

Man saved from car after driving into water off Redondo Beach boat launch

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The quick actions of a South King Fire and Rescue member saved a man's life on April 16 after he drove a car into the water off the Redondo Beach boat launch.

At about 12:25 a.m. April 16, SKFR crews were dispatched to reports of a vehicle in the water near Redondo Beach Drive South in Des Moines, said Capt. Brad Chaney of South King Fire. While en route, crews received updates that bystanders were attempting to swim out to the vehicle and retrieve the man. Due to the frigid waters, the bystanders were unable to reach him.

SKFR driver engineer Ann Hoag, who was on the responding Engine 366, is also a member of the department's rescue swimmer team. With the reports of a victim in the water, she donned her wetsuit prior to arriving at the boat launch.

Crews arrived at 12:32 a.m. and began assessing the bystanders



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH KING FIRE

The Redondo Beach boat launch is located at Redondo Beach Drive South in Des Moines.

for mild hypothermia as Hoag swam to the vehicle. The vehicle was almost entirely submerged underwater nose down, and upon getting closer to the vehicle, Hoag could hear pounding from the vehicle as if the man inside was attempting to escape, Chaney said. Hoag dived down to a rear

window and used a window punch to shatter the glass. She reached inside to grab the man's hand and pull him out of the vehicle before swimming with him back to shore. SKFR firefighters and Des Moines police officers met Hoag and the man, who was awake and responsive, Chaney said.

King County Medic One units evaluated the man for minor injuries and mild hypothermia, and he was transported to a local hospital by Tri-Med. Hoag suffered minor injuries to her hand from clearing the glass from the vehicle's window.

A bystander who had attempted

to swim out to the car prior to crews' arrival was also taken to a local hospital on their own accord by a private vehicle.

"Incidents like these showcase the importance and success of South King Fire's rescue swimmer program that was implemented a few years ago," Chaney said. The department has 29 rescue swimmers throughout the district, which allow the department to conduct water rescues and save lives.

"They practice and prepare for basically every possible situation that could occur in the water," Chaney said.

South King's rescue swimmers train in local pools to work on swimming and deep diving techniques. They also train in local open bodies of water, such as Steel Lake or Five Mile Lake, to practice rescue swimming, search patterns and life-saving retrieval techniques using a sinkable mock training vehicle and training dummies.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

It's volunteer appreciation week and Multi-Service Center would like to thank the over 500 volunteers that make our work possible. You are vital to providing help, hope, and change in our community. We couldn't do it without you.

Thank you!

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