



Rogers Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Title:	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 policy 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

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)—A team consisting of a minimum of two trained members specifically used for firefighter rescue and associated functions.

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

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, Thermal Imaging Camera, and Rogers Pack.

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

Operational Guidelines

1. RIT shall be implemented during the initial stages of an IDLH incident, except as noted below. Based on standing fireground orders, the rescue company assigned to structural fires should assume this task unless directed otherwise.
2. Multiple RITs may be established on large incidents. They shall be numbered sequentially.
3. The RIT reports to the Incident Commander and does not count towards span of control unless activated.
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. RIT equipment should include the "Rogers Pack".

6. The initial deployment of ground ladders should be established by RIT. As long as RIT is not needed for rapid intervention functions, they shall select and ladder secondary means of egress or roof access on both single and multiple story structures.
7. 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.
8. RIT members must maintain visual, voice or physical contact with one another at all times.
9. 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.
10. RIT shall announce via radio to the Incident Commander that RIT has been established.
11. RIT kits shall be located on ladder companies.

“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 immediately return to normal and it does not require the use of the radio emergency button.

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”

“MAYDAY” Radio Message

The term “MAYDAY” will be reserved for firefighters or member(s) of their crew who are in imminent danger. The following is a list of MAYDAY situations:

- If they are lost, disoriented, trapped, caught in fire-related conditions or entangled;
- When a crewmember is unaccounted for (i.e., if a crewmember does not reply after the third time called, you have a mayday);

- If a crewmember is injured, trapped or needs medical attention and existing resources cannot get the member out—and the member is in danger;
- If there has been a critical equipment failure (SCBA, PPE, etc.) or structural collapse;
- If the low-air alarm sounds and one of the conditions mentioned above is present;
- If a firefighter is out of air; or in any other situation that causes a firefighter to feel that their life or team members' lives are in serious danger and serious harm.

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 also 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. Activation of the orange emergency button will automatically cause a radio to transmit – without user intervention – for ten (10) seconds.

Firefighters transmitting a "MAYDAY" via shall announce it in increments of three "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY" followed by their emergency message using the acronym "U.C.A.N."

U – Your unit number and assignment 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 radio talkgroup/channel absolutely belongs to any unit transmitting a "MAYDAY".

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

Upon receipt of a MAYDAY message, the Incident Commander shall immediately deploy the necessary resources needed to effect rescue of personnel in the MAYDAY condition.

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.

The process for managing the "MAYDAY" message includes (in sequential order):

1. Deploying RIT to the location of the "MAYDAY" message.
2. Requesting an additional alarm(s) and Paramedic Ambulances to the scene.
3. Reassigning fireground radio traffic to an alternate talkgroup/channel and keeping the "MAYDAY" and RIT on the originally assigned talkgroup/channel.
4. Placing a Deputy Incident Commander to be in charge of the original incident on the other channel/talkgroup.
5. Conducting a Personnel Accountability Report with the remaining crews assigned to the incident.

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-emergency radio traffic be switched to another channel, so that the air is clear to communicate with persons in distress and to quickly affect their rescue as described in #3.

Deployment of Rapid Intervention Team(s):

1. RIT will only be deployed upon orders from the Incident Commander/Operations Section Chief/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. The "AWARE" Principle includes:

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

Portable Radio Emergency Button Activation

When activated, the orange emergency button on all portable radios transmits a signal to all consoles in the Dispatch Center, along with a numerical identification and name of the unit to which the radio is assigned. The emergency activation will be retransmitted if the radio changes channels as well.

When the Dispatch Center receives an emergency activation from a radio, 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: "Main Street Command, we have an emergency button activation from Engine 4W"

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. Dispatchers may also patch that channel to the appropriate channel for the incident.

Emergency Evacuation

If the need arises to evacuate 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.