

## **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 the 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. The 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.

### **Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT)**

Two members of the initial attack crew who are assigned for rapid deployment to rescue lost or trapped members.

## A. Mayday Announced/ RIT Activation:

I. 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.

II. Firefighter's 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.

III. 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. According to IC discretion all fireground operations with the exception of those involved in the Mayday (RIT and those who activated Mayday), switch to the alternate fire channel typically Channel 16. IC may decide to leave internal crews on the original fire operations channel. The Emergency Traffic transmission will then be terminated. The Incident Command shall call for a PAR check for the fire ground operations on the alternate fire channel. \*See *Mayday standard*.

IV. Individual Company's responsibilities: Upon hearing the Mayday and RIT activation announcement if advised by IC all units and personnel at the scene, (except RIT and those who activated Mayday) shall move to the Radio Channel designated. 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**

**B. Staffing Procedures:**

The following shall be the minimum requirements for a Rapid Intervention

Team:

- I. Optimal staffing will consist of one officer, one senior firefighter and three firefighters.
- II. Minimum staffing will consist of one Officer, one senior firefighter, and two firefighters.
- III. Through Incident Command, RIT can expand the team based on the incident size and complexity.
- IV. 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.
- V. 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

#### C. Equipment Staging:

- I. 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 establishing the RIT staging area:
  - II. The staging area should offer a view of two sides of the building.
  - III. The staging area should be near the command post. If this is not possible, the RIT officer shall remain near the IC.
  - IV. All RIT members shall be in full protective clothing, SCBA, and have a portable radio.
  - V. 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.

#### D. Tools and Equipment:

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

- Tarp
- RIT Bag (department-compatible SCBA)
- Rotary saw (with a selection of blades)
- Chain saw
- Set of irons
- Rope bag
- Thermal imager camera
- Hand tools (wire cutters, bolt cutters, pliers, etc.)
- Hand lights
- Stokes
- Ground ladders 12' roof and 24' extension
- 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



### E. 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 and concise decisions along with actions must be taken to increase survivability. The following is a list of actions to be taken by command:

1. Move fire ground communications to a separate channel (unless IC does not indicate a radio channel change)
2. Call for immediate PAR for all working units.
3. Revise the incident action plan and incident priorities to include firefighter rescue.
4. Commit RIT
5. Develop a medical group and a helicopter on standby.
6. Request additional help, and begin implementing a second RIT team.
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.

**F. Responsibilities of RIT:**

- I. Develop and discuss search and rescue plan
- II. Monitor tactical radio channel
- III. Confirm utilities are secure
- IV. Remove security bars and devices
- V. Assemble and assess tool cache
- VI. Assess situation (recon area)
- VII. Identify means of egress
- VIII. Establish a separate water supply
- IX. Review preplan of the building (if available)
- X. Support egress – note exits, place ladders at appropriate locations, monitor entrance points, and maintain clear pathways.
- XI. Monitor the progress of teams and the situation

## G. RIT Activation:

### I. Positions:

#### RIT rescue officer (RIT RO)

A member of the RIT team will be pre-designated as the RIT rescue officer. The RIT RO will be in direct contact with the IC, either at the incident command post (ICP) or close by. The RIT team will be immediately deployed at the direction of the RIT RO. Resources will be requested by the RIT RO from the IC. The RIT RO will coordinate the rescue and determine work cycle timing, and how many work cycles. The RIT RO will coordinate the assembly of an additional RIT team ready to rotate with the initial RIT when the work cycle is complete. The RIT RO will coordinate any additional RIT needs.

#### Package/ RIT Team Supervisor

Positioned by senior firefighter or engineer. This position will act as supervisor when the team is deployed on firefighter mayday. Plan for viable packaging and extrication plan of downed firefighter.

#### Front RIT Firefighter

Firefighter assigned to check front side of victim.

#### Back RIT Firefighter

Firefighter assigned to check back side of victim.

#### Air RIT firefighter

Carry RIT bag and bottle. Decision on air needs decided by the Air RIT firefighter. Also maintains RIT tag/search line.



## II. Communication

⇒ The Rapid Intervention Team Rescue Officer will be termed – RIT RO

⇒Rapid Intervention Team- RIT [Unit designation number] Example:  
RIT 82

## III. Upon locating victim

A systematic approach of the front, back, air, and (how-to)package will be assessed and executed. The RIT Team supervisor will contact RIT RO via radio to communicate firefighter victim has been located and specify any needs.

### Front RIT firefighter

- Will assess face mask is intact
- Ensure air is flowing to the mask.
- Check the front side of the air pack for any damage.
- Assess the level of consciousness of downed firefighters.
- Check hoses on the front to make sure they are intact and functional.
- Tighten all straps on the pack in preparation for packaging.
- The air pressure in the SCBA will be vocalized as a PSI.

### Back RIT firefighter

- Check the SCBA pack for any damage to include: hoses, pack frame, and bottle.
- Assess bottle pressure, and vocalize as a psi
- Locate Universal Air Connection (UAC)

### Air RIT firefighter

- Tie off tagline outside of structure at approximately 3 feet above ground.
- Maintain tagline.
- Carry the RIT air bottle in.
- Assess air needs based on the evaluation of front and back RIT firefighters, and act upon assessment.

### Package/ RIT Team Supervisor ( duties could also be done by Air RIT firefighter)

- Determine the best viable way to extricate the downed firefighter and coordinate and assist with extraction.
- Communicate directly with the RIT RO.
- Estimate if rescue will take extra work cycles or if it can be completed by original RIT.

#### IV. Additional RIT Team

If rescue cannot be performed by initial RIT team, additional RIT team will be implemented. Original RIT team should tie off tagline at downed firefighter and follow tagline out. A face to face at downed firefighter is ideal.

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