

## RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT)

### Purpose

The rescue of trapped or lost firefighters in a burning building is especially time sensitive. There is a very narrow “window of survivability” for a firefighter who is out of SCBA air supply or trapped by approaching fire. Individual firefighters must not delay reporting to command if they become lost, trapped or in need of assistance. Company officers must also not delay the reporting of lost firefighters or inability to complete accountability reports. Command and company officers must always assume that the missing firefighter is lost in the building until the firefighter can be accounted for. Command must also restructure the strategy and action plan to include a priority rescue effort.

### RIT (Rapid Intervention Team)

An on-scene team consisting of at least FOUR MEMBERS designated and equipped to perform an immediate search and rescue operation for a lost, distressed, trapped or injured firefighter.

#### 1. Communication:

Communication from the distressed firefighter to the Incident Commander (IC) and ultimately the RIT members is imperative. This should be accomplished in the simplest and most effective manner possible. The easiest way to establish communication with the Incident Commander is to contact him/her via the assigned fire ground frequency. The IC will answer and give this situation the highest priority.

- Firefighters responsibilities; If a firefighter becomes lost or has knowledge of someone who is lost, trapped or witnesses someone who becomes trapped, runs dangerously low on air or any other situation or event that is deemed as life threatening a Mayday shall be declared. See Mayday standard.

- Incident Commander's responsibility; The IC will transmit "Emergency Traffic", at which time all other radio traffic will cease. The IC will then announce, "We have a RIT activation. All fire ground operations, with the exception of those involved in the Mayday (RIT and those who activated Mayday), switch to the alternate fire channel, Channel\_." At this time Incident Command shall call for a PAR check for the fire ground operations on the alternate fire channel. See Mayday standard.

- Individual Companies responsibilities; Upon hearing the Mayday and RIT activation announcement all units and personnel at the scene, except RIT and those who activated Mayday, shall move to assigned channel. The company officer shall prepare to give a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR). **It is imperative that fire ground frequencies be kept clear of all non-emergency radio traffic.**

## 2. Staffing Procedures:

The following shall be the minimum requirements for a Rapid Intervention Team:

- Minimum Staffing will consist of one Officer and three firefighters. When the incident dictates, a RIT Support Officer shall be established.
- Through Incident Command, RIT can expand the team based on the incident size and complexity.

- In the event the team cannot meet the minimum staffing, RIT shall notify command. Command shall re-assign personnel to the RIT as they become available to meet the minimum staffing level.

- RIT may request additional resources to accomplish functional tasks as necessary through Command.

### Standard Exceptions to the RIT Requirement at Working Incidents

- When there is a report or suspected life hazard where immediate action could prevent the loss of life.

- When the fire is in an incipient stage that could be controlled by a portable fire extinguisher, without the use of PPE or SCBA.

### 3. Equipment Staging:

- Whenever RIT is established, a RIT specific staging area shall be established with an equipment cache designated using a tarp. The following considerations should be used when established the RIT staging area:

1. The staging area should offer a view of two sides of the building.
2. The staging area should be near the command post. If this is not possible, the RIT officer shall remain near the IC.
3. All RIT members shall be in full protective clothing, SCBA and have a portable radio.

- For High Rise Fires, RIT shall be assigned to staging positions in stairwells, or other appropriate locations. A secondary standby location may be in the lobby.

#### 4. Tools and Equipment:

• Depending on the type of situation the equipment cache may vary. At a minimum the cache shall include:

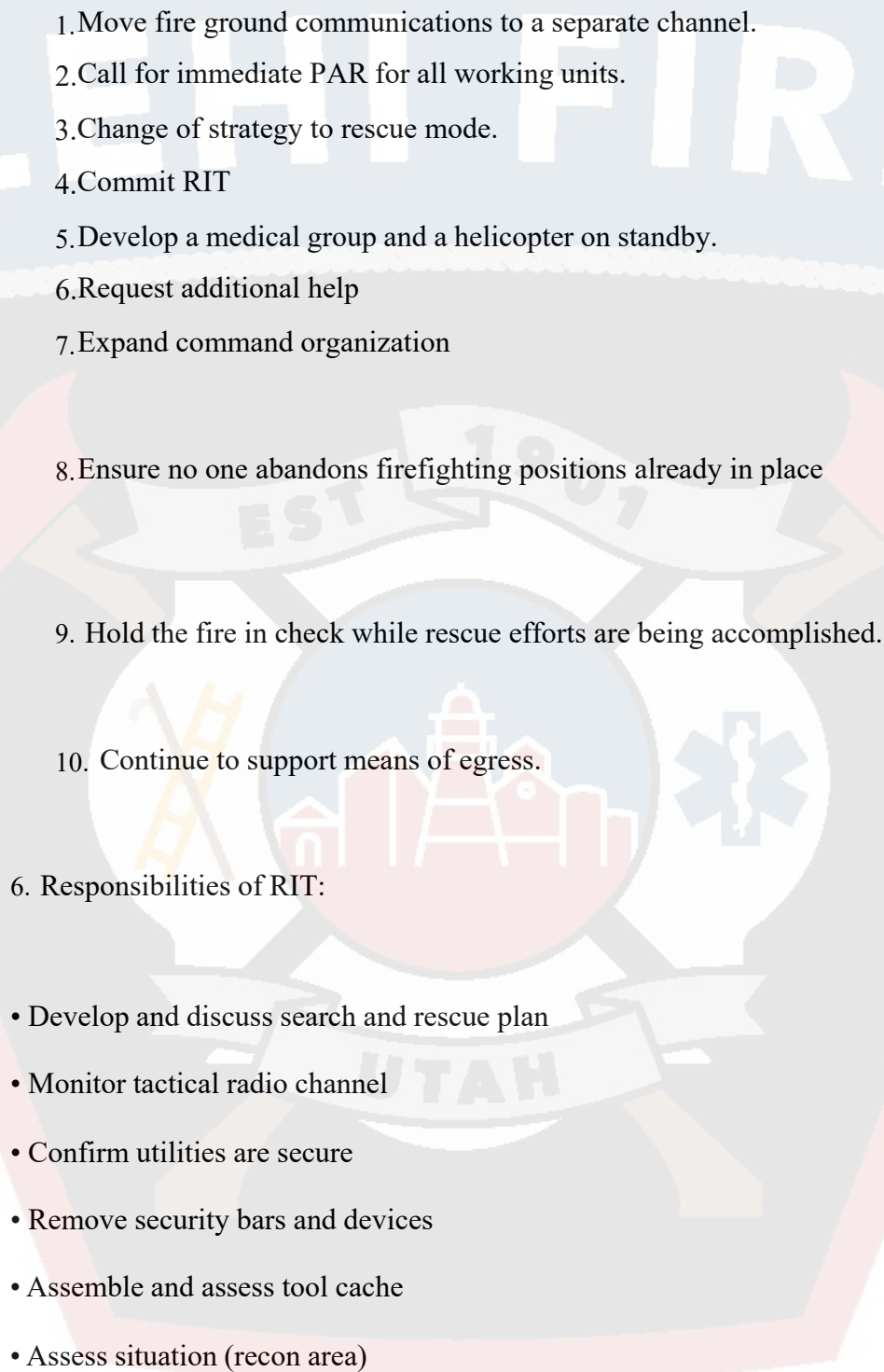
1. Tarp
2. RIT Bag (department compatible SCBA)
3. Rotary saw (with a selection of blades)
4. Chain saw
5. Set of irons
6. Rope bag
7. Thermal imager camera
8. Hand tools (wire cutters, bolt cutters, pliers, etc.)
9. Hand lights
10. Stokes
11. Ground ladders 12' roof and 24' extension
12. Portable radio for all RIT members

• Additional equipment may be needed to provide an adequate RIT response. The RIT officer will work with IC/Operations to make sure that the necessary tools, resources, and expertise are assigned to RIT to handle any situation that may arise.

#### 5. Command Response to Missing Firefighters:

• The incident commander **MUST ALWAYS** assume that the missing firefighter is lost or trapped in the building until the firefighter is

accounted for. Rapid, concise, decisions and actions must be taken to increase survivability. The following is a list of actions to be taken by command:

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1. Move fire ground communications to a separate channel.
  2. Call for immediate PAR for all working units.
  3. Change of strategy to rescue mode.
  4. Commit RIT
  5. Develop a medical group and a helicopter on standby.
  6. Request additional help
  7. Expand command organization
  8. Ensure no one abandons firefighting positions already in place
  9. Hold the fire in check while rescue efforts are being accomplished.
  10. Continue to support means of egress.
6. Responsibilities of RIT:
- Develop and discuss search and rescue plan
  - Monitor tactical radio channel
  - Confirm utilities are secure
  - Remove security bars and devices
  - Assemble and assess tool cache
  - Assess situation (recon area)
  - Identify means of egress
  - Establish separate water supply (if applicable)