

# Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures

## Rescue – Lost Firefighter- Mayday

### 205.02

### Rev 10-07-09

## PURPOSE

The rescue of trapped or lost firefighters in a burning building is a stressful and time sensitive event. There is a very narrow "window of survivability" for a firefighter that is lost, trapped, or out of SCBA air supply. It is critical that firefighters understand the importance of reporting the Mayday to Command if they become lost, trapped, or in need of assistance. The accountability of our members on the fire ground is a critical objective for Command. Following the report of a Mayday on the fire ground the Incident Commander must restructure the incident to include a high risk rescue effort.

## POLICY

This procedure identifies individual, company, rescue group, and command level responsibilities following the report of a Mayday.

## PROCEDURE

### Mayday Radio Message

The radio message "Mayday" will be used by firefighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and in need of rescue. Any member may use "Mayday" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "Mayday" will receive priority radio traffic followed by the emergency traffic tone. The term "Mayday" will be reserved **ONLY** to report lost, trapped, or injured firefighters. The term "Emergency Traffic" will be used to report all other emergencies on the fire ground.

Rescue needs generally fall into two categories. Either the firefighter is trapped by a collapse, OR, lost in a smoke filled and burning building. The most significant problem and difference between the two categories are that the search area can be substantially larger for a lost firefighters than that encountered in a collapse situation. On the other hand, a collapse presents a major extrication situation. In some cases, lost or trapped firefighters may be able to radio to command that they are lost and in need of rescue, prior to being incapacitated. Other problems may include: a possible secondary collapse, separated and scattered crews and confusion of the last known location of the crew (or member). Early PAR's and information as to the number of missing firefighters, identities, and whereabouts are critical.

### Individual Responsibilities

The most reliable and consistent individual approach to operating safely on the fire ground is to work within the structured Incident Action Plan. This means that firefighters will remain aware of their surroundings and exercise a high degree of situational awareness. The following points illustrate appropriate actions that a firefighter should take if they become lost or trapped. It should be understood that these outlined measures to report a "Mayday" as well as self rescue actions that may be carried out following the Mayday.

- The firefighter shall transmit the term "Mayday" in increments of (3) followed by a radio message to Command identifying the following:
  1. Name
  2. Assigned Company
  3. Last known location
  4. Their problem (lost, trapped, etc.)
  5. Actions taken (if any)

- If Mayday is not heard on tactical channel, the firefighter shall go to another channel and attempt to declare their emergency. Channel 1 (Dispatch) is preferred.
- Activate the emergency traffic button on the portable radio, this will alert Dispatch and the Command Van that a firefighter is in trouble.
- Activate the PASS device on your SCBA Pk.
- Locate a wall or some other point of reference and communicate this action to Command (I am crawling along a block wall with my left shoulder to the wall.)
- Communicate to Command any noises, voices, or visual clues that you encounter.
- Attempt to locate a hand line if possible. Remember that male couplings lead towards the fire (nozzle), and female couplings lead towards the truck (outside).
- It is important to remember that rescuers will begin their search along walls, hallways, around doors, and windows, the ability to position yourself along these search routes will increase your chances of being located.
- If you are unable to move due to injury, position yourself in a horizontal position and place your flashlight facing towards the ceiling. Any noise that you can make (tapping on SCBA, wall or floor may be helpful for rescuers).

### Company Responsibilities

Each Company operating on the fire ground must maintain their assigned positions following the report of a "Mayday". The ability to remain disciplined and perform the tasks necessary to support the search will be critical to the success of the rescue efforts. It will be necessary to report PAR's to Command rapidly to assist them in the development of a detailed rescue plan.

### Command Responsibilities

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 for a reported missing or trapped firefighter. These are guidelines and do not necessarily need to be accomplished in the order listed. The first five (5) must be accomplished very rapidly.

1. Emergency Traffic – Immediately after receiving the "Mayday" radio traffic, the Incident Commander must request the Emergency Traffic tones through the Alarm Room. All personnel operating on the fire ground will be advised of the situation and PAR's will be requested.
2. Change the plan to include a high priority rescue.

The incident commander must restructure the IAP to include a high priority firefighter rescue effort. A rapid, well thought out rescue plan must be deployed based on information gathered from the trapped or missing firefighter. The Command organization must be expanded and the plan communicated to all companies operating on the fire ground. Fire attack positions must remain engaged to support the rescue effort.

3. Immediately Request Additional Alarms

A minimum of one additional alarm should be immediately requested including a medical component. Additional multiple alarms may be requested based on the circumstances. Level II Staging should be implemented and the consideration of Squad Companies and TRT resources in the event of a structural collapse.

4. Fireground Accountability

A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) must be immediately requested from all companies operating on the fireground. This is a critical element in situations that involve structural collapse.

Command cannot develop an effective rescue plan without accurate information pertaining to the number of missing firefighters, their identify, companies assigned to, and their last known location.

5. Commit the Rapid Intervention Crew

Deploy the Rescue Crews to initiate search and rescue efforts. It will be necessary to immediately assign another company to backup the initial rescue crew. This will be a labor intensive assignment that may require a large number of personnel. Deploy (1) RIC bag for each reported lost/trapped firefighter.

- Expand the Command organization. An incident of this magnitude will require Branch Level Management. The IC should be proactive and aggressive in their actions.
- Special call Chief Officers to assist in expanding the Command Staff.
- Assign a Chief Officer to the Rescue Group/Branch.
- Assign a Safety Officer to the Rescue Group/Branch.
- Establish a Welfare Branch to assist with any family notifications.
- Maintain strong supervision. This will be a very emotional event.
- Maintain fire fighting positions to support rescue effort.
- Soften the building, which should include opening secondary means of egress, breaching of safe havens parallel to the involved area(s). In all cases, doors that we encounter must remain unlocked.
- Aggressive ventilation should be initiated to increase tenability and visibility.
- Employ lighting both interior and exterior to support the efforts.
- Assign Treatment and Transportation Group to Medical Branch.
- Coordinate and control Rescue Efforts.
- Closely monitor the structural stability of the building. Consider the use of a structural engineer to evaluate the structure.
- Call upon TRT and Squad Companies to shore up the structure where necessary.
- Control the media. Assign a P.I.O. immediately and control access to assure their safety as well as preventing the identification of any victims. Never release the names of injured firefighters to the media.
- Confirm that Alarm monitors all radio channels in the event that the lost/trapped firefighters attempts contact on another channel other than the tactical channel that the incident is being worked on.

Possibly the most important tasks that RIC Crews can do following their assignment is to get a 360 of the building, remove any structural barriers that would prevent escape, and report construction features to Command. The tracking of crew assignments and their likely locations within the structure provide a detailed idea of where potential issues may occur. The assignment of multiple RIC Companies may be necessary when the incident involves large structures. RIC Companies should size-up the structure as it relates to the resources needed to perform a rescue and relay these observations to Command.

Listed below are critical functions that Rescue Group should routinely perform followed by actions that should be taken following the report of a "Mayday".

Basic RIC Functions

- Monitor tactical radio channel
- Complete 360 survey of the structure
- Utilize TIC Camera to assist in task(s)
- Remove all barriers that may restrict egress
- Retrieve RIC bag and confirm that all equipment is in ready state
- Throw ground ladders when crews are opening above the first floor
- Illuminate entrance and exit points
- Develop and discuss a search plan

- Develop and discuss a rescue plan
- Notify Command of your findings and search/rescue profiles. This may best be done face-to-face.

#### Deployment Functions

Execute the search plan

Locate the lost/trapped firefighter

Assess the firefighter and the environment

Advise Command of location and additional (C.A.N. Report)

Trans-fill lost/trapped firefighters SCBA

Package firefighter for removal if necessary

Monitor Rescue teams SCBA air supply

Initiate removal of lost/trapped firefighter

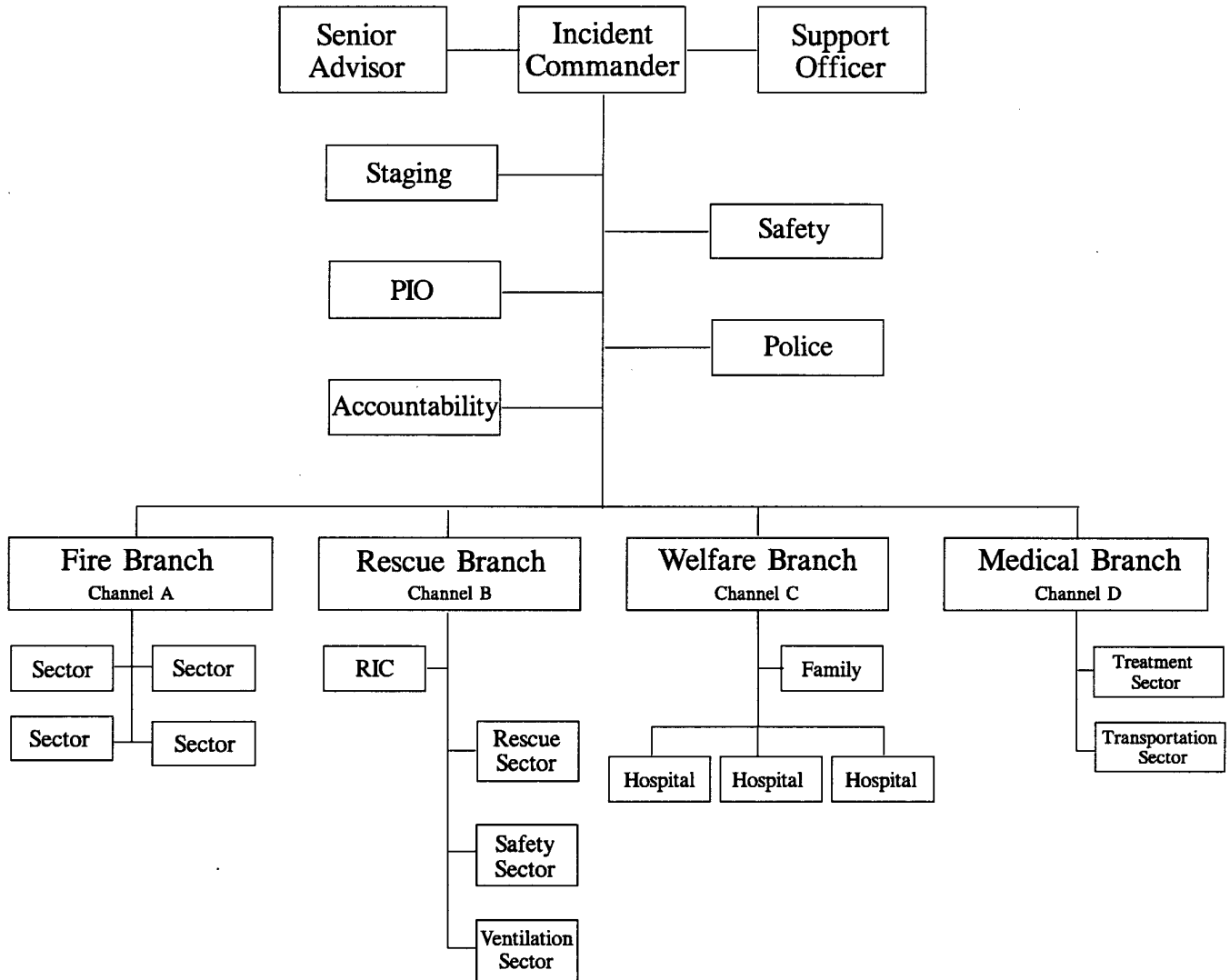
Communicate with additional resources that may have been deployed to assist in the rescue effort.

Remove lost/trapped firefighter to a reliable safe location to coordinate a relay rescue with additional rescue crews if required.

After removal of lost/trapped firefighter from the structure, deliver them to Medical Branch for treatment and transportation if required.

#### **Lost/Trapped Firefighter Command Organization** **Initial Command Organization**

# Expanded Command – Branch Organization



## **General Considerations**

When searching for a lost member, rescue crews should consider the following:

- Visible sightings of trapped firefighters such as arms or legs.
- Knowledge of their last known location.
- The sound of the PASS devices audible tones.
- Shouts for help from the collapsed area.
- Tapping noise, etc.
- Sounds of portable radio broadcast in the collapse area.
- Breathing, moaning sounds.
- The sound of the SCBA alarm bell sounding.
- Radio request for help from within the collapse area.
- Tracing attack hoselines into the collapse area.
- Tracing of life lines into the area.
- Evidence of building structures or locations that were described by lost firefighters.
- Flashlight beams.
- Location of ladders, fans, lights, or other equipment being used by missing firefighters.
- Open or unlock all doors.
- Search hallways before interior rooms.
- Search exterior walls (interior sides) before searching interior spaces.
- Search large interior spaces in a detailed grid pattern.
- Ensure all areas are searched.
- Take one RIC - SCBA Kit for each lost firefighter in the search area.
- Use life lines when searching "off hoselines" to ensure safety of rescuers.