

GTA 17-08-001

ABRAMS TANK EMERGENCY WATER EGRESS PROCEDURES



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DISTRIBUTION: U.S. Army Training and Audiovisual Support Centers (TASCs).

Supersedes GTA 17-08-001, February 2007

**HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MARCH 2010**

Always perform composite risk management and a map reconnaissance prior to all maneuver operations. When possible, a route reconnaissance should also be conducted. All obstacles, to include water obstacles, should be pointed out to all personnel and hazard mitigation procedures should be established and followed during the operation. When traveling as part of a task force/team the lead vehicle must radio all follow on vehicles that they have encountered an obstacle and provide specific details about the location of the obstacle and how to maneuver around or through the obstacle. When traveling beside a river, canal, or any waterway, tank crews need to be aware of the stability of the surface they are traveling on. If the surface is sand, loose soil or gravel, be aware that the weight of the tank may cause a shifting of the surface which could cause your tank to slide or roll down the embankment and into the water. The tank commander (TC) must take extra precautions when conducting night operations that require the driver to use the night vision device (NVD). It is extremely difficult for the driver to identify water while using the NVD. When using the NVD and if the situation/mission allows, the turret should be positioned so the main gun is over the rear deck. In the event your tank becomes partially submerged, all crew members may have to perform the following emergency procedures.

WARNING: At the first indication of water submersion, brace for impact. Do not attempt to leave your station until the vehicle has stabilized and the TC/gunner has attempted to power traverse the gun tube to the rear.

WARNING: If you are buttoned up, DO NOT open any hatch until you have visually determined that the hatch you are about to open is not submerged.

Note: The steps below are listed in the order they should be performed; some steps will be performed simultaneously by different crew members. The steps should be performed as quickly as possible to increase the probability of all crew members safely evacuating the tank. Crew members should be aware that the driver is particularly vulnerable to becoming trapped while submerged especially if he has the NVD installed and the gun tube is not over the rear deck.

- a. Announce: "WATER, WATER, WATER."

WARNING: The driver must not attempt to open the driver's hatch if the NVD is installed. With the NVD installed the hatch can only be partially opened which will increase the amount of water entering the driver's station.

- b. TC – Send flash report across FM radio as soon as possible.
- c. TC – Caution all crew members not to open a hatch without verification that it is not submerged and to begin emergency water egress procedures.

Note: If you determine that the driver or another crewman is injured, follow the procedures for removing an injured crewman.

- d. If the vehicle has power, perform the following steps:

Note: If the crew compartment becomes submerged, you may be forced to evacuate before these steps can be performed.

WARNING: Do not extend any part of your body between the turret and the driver's station unless the turret lock is set to LOCKED. You can be seriously injured or killed if the turret is traversed while you are between the turret and the driver's station.

- (1) TC – Power traverse the turret to position the main gun over the rear deck.
- (2) TC/Loader – Determine which hatches are submerged and which are clear. Announce to crew which hatches are submerged and warn them not to attempt to open those hatches.
- (3) Loader – Lock the turret.
- (4) Loader – Remove all safety screens and guards.
- (5) Loader – Announce "CLEAR."
- (6) Driver – Be prepared to turn on the bilge pump if water enters and covers the bilge pump intake valve.

- (7) TC – Determine if the crew should remain with or on top of the vehicle and the method for getting to the shore. Announce the method to the crew. Wait until ordered to evacuate.
 - (8) TC – Determine the best route of evacuation for the driver and announce “DRIVER EVACUATE THROUGH THE TURRET” or “DRIVER REMOVE THE NVD AND EVACUATE THROUGH THE DRIVER’S HATCH.”
 - (9) TC – Announce “CREW EVACUATE.”
- e. If the vehicle does NOT have power, perform the following steps:
- (1) TC – If at any time the crew compartment becomes submerged, announce “CREW EVACUATE” and the method of getting to shore.
 - (2) TC – Check the power source and switch to emergency mode. If power is restored, perform the steps above for evacuation with power. If the power is not restored, continue with the steps below.
 - (3) TC – Tell the gunner to manually traverse the turret to position the main gun over the rear deck.
 - (4) TC/Loader – Determine which hatches are submerged and which are clear. Announce to the crew which hatches are submerged, and warn them not to attempt to open those hatches.
 - (5) Gunner – Traverse the turret to position the main gun over the rear deck.
 - (6) Loader – Lock the turret.
 - (7) Loader – Stow the loader’s safety guard and other equipment to allow the driver to exit through the turret.
 - (8) Loader – Announce “CLEAR.”

- (9) TC – If the gun tube cannot be traversed, request M88s be dispatched for emergency recovery and that other element vehicles position their vehicle to perform recovery operations.
- f. If the gun tube cannot be power or manually traversed and the driver is trapped in the driver's compartment with rising water or already submerged and the driver is in imminent danger of drowning, perform the following steps.
 - (1) Loader – evacuate the vehicle with a flash light and determine the source of the resistance.

WARNING: Do not put yourself in a position to be pinned or injured by the gun tube in case of sudden movement.

- (2) Loader – Remove the source of resistance if possible, if not continue with the steps below.

WARNING: Recovering vehicles need to be in a position that will not allow them to be pulled into the water.

WARNING: Do not get between tanks while they are moving into position or when the recovering vehicle is attempting to pull the gun tube free from the resistance or you could be injured.

- (3) TC – Communicate by radio or hand-and-arm signals for one of the other vehicles to position their vehicle close enough to wrap the tow cables around the gun tube and attempt to move the gun tube enough to allow driver to evacuate the vehicle through the crew compartment.
- (4) TC – Communicate to other vehicles to begin preparing their vehicles for self-recovery operations. Begin self-recovery as soon as it is apparent that you will not be able to traverse the turret to the rear.
- (5) Gunner – Attempt to locate any kind of tubing that could be used to provide air to the driver and thread the tubing through the turret/driver's hatch and into the driver's compartment.

Note: If the tubing is too long or too narrow, the driver mostly likely will not be able to pull in enough air to prevent him from drowning.

- g. If self-recovery is unsuccessful, notify higher headquarters and again request immediate M88 recovery and medical assistance. Wait for recovery.