



Town of Falmouth
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NEWS RELEASE - 2019-08

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Falmouth Fire-EMS Responds to Dog Trapped in Storm Drain

On Wednesday morning just before 9:30 a.m. the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department received a call from a resident at OceanView in Falmouth reporting that their dog was trapped in a storm drain. The on-duty crew at Falmouth Fire-EMS was in the middle of the daily morning meeting and immediately headed up to OceanView to investigate with Ambulance 2 and Engine 2. The crews found a dog with her head sticking out of a pipe approximately 6-feet below ground in a catch basin at the corner of Marion Way and Whipple Farm Way. A crowd of neighbors had gathered and maintenance staff from OceanView were on site. The maintenance staff was able to point out the exact location of the dog as well as the suspected entry point into the collection system a few hundred feet away. The dog had been missing overnight and wasn't found until a passerby heard the dog whimpering from the hole.

Once on scene and recognizing the need for assistance Fire Chief Howard Rice, Jr. called the Falmouth Wastewater Department to come to the scene to assist along with additional resources from Falmouth Fire-EMS. Upon the arrival of the Wastewater Department, crews worked together to open the drain cover and set up the fire department's confined space equipment off Engine 2. A tripod, fall protection, and hauling system were set up, the area below ground was inspected and metered for potential oxygen deficiency, and once deemed safe, entry was made by lowering one of the wastewater technicians into the hole. A folding ladder was also placed inside the hole. The 11-year old Australian Shephard was very timid but eventually coaxed to come out of the pipe and into the arms of the rescuer. Once secured, the rescuer and wet dog were hauled up out of the hole using the lift system and the tripod. The dog Georgie was towed off and happily went with her owners. The hole was closed up and all Wastewater and Falmouth Fire-EMS units were back in service by 10 a.m.

The Falmouth Fire-EMS department has been working with the Falmouth Wastewater Department for the past 4 years for confined space rescue. Falmouth Fire-EMS members were trained to perform rescues should any of the Wastewater members need help or if someone else were to become trapped or injured in any of the confined spaces in town. In late 2015 two training classes were held to train not only Falmouth Fire-EMS, but also Cumberland and Yarmouth Fire Departments in confined space rescue as well. By having Falmouth Fire-EMS being trained in confined space rescue it saves the Wastewater Department from having to contract with outside companies every time they go into one of their confined spaces. After training quarterly for the past 4 years, today was the first time the crews in Falmouth have used the equipment and training at a real incident. According to Chief Rice, the rescue went very smoothly and was a great example of teamwork between town departments (Wastewater and Fire-EMS). Falmouth Fire-EMS currently has 17 members trained in confined space rescue.

End of release.

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