

Purpose:

To establish an emergency MAYDAY Guideline that Fire Departments can choose to adopt..

Background:

Every firefighter has the potential for performing operations in a hazardous environment. A MAYDAY communications signal that alerts the fireground commander to life threatening situations is essential in ensuring the safety of crews that are operating in a hazardous environment.

Guideline:

1. The MAYDAY signal, "MAYDAY", will be transmitted by fire personnel who may be trapped, in imminent danger, in need of immediate assistance, or declared by the Incident Commander.
2. The Incident Commander should re-broadcast the MAYDAY on the fireground frequencies, including the incident location. The Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Team Leader should acknowledge the MAYDAY transmission to the Incident Commander and deploy the RIT.
3. Personnel who transmit a MAYDAY should, if at all possible, include the following information:
 - Location - floor, room, location by direction, side of the building. (side 1,2,3 or 4) THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM OF INFORMATION THAT THE ENDANGERED FIREFIGHTERS SHOULD TRANSMIT.
 - special tools or equipment needed
 - hose line requirements.
 - other pertinent information.Upon confirmation of their MAYDAY transmission firefighters should activate their PASS alarms.
4. If the firefighters that transmitted the MAYDAY feel their transmission was not received they should immediately re-transmit the MAYDAY.
5. Incident Commanders who have transmitted a MAYDAY resulting from a negative response to a status request or personnel accountability roll call (PAR) must make careful and calculated deductions as to the probable location of the "missing" firefighters.
6. Personnel noting a dangerous condition (potential collapse, etc) which may or has endangered personnel, should report this condition to the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander, after evaluation, may declare a MAYDAY. Due to

communication failure members may be unable to contact the Incident Commander. They may then, at their discretion, declare a MAYDAY.

7. Upon receipt of a MAYDAY signal, all fireground activities underway should continue. Members should not exit the fire building unless specifically told to do so by the Incident Commander. Ongoing fire suppression activities should continue until directed otherwise.
8. After a MAYDAY signal is declared and confirmed by the Incident Commander, the following objectives should take place, and if possible, in the following sequence:
 - a. The Incident Commander should deploy the RIT to the area where the firefighter(s) was last reported.
 - b. The dispatcher should dispatch an additional alarm and have the entire assignment respond to the scene. The Incident Commander may or may not assign the responding units on the additional alarm while enroute. If the Incident Commander has not given an assignment to the enroute units and no staging area has been announced, the Company Officer should place the apparatus in a position that would provide access to any position at the fireground. At all times the Incident Commander will assign the responsibility of an additional RIT team to one of the units responding on the additional alarm.

All Companies responding to the MAYDAY, who have not been assigned a task by the Incident Commander, should have the officer in charge report to the Command Post for assignment. Company personnel, including drivers, should remain with their respective units in full protective equipment, including Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, hand tools and a spare air cylinder.
 - c. The dispatcher should immediately dispatch two additional ambulances and paramedics to the scene. The dispatcher should notify the Incident Commander that the additional ambulances are responding and inquire whether any additional ambulances are required.
 - d. The dispatcher should determine from the Incident Commander if an additional Heavy Rescue or Aerial is required in addition to the units responding on the second alarm.
 - e. The dispatcher will notify the Chief of Department if not already aware of the incident.
9. Upon the issuance of a MAYDAY, all non-emergency radio traffic should halt. The Incident Commander may issue the command to cease all radio communications or switch all other radio traffic to a different channel until the RIT has declared the MAYDAY back to normal fireground operations.

10. During the time period of a MAYDAY, it is imperative that all Fire Department members put forth their full effort towards bringing a safe ending to this type of incident. This will only be accomplished through calm, collective efforts by all personnel. Personnel must be prepared to respond to any command necessary to fulfill this mission.
11. It is imperative that radio communication at any fireground operation, especially with a MAYDAY situation, be kept to an absolute minimum allowing only essential transmissions. As stated previously, all fire personnel should pay close attention to all radio communications.
12. Multiple channels should be utilized at a MAYDAY situation. The channel designated by the Incident Commander as the fireground channel should be used by all personnel operating on the fireground unless specifically altered by the Incident Commander due to personnel declaring a MAYDAY.
13. The Incident Commander may direct the dispatch center to change the fireground channel to another frequency after a MAYDAY has been declared. This will allow for a dedicated channel for the endangered personnel. Once the fireground channel has been changed by the Incident Commander and announced by the Dispatcher, all fireground personnel should switch to the newly designated fire ground channel as indicated by the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander should assign fire personnel to monitor this channel.
14. Incoming personnel and staged personnel that have been dispatched to a MAYDAY should utilize Fire ground unless another channel is assigned by the Dispatcher.
15. The Incident Commander may also request a "Command" channel. In this case, only Chief Officers should utilize the Command channel. This channel should be operated with the following understanding:
 - a. Operations and sector officers should use the fireground channel. The Incident Commander should assign fire personnel to monitor the command frequency. If Operations or Sector officers need to communicate with the Incident Commander they can utilize the Command Channel and return to the fireground channel after finishing the transmission.
 - b. If the Incident Commander needs to communicate with Operations or a Sector the Incident Commander should notify Operations / Sector to switch to the Command Channel. Once on the Command channel, converse as necessary and when finished, Operations / Sector should return to the active fireground frequency.
 - c. The Command Channel may be used for communication between the Incident Commander and dispatcher.

16. Definitions of radio channels:

FIRE GROUND CHANNEL - Channel to be utilized by all fire ground personnel. Normally TAC 1 unless changed by the Incident Commander or Dispatch Center.

MAYDAY CHANNEL - Once declared by the Incident Commander, this channel is to be only used by the endangered personnel. This channel should be monitored by fire personnel appointed by the Incident Commander.

COMMAND CHANNEL -For Chief Officers only. This channel should be monitored by fire personnel appointed by the Incident Commander.

17. It is important to remember that all incidents are unique. The primary tactics will have to be adapted to the existing conditions. The key to accomplishing the objectives of the Incident Commander should be the discipline of the fire personnel.
18. Manpower at an incident involving a MAYDAY will normally be taxed to the utmost. It should be of primary importance that, all personnel promptly obey the commands given by Officers.
19. Fire ground personnel should be prepared to respond to complex and exacting directives. Fire conditions may be such that the Incident Commander may order multiple hand lines and fire streams may be placed into operation in various configurations, including but not limited to, exterior, tandem, and/or opposing attack profiles.
20. It is imperative to remember that not all possibilities can be specified. Therefore, the tactics used must be conducive to maintaining survivable conditions for the trapped or missing members.
21. Fire Departments should identify the makeup of additional fire alarms for their community and notify their communications center.