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Enid firefighters hone floodwater-rescue techniques using their new inflatable boat



Enid firefighters pull a simulated victim into a newly-acquired inflatable boat during floodwater rescue training Wednesday at the city of Enid waterworks lake. (Staff Photos by BILLY HEFTON)

(<http://enidnews.com/localnews/x1770584543/Enid-firefighters-hone-floodwater-rescue-techniques-using-their-new-inflatable-boat>)

**By Cass Rains, Staff Writer
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ENID — Enid Fire Department firefighters are spending this week in the water to hone their floodwater-rescue techniques.

Training Officer Corbin Baker said the department saw a need for its new Saturn inflatable rescue boat after severe flooding in May.

Firefighters were called to rescue at least five stranded motorists from floodwaters following the spring storms.

“We’re training for the rescue of a victim trapped in floodwater,” Baker said at the city of Enid’s waterworks lake. “We’re practicing several methods we would use to get people out of the water.”

Baker said firefighters from throughout the department will train in the water-rescue techniques this week. Firefighters trained Monday and Wednesday and will continue their training Friday.

The department’s inflatable raft will allow firefighters to pluck victims from the water.

Firefighters practiced Wednesday pulling a simulated victim from the water and using a net to roll them into the boat.

The need for the training became apparent in May when motorists were driving around barricades and getting stranded in floodwaters.

“Any time we have to go into a hazardous situation to save someone, it puts our lives at risk, as well as the victim,” Assistant Fire Marshal Todd Hays said. “These people are making a choice to break the law, to go around the barricades and that is putting our rescuers’ lives at risk.”

Motorists who drive around government barricades closing roads will be breaking an Oklahoma law signed into effect in May by Gov. Mary Fallin.

Those breaking the law will face a misdemeanor charge and up to a \$1,000 fine and/or up to 30 days in jail. A motorist who drives around a barricade and then has to be rescued also may face court-ordered restitution for the costs of a rescue crew.