

Standard Operating Procedures Manual
City of Poquoson Fire and Rescue



**City of Poquoson
Fire and Rescue**

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EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

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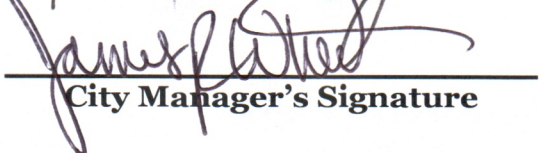
Title: MAYDAY and Rapid
Intervention Teams

Effective Date: 01/01/2009

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Fire Chief's Signature



City Manager's Signature

**MAYDAY and Rapid Intervention
Teams**

I. PURPOSE

To identify and outline the actions to be taken by personnel for declaring a MAYDAY and procedures for the assignment and deployment of Rapid Intervention assets at emergency incidents.

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 the current NFPA 1500 Standard of Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs/Chapter 8 Emergency Operations.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH): An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiate substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

Incipient Stage Fire: A fire which is in the initial or beginning stage and which can be controlled or extinguished by portable extinguishers, Class II (occupant use) standpipe or small hose systems without the need for protective clothing or breathing apparatus.

Interior Structural Fire Fighting: The physical activity of fire suppression, rescue or both inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage.

Working Structural Fire: Any fire that requires the use of a 1 3/4 inch or larger fire attack hose line and requires the use of self-contained breathing apparatus for members entering the hazardous area.

Initial Stage of an Incident: Period of an incident during which tasks are being undertaken by the first arriving company with only one team (2-members in) assigned to or operating in the IDLH area and an Initial Rescue Team is in place for rescue (2-members out). An incident is no longer in the Initial Stage when a second team enters the IDLH area.

Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT): Two members (2-out), outside the IDLH, equipped with protective clothing and self-

contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), for assistance or rescue of the initial entry team (2-in). This team shall remain in radio, visual, voice, or signal line communications with the entry team. Once a second team enters an IDLH, a Rapid Intervention Team must replace the Initial Rapid Intervention Team.

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): Shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members initially, and shall be available for rescue of a member or team as the need arises. The RIT shall be equipped with appropriate protective clothing, protective equipment, SCBA, and any specialized rescue equipment needed, given the specifics of the operation underway.

V. POLICY

A MAYDAY situation exists when a firefighter feels he/she is unable to exit an IDLH environment, or a rapidly changing fire ground situation where a firefighter feels his/her life is in danger. The radio message "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY" will be used by a firefighter to report his/her status as being in trouble and needing assistance or rescue.

At no time shall individuals enter an IDLH atmosphere independently. Teams of at least two (2) members with full protective clothing and SCBA shall be required for entry into such atmospheres. An Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT) is only intended as a temporary standby crew during the initial stages of an incident and is not intended for long term assignment where a formal Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) should be assigned. Once a second team is assigned or operating in the hazardous environment, the incident shall no longer be considered in the "initial stage" and at least one RIT is required.

The RIT will provide for and enhance the overall safety and survival potential of firefighters working on a fire ground or in an IDLH environment. A RIT should be established when multiple crews are operating in an IDLH atmosphere, and during high-risk technical

rescue incidents.

VI. MAYDAY PROCEDURE

A firefighter, crew, or Company Officer must declare a MAYDAY in the following conditions:

- Immediately upon becoming disoriented or lost and unable to exit any IDLH environment.
- Immediately upon the sounding of a firefighter's PASS device and the firefighter not being able to reset the PASS device and/or promptly exit and IDLH environment.
- Immediately upon becoming trapped or entangled while operating in an IDLH environment or hazardous situation.
- Immediately after a firefighter falls through a roof, floor, or stairs, and is unaccounted for, or is unable to immediately self-extricate.
- Immediately upon becoming injured or having a medical emergency which impairs the ability to promptly exit an IDLH environment or hazardous situation.
- Immediately upon discovery of a PPE problem which poses a substantial risk to the firefighter and inhibits his/her ability to exit an IDLH environment or hazardous situation.
- Immediately upon discovering a collapse that blocks the primary exit or any collapse that threatens a firefighter's escape.
- Any situation that the firefighter feels may be an imminent threat to the safety of the crews operating in an IDLH or hazardous situation.

- An Incident Commander may also declare a MAYDAY upon not receiving responses from a Company Officer or other crew member during a scheduled PAR check after multiple attempts or follow up.

FIREFIGHTER RESPONSIBILITIES

- All members entering any IDLH atmosphere on the fire ground shall have a portable radio and task specific tools.
- Minimum crew size is two and crew members must remain in contact.
- Crews must have an assignment and must be working under direct supervision.
- Firefighters who find themselves in a MAYDAY situation will transmit the MAYDAY message to Command on the incident specific radio channel using the LUNAR acronym.
 - L- Location
 - U-Unit
 - N-Name
 - A-Assignment/Air Supply
 - R-Resources Needed

For Example: *“MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY! On the second floor, this is Engine 41Bravo Firefighter Jones, I was on search and rescue and became disoriented. Low on air and need an egress ladder on side Charlie”*

If the transmission is not acknowledged, the firefighter will press the orange emergency button and repeat the MAYDAY message.

- Depressing the orange emergency button will open the firefighters' microphone and will transmit for approximately 10 seconds on the channel that the radio is currently set. After 10

seconds, the firefighter will need to press the transmit button on the radio. By doing so, this will allow the radio to receive radio traffic again.

- Activate Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device manually. The PASS device will be turned off during radio communication or at the request of the Incident Commander or Rapid Intervention Team.

VII. IRIT PROCEDURE

The first arriving company shall determine if the incident involves an IDLH atmosphere. If the presence of an IDLH atmosphere is determined, a minimum of four (4) firefighters must be on the scene before operations begin in the IDLH atmosphere. These four (4) firefighters will form two (2) teams – two members to make entry and two members to serve as the IRIT.

One member of the IRIT must be wearing full personal protective equipment, including SCBA, necessary to enter the IDLH atmosphere. This member shall monitor the activities of the interior team by radio and will maintain voice or visual contact with them.

One member of the IRIT must have full PPE, including SCBA, readily accessible in the event that the team operating in the IDLH needs rescue. This member may be assigned other tasks/duties outside the IDLH so long as the member is able to perform assistance or rescue activities without jeopardizing the safety or health of any firefighter working at the incident.

The initial IC shall notify the responding Battalion Chief or command officer via radio that an IRIT has been established.

EXCEPTIONS

Imminent Life-Threatening Situation

If upon arrival, an imminent life-threatening situation exists when immediate action could prevent the loss of life or serious injury before the team of four firefighters is assembled, actions shall be permitted without establishing an IRIT. The determination must be based on reasonable, justifiable indicators and not general assumptions.

- Command shall notify the Emergency Communications Center and incoming units that a rescue is being attempted without an IRIT established.
- Activities shall be limited to those required to affect the rescue.
- After completing a search of the structure or rescue of the occupants, firefighters shall withdraw until an IRIT can be implemented.
- Exceptions shall not be permitted when there is no possibility to save lives.

Incipient Fire

If the fire is determined to be in the incipient stage, a team of two (2) firefighters may take action to extinguish the fire without the establishment of an IRIT. An incipient fire is a fire which is in the initial or beginning stage and which can be controlled or extinguished by portable extinguishers, Class II (occupant use) standpipe or small hose systems without the need for protective clothing or breathing apparatus.

VIII. RIT PROCEDURE

The RIT should be deployed when:

- A MAYDAY is transmitted on the incident scene.
- A firefighter is known to be lost, injured, trapped or missing.
- A PASS device or low air alarm is activated and the IC is unable to confirm a PAR for crews operating on scene.
- A PASS or low air alarm is received by command via telemetry and the status of the firefighter cannot be verified.
- A firefighter has lost radio contact and is separated from their crew.
- The Incident Commander deems a RIT activation is necessary to mitigate a situation on scene.

Upon a RIT Activation, a Second Alarm **SHALL** be requested and a second RIT established. Each RIT established shall maintain their own unit designation along with “RIT”. Example: “Engine 41 RIT”.

Timely radio contact with the Mayday firefighter(s) is of paramount importance. The RIT Officer or a Search firefighter should maintain radio communications with the Mayday firefighter throughout the rescue effort.

The RIT Officer should provide certain benchmarks to Command during the operation. At a minimum the benchmarks should include:

- RIT entry, location and PAR
- RIT location change inside the structure

- Downed firefighter located and status
- Air supply secured
- Removal location
- Downed firefighter removed
- RIT out of the building

Incident Command Responsibilities during a RIT Activation:

- Perform a Personnel Accountability Report of units on the newly assigned TAC channel.
- The IC shall assign additional resources to supplement and support the original RIT assignment.
- Once the RIT has been deployed, a second or subsequent RIT shall be established as soon as possible.
- Include notification of the Emergency Communication Center requesting priority traffic marker and MAYDAY tone.
- The IC shall call for a 2nd alarm assignment.
- Coordinate the rescue effort with the firefighting effort until command of the firefighting effort can be transferred to another officer.
- Consider moving non-rescue related radio traffic to an additional TAC channel once second alarm assignment arrives and/or sufficient incident command support is in place.
- Consider assigning a dedicated Safety Officer to the Rescue Operation.

- Clearing a MAYDAY activation after the following conditions have been met:
 - ♦ Removal of the firefighter(s) who activated the MAYDAY
 - ♦ Full PAR check of all units on the fireground
 - ♦ Clearing the MAYDAY activation with the Emergency Communications Center

Emergency Communications Center Responsibilities during a RIT activation:

- Ensure Command acknowledges any MAYDAY transmission, if Command does not acknowledge the MAYDAY, the Emergency Communications Dispatcher will acknowledge the MAYDAY.
- Broadcast the MAYDAY “warble” tone (Alert Tone 2) on the assigned tactical and primary dispatch channel. The Emergency Communications Dispatcher will repeat the LUNAR information provided during the MAYDAY if it was not acknowledged by the Command.
- Dispatch a 2nd alarm assignment.
- The Emergency Communications Shift Leader will dedicate an Emergency Communications Dispatcher to the incident if this is not the case already.
- When possible, ALL non-emergency activity in the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) will be suspended and ALL channels will be monitored to the best of their ability for any transmissions from the missing/trapped firefighter(s).

TERMINATION OF RIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The requirement to staff a RIT on an emergency scene may be discontinued when all the following criteria are met:

- The incident is marked under control
- Toxic or oxygen deficient atmospheres no longer exist

Ongoing operations no longer pose a risk to members operating in or around the incident scene.