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507 Rapid Intervention and Firefighter Survival
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PURPOSE

This procedure meets or exceeds the intent of applicable sections contained within Chapter 6, Emergency Operations, of NFPA 1500, Standards on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program. It also intends to meet requirements of the OSHA Respirator Protection Standard 1910.134 and OSHA 2 in/2 out Rule 308-134e.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the procedures used for the rescue of personnel operating at emergency incidents, namely structural fires. It further outlines the procedures for members entering an 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.

POLICY

RIT should be established anytime members enter an IDLH (Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health) environment without the possibility of a rescue. IDLH environments are typically those described as:

- Oxygen level below 19.5% or above 23%
- Lower Explosive Limits in excess of 10%
- Toxins in excess of the Permissible Exposure Level
- Confined Space, collapse or any other situation recognized to be unstable and could cause injury or death

A condition that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous condition. The interior of a structure involved in fire, beyond the incipient stage, is considered an IDLH condition.

DEFINITIONS

Level 1 Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) - A team consisting of a minimum of two trained members

Level 2 Rapid Intervention Team(s) (RIT) - At least two (2) teams each team consisting of a minimum of at least two (2) trained members per team, whose duties are to track, and rescue if needed, emergency personnel that enter a structure involved in fire beyond the incipient stage (IDLH atmosphere), or the rescue of emergency personnel who fall victim to an unstable situation (e.g. confined space, collapse) at a emergency scene (IDLH). RIT teams shall be referred to as RIT-1, RIT-2, etc on the radio.

Mayday - A verbal notification that immediate action is required to rescue or assist emergency personnel operating in emergency incidents



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EQUIPMENT

The equipment carried for rapid intervention crews can vary based on the incident. It is desirable for the crew to be able to deploy quickly, with a condensed set of supplies. It is the responsibility of the RIT leader to choose the proper equipment.

Mandatory Equipment: Portable Radio, Forcible Entry Tools, RIT Kit (which contains drag devices, search rope, entanglement cutters, and SCBA Cylinder with high pressure universal air connection hose), Hand Light and Thermal Imaging Camera.

Optional Equipment: Cutting Torch, Circular Saw, Ladders, Hose Line, APW Extinguisher

OPERATIONS

1. RIT shall be implemented during the initial stages of an IDLH incident, except as noted below. Based on standing fireground orders, the paramedic ambulance assigned to structural fires should assume this task unless directed otherwise.
2. Multiple RITs may be established on large incidents (Level 2 RIT).
3. The RIT reports to the Incident Commander.
4. RIT shall stage near the entry point to an IDLH area, along with the RIT kit.
5. After sizing-up the incident with respect to RIT considerations, RIT shall gather and/or call for any additional tools or equipment, not carried in the RIT Kit that may be needed to affect a rescue. RIT shall stage all RIT equipment in a readily accessible location.
6. Although accountability is the responsibility of the incident commander, RIT should maintain an active awareness of where crews are located inside and outside of a building.
7. RIT members must maintain visual, voice or physical contact with one another at all times.
8. RIT members may be utilized for other support activities at the incident scene, (provided that RIT members remain in contact as described above). However, these activities shall not, if abandoned due to rescue operations, place any personnel at additional risks. At least one (1) RIT member shall continue to monitor those persons in the IDLH condition.
9. RIT shall announce via radio to the Incident Commander that RIT has been established.
10. A RIT kit shall be located on truck companies.



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“URGENT” Radio Message

During times of increased radio traffic, it may be necessary for an individual to transmit a message that has increased priority over other non-emergent traffic. Utilizing the word “urgent” will signify that a unit has important information that takes priority over other communications occurring. After transmitting the “urgent” message, all radio traffic will return to normal.

Example:

ENGINE 1: “Engine 1 to Main Street Command, URGENT”

COMMAND: “Go Ahead”

ENGINE 1: “We have lost pressure from this hydrant”

COMMAND: “Main Street Command copies you’ve lost hydrant pressure”

The term "May-Day" will be reserved ONLY to report a lost, trapped, or injured fire fighter(s). The term "urgent" will be used to report all other emergencies.

“MAYDAY” Procedure:

Anytime emergency personnel operating at an incident feel that they or another firefighter are trapped, injured, lost, or in any other condition placing them in imminent danger and in need of rapid assistance, they shall verbally signal a MAYDAY alert. That person shall immediately activate their “orange emergency button” (See “*Portable Radio Emergency Button Activation*”) on their portable radios and activate the manual alarm on their PASS devices.

They shall transmit the word “MAYDAY” via radio by announcing in increments of three “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY” followed by their emergency message using the acronym “U.C.A.N.”

U – Your unit number and the phrase “Emergency Traffic”

C – Conditions

A – Actions you have taken

N – Needs you have

Example (After Pressing Orange Emergency Button): “ MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY, Fire Attack, Emergency Traffic, I’ve fallen through the 2nd floor and I’m lost. I’m trying to find a window and I need help – I’m low on air.”

The air absolutely belongs to any unit transmitting a “MAY-DAY”.

This shall be repeated until acknowledged by either the Incident Commander and Dispatch. If the Incident Commander does not acknowledge the MAYDAY alert, Dispatch shall immediately relay this information to command.

Command shall immediately deploy the necessary resources needed to effect rescue of personnel in the MAYDAY condition.



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Other members operating on the scene should be aware of the “MAYDAY” situation. However, they must continue with their assigned tasks. The task they are currently performing may very well limit injury to the person or persons in distress as well as assist the RIT team.

Upon the Mayday call, a Personal Accountability Report (PAR) shall be initiated.

The RIT team shall notify the incident commander when the person(s) in distress have been located and the actions being taken to remove them or if additional assistance is needed.

When a MAYDAY situation occurs, it is imperative that all non-emergent radio traffic be switched to another channel , so that the air is clear to communicate with persons in distress and to quickly effect their rescue.

Portable Radio Emergency Button Activation

When activated, the orange emergency button on all portable radios transmits an audible signal to all consoles in the Dispatch Center, along with a numerical identification of the unit the portable is assigned to.

Should the Dispatch Center receive an emergency activation from a portable radio (button), Dispatch will first identify the company which activated the alert. Dispatch will then go to that company's current radio channel for direct contact with the affected company to determine if an emergency exists. The standard script for dispatchers shall be:

Dispatch: “Engine 4, we have an emergency button activation – confirm or deny”

When the activation occurs during an incident where Command has been established, Dispatch will contact Command directly. Command will contact the affected companies to determine if an emergency exists. The standard script for dispatchers shall be:

Dispatch: “Ash Command, we have an emergency button activation from Engine 4”

If a missing fire fighter transmits on an incorrect channel, the dispatcher will maintain communications with them on that channel and relay the information to Command. It is essential that once communications have been established they not be lost.

Emergency Evacuation

If the need arises to evacuate interior operations in a structure, command may order all apparatus operators to utilize the air horns on the apparatus to announce emergency evacuation. This will be announced with one long blast on the air horn(s) for a duration of not less than 15 seconds. All personnel inside the structure will immediately evacuate the building, with their partners, and report to command for accountability.



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Deployment of Rapid Intervention Team(s):

1. RIT will only be deployed upon orders from the Incident Commander/Operations Officer/Safety Officer.
2. A backup RIT shall be established whenever the initial RIT is deployed.
3. Upon the report of a lost or trapped firefighter the RIT will immediately abandon any support activities they may be involved in and concentrate their efforts on rescue.
4. Unless already known, the person in charge of the RIT shall compare information with the Incident Commander or Accountability Officer (if established) in determining the last known location of the missing personnel.
5. RIT members shall utilize the information from their on-going scene size-up to help determine the type of rescue that they may encounter.
6. If self rescue or a quick grab and go rescue is not possible, RIT members shall use the “AWARE” Principle while determining the method of rescue as well as the estimated time it will take to complete the rescue.

“AWARE” Principle:

- 1. Air:** RIT should first provide the victim with a redundant (primary and secondary) supply of air.
- 2. Water:** If the rescue involves fire, the next consideration is to provide a defensible space for the victim by using a hose line or distributor to protect the victim.
- 3. A Radio:** If the victim is conscious and able to communicate, RIT may want to provide the trapped victim with a transceiver to monitor his condition. Depending upon the size of the incident, a separate radio channel may be designated for the victim to use.
- 4. Extrication:** Removal of the victim