

Standard Operating Procedures Manual
City of Poquoson Fire and Rescue



**City of Poquoson
Fire and Rescue**

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EMEPERGENCY OPERATIONS

SOP# EO 2.00

Title: Emergency Operation in
Atmosphere Immediately Dangerous
to Life and Health

Effective Date: 01/01/2009

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Fire Chief's Signature



City Manager's Signature

**Emergency Operations in
Atmosphere Immediately
Dangerous to Life and Health**

I. PURPOSE

To establish standard procedures for conducting emergency operations in interior spaces where atmospheres are considered to be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) as established by provisions of the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health regulations.

This SOP is not all inclusive and cannot encompass all situations which may be encountered.

II. APPLICABILITY

All career and volunteer personnel

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all emergency incident operations where members could be trapped or disabled in confining or hazardous environments including, but not limited to, structure fires and

hazardous material responses. This policy is in accordance with NFPA 1500 Standard of Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs 2007 Edition / Chapter 8 Emergency Operations.

IV. POLICY

A. Buddy System

Operations in hazardous atmospheres shall not be conducted unless there are a minimum of two (2) personnel present to operate as a team. Team members shall have constant communication with each other while operating in the hazardous area. Communication between team members must consist of voice, visual, or tethering with a signal line. In addition, the team shall maintain contact with the Incident Commander, Sector Commander, or other designated representative. Team members will be in close proximity to each other to provide assistance in case of emergency.

B. Rapid Intervention Team

1. Before initiating any operation in an atmosphere where conditions are considered to be IDLH, the Incident Commander shall first assemble a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT). The purpose of the RIT is to monitor and maintain constant communication, primarily via the radio system, with personnel entering into the hazardous atmosphere and to affect an immediate rescue should they become distressed, disoriented, or incapacitated. The RIT shall be fully equipped with protective clothing, SCBA, and specialized rescue equipment which may be needed to affect a rescue. The Incident Commander shall locate the RIT near the Command Post or at an assigned sector location.
2. The RIT will remain in service until the Incident Commander has determined that an incident is under control and no longer

requires the use of SCBA. Care should be given not to prematurely eliminate the use of the RIT during overhaul operations, which could potentially involve equally dangerous environments for firefighters to work in. The RIT shall not be deployed or used for fire suppression unless a replacement team is immediately provided.

3. As an incident expands, the Incident Commander shall deploy additional teams depending upon the number of interior teams which are operating and/or the complexity of the physical arrangement of the property.

C. Life-Saving Rescue – Exemption for the Use of the RIT

Incident Commanders may set aside the use of the RIT and initiate interior operations in an IDLH atmosphere only if there is an immediate life threat present on the scene which would require a life-saving rescue.

V. PROCEDURES

A. General

1. The Incident Commander shall establish a RIT before interior operations are initiated on a working structure fire. The RIT must be placed in a location where they can be immediately deployed to provide search and rescue of firefighters who may be lost, disoriented, or incapacitated.
2. RIT is a separate and exclusive assignment and is used primarily for the rescue of trapped or endangered firefighters. In a situation where all other resources are being utilized on the fire ground and crews inside the building identify additional

victims to be rescued, the IC can deploy the RIT to assist in the rescue operation. A replacement RIT shall be immediately established.

3. Units on scene shall only engage in exterior suppression operations until sufficient personnel are on the scene to provide a RIT.
4. Incident Commanders or Driver Operators, actively engaged in pumping operations, should not be deployed as RIT members when such service would remove them from their principal responsibilities and jeopardize the life and safety of other firefighters operating on the scene.
5. The IC shall assign a RIT tactical talk-around channel to the incident for the sole purpose of direct communications with the RIT. The RIT Leader shall ensure that one portable radio is monitoring the primary tactical channel assigned to the incident, and that the other portable radio is tuned to the RIT tactical talk-around channel assigned by the Incident Commander
6. RIT assignments shall be continuous and ongoing through the overhaul phase of the event or until the IC and the Safety Officer determine that RIT is no longer needed.
7. The RIT Leader shall ensure that the team has obtained the necessary equipment to perform the task of RIT, conducted a recon of the structure, neutralized the utilities, and provided secondary assess/egress if not already completed by other members operating on the fire ground.
8. Upon assignment RIT shall:
 - Don full protective equipment including SCBA
 - Have the following equipment readily accessible where the RIT is staged:
 - RIT pack and/or spare SCBA
 - Two (2) portable radios
 - Forcible Exit/Entry Tools (Haligan & Axe)
 - Hand light for each team member

○ Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC)

- RIT shall also have a hose line available that is dedicated specifically to the rescue effort. Consideration should be given to supplying this hose line from a secondary pump and water supply.

B. Personnel Lost or Trapped

The following procedures are to be employed if fire personnel are found to be lost, missing, or trapped:

1. When fire personnel are suspected or known to be missing or trapped, an emergency “May Day” shall be given over the radio. The unit issuing a “May Day” shall immediately provide the Incident Commander and all other units on the scene pertinent information and details concerning the missing team’s last known whereabouts and location inside the structure. The Incident Commander will announce over the radio the specific problem and information known about the condition of the missing personnel to all units operating on the scene.
2. When a “May Day” is issued, the Incident Commander shall maintain essential suppression operations, if possible, to control the incident. All suppression operations around the missing team shall be suspended. All units should be prepared to engage in search and rescue, if necessary. A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) should be conducted if the identity of the missing team is unknown. The PAR may be suspended if the identity of the missing teams is confirmed.
3. When an emergency “May Day” is issued, all units City-wide on the radio channel shall maintain radio silence until an “All Clear” is issued by the Incident Commander, with the exception of the members directly engaged with the rescue operation.
4. The RIT is to be immediately activated by the Incident Commander and put into an operational mode. The RIT shall make a coordinated entry for rescue with direction from the

Incident Commander and assistance from the other units on the scene as necessary.

5. When a RIT is placed into a rescue mode, another RIT shall be formed from units on the scene and placed in service to back up the RIT operating on the interior of the structure.
6. One person at the Incident Command Post shall be designated to communicate directly with the RIT. This person shall keep the Incident Commander apprised of the situation until resolved.
7. When the “May Day” situation has been completed, the Incident Commander shall advise all units of an “All Clear” and that the RIT rescue intervention operation has been terminated.
8. A RIT shall be reorganized after a rescue attempt and be maintained until the Incident Commander determines that an IDLH no longer exists.
9. When a RIT is deployed, a written report shall be prepared by the Incident Commander detailing the events and particulars surrounding the event. The report must be forwarded to the Fire Chief within 48 hours of the incident.