

## MAYDAY

**PURPOSE:** This standard shall have guidelines to be followed in the event of a lost, trapped or injured firefighter and identify the roles and procedures of all parties involved at an incident where a “MAYDAY” has been transmitted.

**STANDARD:** Due to the nature of fire service activities, fire department personnel may be called to operate in hazardous environments. It is the standard that all members shall take every precaution to safeguard themselves and their crew members at all times during operations. If any member becomes lost, trapped, injured or in any way needs immediate assistance while operating in a hazardous environment, this standard shall be followed.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Emergency Traffic:** Emergency Traffic is the term used to alert all operating personnel of an on scene emergency or imminent danger. Any member can request “Emergency Traffic”. When Emergency Traffic is complete, Command should state, *“All clear, resume normal radio traffic”* [NFPA 1561 Emergency Services IMS, Section 2-2.4.1&2].

**Mayday:** All reports of “Mayday” shall receive priority radio traffic. The term “Mayday” shall be reserved ONLY to report firefighters in imminent danger. The term “Mayday” typically will be used in the following situations:

1. By member[s] who are lost, trapped, injured or in trouble
2. By the company officer, Group/Division officer, or any member who cannot account for a firefighter[s] operating in a hazard zone.
3. By a member who witnesses or has discovered a trapped or

injured firefighter[s] in trouble.

To ensure that a message is transmitted and received, the term “Mayday” should be repeated at least [3] times [e.g. “ Mayday, Mayday, Mayday”].

#### GENERAL PROCEDURE:

Command, through the use of Personnel Accountability System [PAR], shall track the location of all personnel at the emergency incident. In the event a firefighter cannot be located through PAR, or any other time a firefighter is reported missing, the Incident Commander or any fire ground personnel shall announce a “Mayday”. Command shall respond to the “Mayday” by implementing the Rapid Intervention Team [RIT] standard. Until accounted for a missing firefighter[s] is assumed lost or trapped. Rapid, concise decisions and action must be taken to increase survivability. Command and others shall take the following actions for reported missing or distressed firefighter[s].

The following guidelines do not necessarily need to be accomplished in the order listed.

#### 1. Mayday Initiation

- a. The firefighter[s] in distress or a firefighter that recognizes a need for assistance shall call a “Mayday” [ex: “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday”].
- b. Upon the recognition of a missing or distressed firefighter, or a declaration of “Mayday”, Command immediately shall gain control of the assigned fire ground frequency by announcing “Emergency Traffic” to acknowledge Mayday and alert all personnel working at the incident. [e.g.”Command copies a Mayday...emergency traffic...repeat...emergency traffic...go ahead Mayday”].

- c. If possible, the Mayday firefighter[s] gives a report using the E.S.C.A.P.E. acronym:

**E**-Engine/Truck number, current assignment and position

**S**-Situation

**C**-Conditions

**A**-Air Supply

**P**-Position

**E**-Escape plan

Escape Example: “Truck two, [Attack team Bravo, Captain,... I’ve fallen through the first floor, I’m pinned and injured...heavy smoke, zero visibility, moderate heat...my low air alarm is sounding...I think I’m somewhere in the basement in the middle of the room...I can’t move.”

- d. Command shall confirm the “Mayday” report, attempt to get more information using the E.S.C.A.P.E. acronym, give direction and support if possible. Review with the firefighter the following:
- Are others trapped/lost or is the firefighter alone?
  - Last known assignment or operating area.
  - Can they hear anything [fans, saws, air horns, etc.
  - Activate PASS and flashlight.
  - Direct firefighter to a doorway, window or wall.
  - Positive emotional support and calm them down.
- e. Command shall deploy RIT and immediately announce, “We have a RIT activation”. [See RIT Standard] 1. Command shall direct dispatch to activate emergency traffic tones. 2. Advise the Mayday and RIT crews to remain on current fire channel. 3. Advise all others on current fire channel to switch to new tactical channel

to be determined by command.

- f. Command shall conduct a PAR of all companies on new tactical channel.

## **2. Communications Center Responsibilities**

- a. The Communications Center shall notify Command when they have received a “Mayday” from a portable radio and inform them which firefighter the radio was assigned.
- b. If the Communications Center is contacted by the missing firefighter on any channel, the Communications Center shall keep the firefighter on that frequency and advise Command immediately.
- c. When a firefighter is declared lost, trapped or injured, the Communications Center shall report the “Mayday” message on all fire ground channels.
- d. Restrict the channel to emergency traffic only.

## **3. Mayday Termination**

- a. Mayday shall be terminated upon direction of Command.
- b. Upon the direction of Command the Communications Center shall broadcast the termination of Mayday on all fire ground channels.
- c. At the discretion of Command units may be switched back to the original incident channel and a PAR performed.