

DCSAR ROPE COMMANDS

Preparatory Commands

COMMAND	MEANING
[ITEM] + READY FOR SAFETY CHECK	Belay, system, litter, rappeller. It means that something is ready to be safety checked (touch test) and that someone is going to monitor that something to make sure that nothing changes between the time of the safety check and when the system starts to move
SYSTEM STANDING BY	Edgeman to litter team. It means that everything up top and been safety checked and is ready to belay/raise/lower you in less than 1 minute
LITTER TEAM STANDING BY	Litter tender to systems group. Means the patient is packaged, the litter is tied in, litter tenders can be ready to start carrying the litter in less than a minute.
LITTER TEAM READY	Litter tender to systems operator and belayer. It means, each member, the patient, and litter have been safety checked, as soon as I hear "BELAY ON" and "SYSTEM ON" I'm going to give the raise / lower command.

Main Operating Commands

COMMAND	MEANING
STOP + [reason for stop]	Anyone. Belayer and main line operators remove any excess tension and lock off their systems.
ROCK!	Anyone. Something is falling towards the litter team. Team members should keep their head down so that their helmet can protect them; protect themselves and protect the patient.
SLACK + [rope color ¹]	Litter tender to belayer or brakeman. It means "The rope is too taut, give us some slack"
TENSION + [rope color]	Litter tender to belayer or brakeman. It means, Take up some rope and make it more taut.
ON BELAY	Litter tender to belayer. It means, "I need you to make sure that I'm not going to fall."
BELAY ON	Belayer to litter tender. It means, "I've got you and won't do anything else until you tell me I can stop. I'm also ready to let you move down if needed."
OFF BELAY	Litter tender to belayer. It means, "I'm in a secure position and in no danger of falling"
BELAY OFF	Belayer to litter tender. It means, "I not going to watch the belay line any more."
RAISE/HAUL (SLOW)	Litter tender to haul team captain. This command is given only once. The team continues to haul until given another command. May be modified with speed
LOWER	Litter tender to systems operator and belayer. It means start letting rope out.
ON ROPE	Litter tender to belayer and system operator. It means I'm attaching to the rope the belay and system need to be ready to protect me and for me to move.
SYSTEM ON	Main line operator. I'm ready to move you up or down – this means that the haul team is ready too. In the case of a lowering system, the rope is locked off by hand and not tied off.
RAPELLING	Rappeller to belayer. It means that the rappeller is starting to move; allow him to descend.

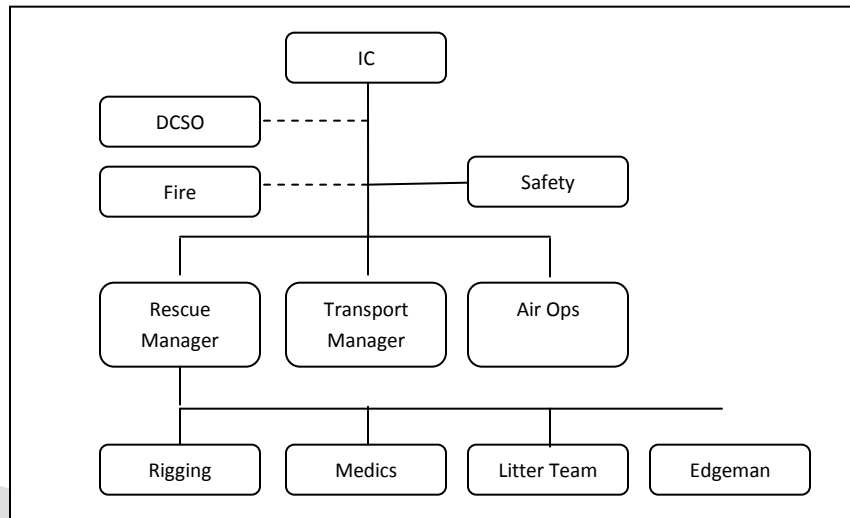
Secondary Commands

COMMAND	MEANING
RESETTING	System operator to everyone. We are resetting the pulleys so we can raise again. We'll announce "SYSTEM ON" after the pulleys are reset and the haul team is ready.
ZERO	Belayer or main line operator to litter tender. It means that there is about 20 feet of rope left and litter team should look for a spot to set down the litter.
SLOWER / FASTER	Litter tender to belayer /main line operator. It means, adjust the speed.
SLACK (HAUL TEAM)	Systems operator to haul team. The progress capture devices (prussics) have been set. Completely transfer the weight to that device by slowly lowering the rope.
OFF ROPE	Litter tender to brakeman. It means, "I'm no longer attached to the rope."
MAIN LINE /BELAY SET	Belayer or main line operator to litter tender and haul team. Progress capture device (prussics) set. If lowering system, then the brake bar is tied off.

¹ We prefer to use rope colors rather than Belay or Main Line if possible because sometimes it's not clear to the litter team, which is which.

ROPE RESCUE PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS

COMMAND STRUCTURE



1) INCIDENT COMMANDER

- Call sign: Command
- Overall commander of operation.
- Interfaces with other agencies.

2) SAFETY OFFICER

- Call sign: Safety
- Responsible for overall safety of operation
- Should be experienced tech

3) OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

- Call sign: Ops
- Responsible for overall strategy and application of resources.

4) RESCUE MANAGER:

- Call sign: Rescue Group
- Responsible for everything at the scene of the rescue.
- Oversees medics, litter team, edgeman, and rigging team.
- Objective is to locate access, stabilize and transport the subject.
- Must act as safety officer if one isn't assigned

5) MEDIC

- Call sign: Medic
- Responsible for medical care of subject
- Assists higher medically trained people

6) LITTER TEAM

- Call sign: Litter team
- Responsible for getting litter and other medical equipment to subject
- Prefer that one member of this team be medically proficient
- Prefer that one member of this team be good at rigging – this would likely be the down slope safety officer.

7) EDMAN

- Responsible for setting edge protection
- Will act as command relay for litter team to systems team when needed.
- Needs to be proficient at setting edge protection

8) RIGGING TEAM

- Responsible for building belay and main line systems
- Lead by rope tech.

9) AIR OPERATIONS BRACH DIRECTOR

10) TRANSPORTATION MANAGER

- Call sign: Transport
- Responsible for the logistics of any secondary transport issues once the initial rope rescue task is completed.

BASIC APPROACH TO SAFETY

- Anyone can say “STOP”
- People near the edge of a medium or high angle slope need to be tied in. Consider it for low angle situations. (Low angle is < 25°)
- Use the “touch” system for safetying something – and be systematic.
- Anything connected to a rope needs to be safetied before it moves.
- If something is safetied and then changed, it has to be safetied again.
- Once something is safetied, someone needs to remain with it.
- Movement is controlled by the “load” (litter/rappeller/person).
- Keep communication as clear, simple and direct as possible.
- Operate within your level of training – call additional resources if you need them
- Move slow to go fast.

EXAMPLE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Belayer sets up system and is ready for medic 1 to tie in so that she can rappel down to the patient.	BELAYER: READY FOR SAFETY CHECK
Medic 1 prepares to rappel down to the subject. He attaches into the main line that he secured to a tree. He’s also attached to a belay line.	MEDIC: READ FOR SAFETY CHECK
Medic 1 wants to start rappelling down	MEDIC: ON RAPPEL
Belayer confirms that belay is properly tensioned and ready to hold the medic.	BELAYER: BELAY ON
Medic 1 starts to rappel	MEDIC: RAPELLING
Medic 1 arrives at patient and stops	MEDIC: STOP
Belayer sets progress capture device	BELAYER: BELAY SET
Medic 1 decides that she wants to come back up with the patient. She configures things so that both she and her patient are tied into the ropes. The topside rigging team adds a piggyback raising system to the rappel line.	MEDIC: STANDING BY TO RAISE
System operator is all set up and confirms that haul team is ready.	SYSTEM OPERATOR: SYSTEM ON
Belayer confirms that his system is ready	BELAYER: BELAY ON
Medic 1 wants to go up. Haul team captain gets things moving once he hears “raise”.	MEDIC: RAISE
Haul team captain sees that they are just about to run their moving pulley into the anchor.	HAUL TEAM LEADER: STOP
Haul team captain resets the pulleys in the raising system	HAUL TEAM LEADER: RESETTING
System operator confirm that haul team is ready to continue	SYSTEM OPERATOR: SYSTEM ON
Belayer is ready	BELAYER: BELAY ON
Medic is ready to continue	MEDIC: RAISE