove Fire Department Ocean Rescue Team

Special Presentation

September 12, 2023

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors



The Shelter Cove Ocean Rescue Team was established in the early 2000s and is one of the few volunteer ocean rescue teams around. There are 13 specialized team members who train once a month rain or shine in addition to the weekly fire department training. The team utilizes 2 boats and 2 jet skis. From 2009-2023, the team has 6 rescues from the water and 7 recovering of loved ones. There have been 4 rescues in the last year.



May 29, 2022

The Shelter Cove Ocean Rescue Team rescued two hikers out of the water off Black Sands Beach at approximately 14:30. The team utilized both Sea Legs rescue boat and rescue ski 1 pushing both vessels and crew members to the limits in order to successfully rescue 1 victim and recover another from 15-20ft waves. The team had both vessels in the water within 10 minutes of being dispatched. Unfortunately, one of the victims was pronounced deceased at scene by paramedics, and one was transported by air ambulance in stable condition.



July 24, 2022

At 12:27 Shelter Cove Fire Department's Ocean Rescue Team responded to a medical rescue call in the area of the Shelter Cove Boat Ramp. Upon arrival rescue units found a kayaker stranded on a large rock approximately 200 yards offshore. The kayaker was unable to self-rescue and needed assistance walking down the rock and onto the Shelter Cove ORT jet ski. The kayaker was then taken to the Shelter Cove Marina where they were treated for minor hypothermia symptoms and released. Shelter Cove Fire's Sea Legs rescue boat was able to recover the kayak and tow it back to the marina.



September 15, 2022

At approximately 17:42 the Shelter Cove Fire Department was dispatched along with Cal Fire, US Coast Guard Sector Humboldt Bay and Southern Humboldt Technical Rescue, for a person in the water around the area of little black sands beach. Shelter Cove Fire's Duty Officer and Rescue Swimmer immediately responded to the last known location and located a male victim treading water 100ft from a large cliff. Thanks to firefighters already being at the station Shelter Cove's Ocean Rescue Team launched Jet Ski 1 and were able to make it to the victim in under 20 minutes. The rescue swimmer and Jet Ski crew were able to work together to get the non-ambulatory patient onto the Jet Ski and transported him to a waiting ambulance at the Shelter Cove Marina. Once off the water the patient was treated for mild hypothermia by medical personnel from Shelter Cove Fire and City Ambulance out of Garberville then released to family. All incoming mutual aid was canceled.



July 8, 2023

At approximately 12:38 Shelter Cove Fire received reports of a small plane crash in the ocean with people in the water north of the Shelter Cove Airport. Shelter Cove Fire's Duty Officer and rescue swimmer immediately responded to the scene and located wreckage and two victims in the water approximately 80 and 200 yards offshore of Little Black Sands Beach north of Shelter Cove. The Shelter Cove Duty Officer gave the updated location and that "one victim had made it to the beach" to all incoming units before the fire officer changed into a wetsuit and started paddling out to the second patient. Shelter Cove Fire also launched Ocean Rescue Ski 1 & 2 along with an amphibious rescue boat. Luckily Ski 1 and the rescue swimmer arrived at the victim just as they no longer had the ability to swim and were able to pull them from the ocean and bring them to the rescue boat for patient assessment and safe transport back to the marina. The patient on the beach was treated for hypothermia by SCFD EMTs and transported to the airport. Both patients were flown to local hospitals in stable condition with moderate injuries.

