Pleasant Valley Fire District
Standard Operating Guidelines

SOG #34 – CARE OF LIFELINE/RESCUE ROPES

PURPOSE: Inspecting a life safety rope involves visually looking for damage, feeling for damage and checking the rope's history in the rope log. A non-destructive test that tells how much strength your rope has left does not currently exist. The decision to retire a rope or to keep it in service relies on good judgment that comes only from experience in working with rope.

GUIDELINES:

1. All new ropes should be inspected **before** it is put into service and then after each use. .

2. Keep ropes away from acids, alkalis, exhaust emissions, rust or other strong chemicals.

3. Avoid shock loading ropes or using them over sharp bends.

4. The inspection should be done by a competent person deemed qualified by the fire district. A complete inspection includes both a visual and a tactile inspection.

5. Check your rope carefully after each use to make sure there are no cuts, chafed areas, broken fibers, soft or hard spots, glazed surfaces, discolorations, variations in diameter or any other visible damage. If any of the above are noted, the rope should be removed from service.

6. Visually inspect the sheath to identify chafed areas, glazed surfaces, discoloration or variations in diameter. These areas should receive additional scrutiny during the tactile inspection. Look for areas of abrasion or cuts in the sheath where the core is exposed or enough of the sheath is worn that its ability to protect the core is compromised. The tactile inspection should be done with tension on the rope. Feel for variations in size and soft or hard spots that could indicate damage to the core or rope that has been overstressed. If any of the above are noted, the rope should be retired from service. If the rope has been subjected to shock loads, fall loads or abuse other than normal rappel or rescue training, the rope should be retired from service.

7. The cleaning of all ropes should be done according to the manufacturer's requirements.