

Tully Hose Co. #1

Standard Operating Guidelines
"MAYday" operations
Guideline # TF-313 – Rev.1

Purpose: The purpose of this procedure is to identify the roles and responsibilities of all the parties involved at an incident where a "MAYDAY" has been transmitted. This is a general guideline for personnel should they become lost, trapped, disoriented, down due to an injury, or otherwise in need of emergency assistance during fireground operations and emergency incidents.

Procedure: Prior to entering hazard zone personnel should verify that all team members have a radio and are on the correct frequency and that each team member's PASS device is working properly. **To activate a MAYDAY you push the orange button on the radio or the mic.** The officer in charge is responsible to ensure that these tasks are handled.

"MAYDAY" RADIO MESSAGE

The MAYDAY message will be used by firefighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and needing rescue. Any member may use "MAYDAY" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "MAYDAY" will receive priority radio traffic. The term will be reserved ONLY to report a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter. The firefighter should immediately initiate a MAYDAY when they are in need of assistance (i.e. Lost/Trapped/Missing/Injured, etc.) on the radio to the IC, of his/her situation, followed by location and report if possible. If possible initial call should include the amount of air remaining. The important thing is to not delay the MAYDAY message. Time may become an important issue in the safety of the firefighter involved.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMAND

Through the use of the Accountability and Staging Officers, The Incident Commander will maintain an awareness of the location of firefighters. In the event that a firefighter cannot be located or any other time a firefighter is missing, a "MAYDAY" will be broadcast over the radio. It is the Incident Command's responsibility to respond to a "MAYDAY" by implementing a rescue plan for the firefighter.

The IC must request another fire frequency that ongoing operations can continue to use while the "MAYDAY" situation is underway on the current frequency. Onondaga County 911 should dispatch an alert tone over the current frequency, make notification of the "MAYDAY" and notify that the fireground operations are being moved to new frequency.

THE RAPID INTERVENTION CREW

All significant firefighting operations will have a rapid intervention crew (RIT/FAST) assigned. This team should be fully outfitted with protective clothing, SCBA, etc., and monitoring all tactical radio traffic. Upon report of a missing firefighter, the incident commander has a completely fresh crew/crews fully outfitted, available for commitment

to an immediate search and rescue of the last known area of the missing fire fighter(s). The RIT or any fresh crew(s) in staging, must be immediately sent to the rescue area. The commitment of additional crews, however, must be controlled and organized.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If not already on the scene, the Incident Commander must request additional mutual aid to the scene to continue operations during rescue efforts. It is important for the I.C. to remember that some firefighters may be approaching physical exhaustion. There should not be any hesitation in requesting additional resources to the scene.

If not on the scene already, the Incident Commander should request medical personnel to the scene to treat the rescued firefighter(s). An additional ambulance should be requested to standby for the other fireground operations in case of another emergency. It is the Incident Commanders responsibility to ensure that there is adequate medical resources readily available onsite in case of an emergency.

TRANSFER OF COMMAND

If possible, the Incident Commander should transfer command of the fireground operations to another Chief officer or the highest-ranking officer on the scene so they can focus on rescue efforts. While still monitoring the entire situation, delegation of the fireground operations to another I.C. will free up the Officer to focus on rescuing the missing or injured firefighter.

ASSIGN ADDITIONAL SAFETY OFFICER

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 commitment that will draw away from the priority rescue effort. An additional Safety Officer should be assigned to the rescue area to help control the risk taking. The officer will be able to conduct an assessment of the hazards allowing time for the rescue officer to concentrate on the critical rescue effort.

ROLL CALL

In some situations, such as collapse or explosion, crewmembers may get separated. The only practical method to obtain an accurate accountability of crews may be to withdraw them to the exterior and have a Roll Call. In addition, withdrawal may be the only way to quickly obtain accurate information on exactly where trapped members may be, routing to victims, debris locations, and the type of rescue equipment needed. Once the roll call has been completed, crews can be re-assembled into a more organized rescue effort.

Withdrawal is a judgment call based on circumstances at the time, information available, and resources. It may not be practical or possible to do. However, the absolute need for an accurate roll call and information on missing firefighters remains a critical priority. If it's determined not to withdraw, a detailed roll call must be obtained from each officer for all crews operating under his/her direction.

DO NOT ABANDON FIRE FIGHTING POSITIONS

The reasons for a rapid intervention team and the immediate request for additional resources become very clear with this critical fireground need. If a missing firefighter is to survive, the Incident Commander must keep the fire out of the rescue area. Without the RIT in place, any rescue effort will be significantly delayed and a decision must be made. Do we relocate companies committed to fire combat to the rescue effort and allow the fire to spread or do we hold the fire positions and wait for additional resources for the rescue effort? With a RIT team in place, the incident commander can initiate an immediate rescue effort without withdrawing or relocating fire combat companies.

In most situations the incident commander cannot allow the fire to spread. If anything, the fire combat positions need to be reinforced to protect the rescue operations and additional companies should be sent to priority positions to assist in the confinement. Master stream appliances should be deployed when safe to do so. Adequate water supply must be obtained for this reinforced response.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

It is imperative to the operations that the remaining individuals operating at the incident follow directions from their superiors and continue with their assigned tasks unless otherwise directed. Freelancing will not be tolerated and can create additional rescue needs.

Every member on the scene should listen specifically for a "MAYDAY" as fireground noise could cover a "MAYDAY" call.

INJURED OR LOST FIREFIGHTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Stay Calm and Preserve Your Air Supply

A conscious effort must be made by the firefighter to control his/her breathing (i.e. skip breathing techniques or other means of air conservation should be immediately initiated). Unnecessary talking or physical activity must be ceased, unless absolutely needed (i.e. call for help or getting out). Firefighters must control and pace their physical exertion activities in order to extend their air supply. This is your most critical limitation absent direct trauma or flame impingement.

Activate PASS

As soon as a firefighter recognizes he/she is or they are in trouble the PASS device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. The device should remain "ON" until rescued. If possible, the PASS device should be silenced only briefly to transmit radio information.

Situation/Problem Reporting

Firefighter should attempt to communicate their exact location; if unknown, members should attempt to describe their surroundings (i.e. L-1 to command, I'm trapped on second floor, in a bedroom near the rear of the structure). Following each transmission (if possible) the firefighter

should reactivate his/her PASS device and place his/her radio near his/her ear to ensure additional communications are not missed. In addition, if the firefighter hears the rescue teams getting close or hear other sounds that could assist with finding their location, this information should be broadcast.

Stay Together if Lost or Trapped as a Crew

As a general rule, it is much easier to find a group rather than individuals. Members that separate from each other make it difficult for rescuers to find them. Crews that stay intact as a crew enhance their chances of being rescued and allow for an easier, more efficient rescue operation.

Search for an Exit

Firefighters should always attempt to get out of the building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows, or other means of egress are not available, firefighters should next attempt to reach an exterior wall. Rescuers should first search hallways, around walls, windows and doors, before sweeping large areas due to prior training and standardized firefighter actions. For this reason, firefighters in trouble should avoid large open spaces. Getting to one of these areas (exterior wall by windows or doors) increases the chances of being rescued early.

Follow a Hose line to Safety

Crews should stay with a hose line and follow it out whenever possible. All firefighters must remember and be continually trained in the self-survival of coupling identification with gloves on. Female side of the couplings when felt first point toward the pump – EXIT. Male side of the coupling when felt first point toward the nozzle – FIRE.

Horizontal Positioning

If a firefighter cannot get out, he/she should assume a position on the floor that maximizes the audible affects of the PASS device. Proper positioning is dependent on the surrounding conditions (i.e. heavy heat environment, place your face in a corner with your hands shielding your face from exposure with your back facing outward thereby enhancing the directional projection of the PASS device). Try not to trap the pass device between your body and the floor or wall.

Flashlights/Tapping

If assuming a position to await rescuers, firefighter(s) should attempt to position his/her flashlight toward the ceiling and/or continue rotating the beam side to side to signal potential rescuers. If possible, the firefighter should also attempt to create tapping noises to assist rescuers in locating him/her (i.e. hitting a tool against a metal roll-up door, floor, or hard surface within the immediate area).