

_____ – STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

TITLE: INCIDENT OPERATIONS S.O.G. #
MAYDAY AND RESCUE OF LOST OR TRAPPED FIRE FIGHTERS

DATE ISSUED: 08/09/10 DATE REVIEWED: 09/22/10 BY:
AUTHOR: DATE REVISED: 09/22/10 BY:
APPROVED BY:
DATE:

PURPOSE: This procedure identifies operational approaches for search and rescue of a fire fighter(s) trapped, lost, collapse, low air activation, entrapment and/or a fall. To identify the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved at an incident where a “Mayday” has been transmitted. The rescue of a downed firefighter(s) in a burning building is especially time sensitive. An immediate and well organized search and rescue response must be implemented to take advantage of the very limited survivable time element.

“Mayday” Radio Message

The radio message “Mayday” will be used by the firefighter(s) to report their status of being lost, trapped, or injured and needing rescue. Any firefighter may use “Mayday” to report the lost, injured firefighter(s). Any report of a “Mayday” will receive priority over all other radio traffic followed by the emergency traffic tone. The term “Mayday” will be reserved ONLY to report a firefighter in distress. The term “Emergency traffic” will be used to report all other emergencies.

Command Responsibilities

Command will maintain an awareness of the location of firefighters on the fire ground primarily through assignments and the MARC (Member Accountability Roll Call) or PAR (Personnel Accountability System). In the event that a firefighter(s) cannot be located through MARC or PAR, or any other time a firefighter(s) is missing, the officer or a member should announce a “Mayday”.

Command shall respond to a “Mayday” by implementing a rescue plan for the firefighter(s). In the event of a building collapse (full or partial) have Central Dispatch give the evacuation tone. Command will order a MARC/PAR of all firefighters on scene to determine if the firefighter(s) are missing and how many. **Stay with your teams!** Command/Safety Officers should use the apparatus PAS (Personnel Accountability System) Ring with attached PAS Tags to obtain an accurate roll call and determine the names of missing firefighters.

Command will immediately deploy RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) to the area. If it is suspected or confirmed that a firefighter(s) IS MISSING, Command will then immediately request mutual aid.

Refer to Command Worksheet for Mayday (see Attachment A) to determine other considerations to be addressed (such as assigning back-up RIT).

Building Collapse

Command will adjust the incident management plan to a high priority rescue effort and for protecting fire fighter(s) from the effects of fire. Command must immediately place additional attack lines, deluge guns, or elevated streams as appropriate in the collapse area to protect trapped fire fighter(s) and rescuers from the fire. Positive pressure ventilations should be initiated to improve atmospheric conditions and visibility. Write off of the remainder of the building may be required in order to commit resources to the rescue effort.

Additional Officers should be sent to the collapse area to assume additional operational responsibilities. A Safety Officer **WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED**, depending on the size of the geographic area and nature of the search and rescue effort.

Command/Safety Officers should use the apparatus PAS (Personnel Accountability System) Ring with attached PAS Tags to obtain an accurate roll call and determine the names of lost fire fighters. If PASS devices on lost firefighters are not operating, the use of portable radios may be used, as previously described for locating lost, or a firefighter(s) stuck in a collapsed area.

Additional standby rescue crews (RIT) should be maintained outside the entry points to relieve initial rescue crews as SCBA's go empty. These standby rescue crews may also be required to quickly enter and assist removal of the lost firefighter once they are located. Several firefighters for each downed firefighter will be needed to quickly remove them.

Refer to Command Worksheet for Building Collapse (see Attachment B).

Lost Firefighter

Lost firefighter(s) in a building poses a different search and rescue problem. The most significant problem and difference is that the search area can be substantially larger than the collapse area.

Company Officers who receive information that firefighter(s) may be lost will use **"MAYDAY"** radio communications to announce the situation and initiate appropriate rescue efforts.

Command will order a MARC/PAR of all firefighters operating on scene to determine if firefighters are lost and how many. Stay with your team!

Command/Safety Officers should use the apparatus PAS (Personnel Accountability System) Ring with attached PAS Tags to obtain an accurate roll call and determine the names of missing firefighters.

Command will immediately send RIT to the most appropriate location to initiate search and

rescue efforts. Additional Fire and EMS personnel/equipment shall be requested (Mutual Aid/Call-In crews). Refer to Command Worksheets for Mayday to determine other considerations to be addressed (such as assigning back-up RIT).

In many cases, lost firefighters will be able to radio to Command that they are lost and in need of rescue prior to being incapacitated when a SCBA goes empty. Firefighters who find themselves lost and who have a radio will immediately use Mayday radio communications (**L.U.N.A.R.**) to announce their situation while they continue to attempt self rescue. Lost firefighters will give Command information as to where they think they are, description of building structure where they are, sounds of nearby activities (i.e., ventilation saw noise), or other information that might direct rescue crews to their location. If a firefighter detects they are about to become incapacitated (i.e., now breathing smoke) they should take whatever protective measures are necessary to increase survivability and manually activate their PASS devices. Flashlights must be turned on and placed in a position that will assist rescue crews in the locating of downed firefighters.

Command will adjust the incident management plan to HIGH PRIORITY rescue efforts. In many cases, the offensive fire attack must continue in order to protect lost firefighters from the effects of fire. However, some areas of the building may need to be written off to concentrate on the rescue effort and protecting the firefighters.

Early and continued ventilation (including positive pressure ventilation) and interior lighting must be implemented. Spare SCBA's, SAR's and accessories (i.e., air carts supplied air lines and communication equipment) should be brought to the rescue area to be used on lost firefighters if needed.

Command will implement appropriate Incident Command Scene (ICS) management. The affected area may have to assume offensive fire attack responsibility in addition to search and rescue responsibilities.

If PASS devices on lost firefighters are not operating, the use of portable radios may be used, as previously described for locating lost, or a firefighter(s) stuck in a collapsed area.

Additional standby rescue crews (RIT) should be maintained outside the entry points to relieve initial rescue crews as SCBA's go empty. These standby rescue crews may also be required to quickly enter and assist removal of the lost firefighter once they are located. Several firefighters for each downed firefighter will be needed to quickly remove them.

Refer to Command Worksheet for LOST FIREFIGHTER (See Attachment C)

Assign a Safety Officer to the Rescue Operation

Rescue operations are high risk. The operation may be taking place in a post-collapse environment. Flashover may have occurred. The Incident Commander must avoid sustaining additional injuries. Each additional injury requires a resource committed that will draw away from the priority rescue effort. A Safety Officer in the affected area will help control the risk. The Officer will be able to conduct an assessment of the hazards allowing time for the RIT Leader to concentrate on the critical rescue effort. These Officers must work hand in hand to ensure that a safe and effective rescue

operation is conducted.

Individual Responsibilities:

- To follow directions from superiors
- To continue with assignment unless otherwise directed
- To keep your cool and remain calm

Every member on the scene should listen specifically for the “Mayday” as fire ground noise could cover a call for “Mayday”.

Dispatch Center Responsibilities

When a firefighter has reported a Mayday, Central Dispatch will sound emergency traffic tones on ALL tactical channels being used on the fire ground. Personnel will be advised that a “Mayday” exists for a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter(s).

Command must be advised to immediately assign someone to monitor fire ground channels in the event the missing firefighter(s) broadcasts on another channel. Central Dispatch **does not have the capability to monitor the I-TAC channels**. It is essential that someone monitors these channels.

The dispatch center will contact other agencies (City fire, County fire, Tri Hospital EMS, and Law Enforcement) and advise them of the situation and the request that they be alert in case the firefighter(s) calls on any channel. These agencies must keep the firefighter(s) on whatever channel he/she is currently on and **notify Central Dispatch immediately**. Instructions and information will be relayed between agencies.

Include a Medical Component when requesting additional resources

Medical personnel will be needed to treat rescued firefighter(s). The Incident Command must ensure that an adequate number of ambulances are responding to transport injured firefighters. The Incident Command should understand that the situation is critical, and that the firefighters sometime tend to overextend themselves when searching for a missing firefighter(s), resulting in additional firefighters becoming injured. Adequate medical resources must be readily available and on site. One (1) ALS unit to every down firefighter.

Utilize a Staging Area

All additional resources will be sent to a centralized staging area. The Incident Commander should commit resources from staging based on the needs at the site. Staging controls resources and ensures that there is a route in and out of the scene, free of congestion, for crews coming in and for ambulances to transport recovered firefighters.

COMMAND WORKSHEET FOR MAY-DAY

Attachment A

L	Location _____		
U	Unit _____	PSI	LED'S
N	Name _____	_____/above	Green, Green
A	Air Supply _____	_____/above	Green
R	Resources Needed _____	_____/above	Yellow, Flashing

- Announce EMERGENCY radio traffic only
- Are other crew members or crews involved?
- Have the lost/trapped fire fighter(s) activated their PASS Alarm?
 - Change the Incident Action Plan to HIGH PRIORITY RESCUE
 1. Tell fire fighters(s) calling MAY-DAY and the RIT team to say on the fire ground channel
 2. MAKE SURE THE MAYDAY AND RIT ACKNOWLEDGE
 3. Announce that you are the RESCUE BRANCH and who will be the new I/C
 4. Tell everyone else on the fire ground to move to channel _____
- Deploy RIT to reported or last know area
 - Dispatch:
 1. Monitor ALL radio channels
 2. Additional MUTUAL AID and CREWS
 3. Heavy Rescue or Trench Trailer
 4. Additional EMS units
- New I/C
 - Assure that everyone changes to the new fire ground channel and conduct a PAR – withdraw only if NECESSARY
 - Move or reinforce firefighting efforts to support the Rescue Branch.
 - Backup RIT for deployed RIT
 - Staging for equipment and alarm companies coming in
- Monitor structural stability of building
 - Consider the pro's & con's of ventilation, forcible entry and fire stream placement on the rescue.
 - Consider writing off part of the building or pushing or drawing the fire into uninvolved areas to support rescue
 - Secondary means of egress for the rescue operations
 - Provide lighting at the entry and exit point

When searching for a firefighter(s), the following should be considered to aid in the search and rescue efforts:

- Visible sighting of trapped firefighter(s).
- Knowledge of their last known location.
- Sounds of shouts for help, tapping noises, breathing or moaning sounds from the collapse area.
- Sounds of portable radio broadcast in the collapse area.
- The sound of the PASS devices audible tones.
- The sound of the SCBA bells/whistles sounding.
- Radio request for help from portable radios from within the collapse area using Mayday radio communications (**Location, Unit, Name, Air Supply, Resources Needed – L.U.N.A.R., see “Command Worksheet for Mayday”).**
- Radio Emergency Button activation (will not work in analog “ITAC” channels).
- Tracing attack hose lines into the collapse area.
- Locations of ladders, fans, lights or other equipment being used by missing fire fighter(s).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED

- Request MUSAR or any other special response team. This request must be made early as possible, even if it’s unsure they will be needed on arrival.
- A medical Rehab area with appropriate resources (one (1) additional ALS unit per downed firefighter).
- Additional attack lines, deluges etc, (Protect firefighters and RIT from fire).
- Early lighting of the area will be required.
- Positive pressure ventilation.
- Debris will need to be stabilized as rescue efforts progress.
- Spare SCBA’s, SAR’s and accessories (i.e. air supply and communication).

In searched for lost firefighter(s), the following should be considered;

- Knowledge of their known location.
- Tracing attach lines into the area where the lost firefighter(s) were known to be.
- Location of ladders, fans, lights or other tools being used by missing firefighter(s).
- Evidence of building structures or locations that were that was described by a lost firefighter(s)
- The sounds of the PASS devices audible tones.
- The sound of the SCBA bells/whistles sounding.
- Radio request for help from portable radios from using Mayday radio communications (Location, Unit, Name, Air supply, Resources needed – L.U.N.A.R.).
- Radio Emergency Button activation (Central Dispatch cannot receive Mayday calls on I-TAC channels).
- Flashlight beams.