

St. Clair County Fire Chiefs Association

Best Practice

Rapid Intervention Team

Scope

This Best Practice meets or exceeds the intent of applicable sections within Chapter 6, Emergency Operations, of NFPA 1500, Standards on the Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program. It also intends to meet requirements of the OSHA Respirator Protection Standard 1910.143 and OSHA 2 in 2 / out Rule 308-134e.

Purpose

The purpose of this Best Practice is to outline the procedures used for the rescue of personnel operating at emergency incidents if the need arises. It further outlines the procedures for members entering an Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmosphere or working in an environment recognized to be unstable.

Personnel assigned to perform this function will be designated as the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT). The composition and structure of the RIT shall be flexible depending on the type, size and complexity of the incident. All fire personnel will be trained in the County Mutual Aid RIT Training as prescribed by the St. Clair County Fire Chiefs Association.

Personal Accountability Report (PAR) – Report given to Command or Operations that all members of the crew are accounted for.

Mayday – A verbal notification to the incident Commander that immediate actions are required to rescue or assist emergency personnel operating in emergency incidents.

RIT Group Leader – An Officer whose function is the tracking of the entry teams and performs no other function but tracking and rapid intervention.

Rescuing a Downed Firefighter

To ensure the fastest possible response to a downed firefighter, the following procedures should be followed:

- A RIT Team should be established as soon as possible following all applicable guidelines including OSHA 29CFR 1910.134 (g) (4), NFPA 1710, NFPA 1500 and department procedure etc.
- The department RIT will consist of a minimum of three-person team.
- Minimum of one 1-1/2 inch hand line dedicated for RIT supplied by different engine than the initial fire attack team.
- When a firefighter needs immediate assistance because he/she is lost/disoriented/entangled/low on air or otherwise in immediate danger he/she should call MAYDAY. The call should be made 3 times **Mayday, Mayday, Mayday** followed by pertinent information such as location, type or emergency, what company is involved and how many personnel are involved. The incident Commander should repeat **Mayday** call. All fire companies working on the scene will remain on the same talk group, there will be no switching of talk groups. It is important to maintain radio discipline during Mayday, and only speak when it is necessary, keeping that to an absolute minimum.

- **PAR** (Personal Accountability Report) should be taken when changing the fire incident command is established. PAR should be done at no less than 20-minute intervals.
- The evacuation signal is three blasts of air horn of an apparatus, followed by a fifteen (15) second pause to accommodate for radio traffic, continuing until all members have been evacuated and accounted for.
- When a MAYDAY is broadcast, the IC should immediately sound an additional alarm. This will bring outside departments to the scene to assist with any RIT or fire control measures. (Because of the emotions involved in a firefighter down scenario. It is recommended that an outside agency be called to assist. This will give a different prospective to the incident and will provide a safer environment in which to work.) The request for assistance should be included in the fact that it is for “Firefighter Down.”
- A ranking officer shall be assigned RIT Officer Operations. This position should not be handled by the Incident Commander. The IC should maintain control of the scene to allow for a continuously smooth flow in the operation. Any and all information regarding the in individual calling for assistance should be given to the RIT Officer. This officer shall be required to have a minimum of: RIT training and Fire Officer 1.
- In the event that the RIT is pressed into service, another RIT will be established. If the fire is in a large structure, more than one RIT may be established. Whenever more than one RIT is set up, they should have numerical designation assigned to the team so the IC and RIT Officer can differentiate which team in handling a given assignment (Example: RIT -1; RIT-2).
- Prior to arrival, a staging area shall be designated at the direction of the authority having jurisdiction.
- RIT teams shall be fully bunkered including SBA to be ready for immediate rescue. For all other incidents involving risk to firefighter life safety, all appropriate personal protection equipment and necessary emergency equipment will be in position before beginning emergency operations.
- The agency having jurisdiction will have portable radio designated for RIT team usage, allowing them to monitor the fire ground.
- The Safety Officer shall maintain documentation of RIT members, Time in, Time out, locations searched, and all other pertinent information.

The Recommended tools for RIT Operations are as follows

- RIT Kit Storage Bag
- SCBA RIT Bottle Cover
- Hybrid Halligan Tool
- TNT Tool
- Cable Cutters
- LED Mounted Flashlight
- Flashlight Case
- NFPA Carabiners
- Search Line Rope Bags
- Heat Resistant Search Line

Training Requirements

Training requirements shall be separated in 2 groups; annual and bi-annual. At the end of each year on a Department letter head that states “XX%” of Employees completed the training and explanation for those that didn’t complete the required training be sent to the training committee.

- 1. Annual requirements:**
 - a. RIT equipment renew
 - b. MayDay call
 - c. Buddy Breathing
 - d. Air pack connection review
 - e. Wall breach
 - f. Denver drill

- 2. Bi-Annual requirements:**
 - a. Thermal imaging camera
 - b. Ropes and knots
 - c. Cincinnati Drill
 - d. Stairway Maneuvers
 - e. Haling system search
 - f. Practice drill