



Lower Township Police Department

405 Breakwater Road
Erma, NJ 08204
609-886-1619

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Police, Fire and Rescue Personnel Pull Efforts To Rescue 14 Year Old From Gravel Pit Pond

LOWER TOWNSHIP – On Saturday, July 7th, at approximately 5 pm, the Lower Township Police Department received a 9-1-1 call from a frantic juvenile, stating that his friend was unconscious and non-responsive, still in the water at the gravel pits behind Wuerker's Farm.

Lower Township Police, Fire and Rescue units immediately responded to the area, however there are numerous dirt roads leading into the area which contain several fresh water ponds and first responders had difficulties locating the exact pond.

When Lower Township Police Officers, Darrin Hickok and S/O Michael Iames, arrived at the scene, they immediately jumped into chest deep water to assist the 14 year old male victim who was being held in the water by a group of his friends who had been swimming with him.

Erma Fire Chief, Warner Miller arrived on scene and was able to direct rescuers to the area.

Preliminary assessment on scene determined that the juvenile may have suffered a neck injury while swimming at the pond.

Other juveniles at the scene advised police officers that when they pulled their friend from the water, he was unconscious and unresponsive. Several of the juveniles at the scene then performed CPR on their friend, while he was still in the water.

When police officers reached the boy, he was semi-conscious.

The rescue effort was made more difficult due to the fact that the victim was still in the water at the bottom of a ten (10) foot dirt cliff.

Firefighters from Villas and Erma Fire Departments responded to the scene to assist in the rescue along with Lower Township Rescue Squad and Paramedics.

Rescue personnel were able to stabilize the victim in the water, secure him to a rescue stretcher and carry him up the cliff face to a waiting ambulance in the parking lot of the Cape May County Storage Bin Center located on the border of Lower and Middle Townships off of Fulling Mill Road.

Lower Township Police Officers used bolt cutters to cut a large section of chain link fence surrounding the storage center in order to give rescuers access to the ambulance.



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Paramedics and Lower Township Rescue Personnel worked on the juvenile who became unconscious again and requested a Medi-Vac Helicopter. However the helicopter had to abort the mission due to mechanical problems.

The 14 year old boy was then transported by ground by the Lower Township Rescue Squad, to Cape Regional Medical Center, and was later airlifted to Cooper Trauma Center in Camden.

Lower Township Police Chief, Edward Donohue, who was also at the scene on Saturday, commended the efforts of police, fire and rescue personnel during the water rescue stating,

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to this young man and his family.”

Chief Donohue also wanted to remind residents and visitors alike that these fresh water ponds are unprotected and full of underwater hazards that have the potential to injure swimmers. They are also extremely difficult for first responders to access in the event of emergencies.

Police are not identifying the juvenile, only stating that he is a 14 year old boy from Middle Township.

Press Release Prepared By:

Captain Louis Russo