



Town of Falmouth
Fire-EMS Department
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NEWS RELEASE - 2020-08

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Falmouth Fire-EMS Responds to Boater in Distress

On 10/30/2020 at 11:43 hours, Falmouth Fire-EMS was notified of a boater in distress near the mouth of the Presumpscot River next to I-295. Falmouth Police responded and confirmed sight of the boater. The Coast Guard was called to respond as was Falmouth Fire-EMS Department. Falmouth Fire-EMS responded with the on duty crew in Ambulance 2 and Engine 2 along with crews in Tower 2, and a crew towing the inflatable boat, Marine 7. Crews were initially directed to the Martin's Point Bridge off Route 1.

While Chief Rice, Engine 2 and Ambulance 2 all responded to the Martin's Point Bridge, the crew with Marine 7 and Assistant Chief Hallett went to Mackworth Island to launch the boat. Using binoculars from the Martin's Point Bridge on Route 1, police and fire-ems units could see the man in a canoe across the water closer to the shore near I-295. A crew was sent to I-295 to hike through the woods and down to the shoreline to see if they could reach the man.

Marine 7 was launched from Mackworth Island with 3 call members from Station 1 in cold water suits. The air temperature at the time was 33 degrees F. and winds were blowing from the North at 19 mph. A small Coast Guard boat arrived in the area but was unable to get near the canoe due to water depth.

After hiking through the woods off I-295, the crews from Engine 2 and a Falmouth police officer made contact with the man in the canoe. The firefighters were able to throw a line to the boater from the shore. Two members of Falmouth Fire-EMS then waded out into the shallow water to retrieve the man and stop his canoe from floating out with the tide. The man was duck hunting and had lost his oar in the water. The strong winds then blew him away from the River into the current. Crews stayed with the hunter until Marine 7 arrived. Marine 7 towed the uninjured hunter and his canoe back to his hunting blind near the mouth of the Presumpscot River. Marine 7 assisted the man back to the location of his car on Middle Road. Once the man was safely on shore at his car the crew returned to Mackworth Island.

Luckily, no one was injured in the rescue. Falmouth Fire-EMS operates a 13.5-foot inflatable rib boat, purchased 2 years ago primarily for use in the Presumpscot River and along the shores of the ocean. While crews have trained extensively with the boat, this is the first time the boat was used in an emergency. According to Assistant Chief Jay Hallett, a lifelong mariner, the boat functioned exactly as it was designed to and increases the capability of the fire-ems department.

In addition to the 7 on-duty crew members responding to the incident, 7 call members responded from home to assist. All units were back in quarters by 1:30 p.m.

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