

Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures
Emergency Scene Accountability
205.08
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PURPOSE

This procedure identifies a system of incident site firefighter accountability. The purpose is to account for all firefighters, at any given time, within a small geographic area, and within the "hazard zone" of an incident. Use of the system will provide enhanced personnel safety for the individual firefighter, and will provide the incident command staff organization an improved means to track and account for all personnel working in the hazard zone.

The hazard zone will be defined as any area that requires an SCBA or in which a firefighter is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment or structure. This would include entering a structure reported to be on fire, operating in close proximity to the structure during exterior operations, confined space or trench rescue, etc.

POLICY

Implementation of the passport accountability system will occur at any multi-unit incident that requires the use of SCBA. Accountability involves a personal commitment to work within the safety system at an incident.

PASSPORTS

To enhance accountability and to improve tracking of firefighters in the hazard zone, the "passport" system will be used. Passports involve a plastic card, with the crew members' names affixed, that is turned over to an accountability officer. The accountability officer may be an engineer, a sector officer, or a designated accountability officer, depending on the nature, type, and complexity of the incident.

PASSPORT EQUIPMENT

The passport system equipment involves a 2" X 4" plastic card with the company's ID etched on it. The passport will contain the names of all personnel presently assigned to that company.

The passport will always be located on the door of the apparatus at the company officer position (passenger side). A Velcro strip will allow the passport to be affixed on the door and easily removed.

Each firefighter will be issued five individual name tags. These will be affixed to Velcro strips on the underside of their helmet.

All engines, ladders, and specialized equipment will be equipped with an 8" x 11" status board. This will be used to affix passports on and will always be located on the inside of the driver's door. The status board will be attached with Velcro to permit easy removal.

The company officer will be responsible for ensuring that the passport always reflects only currently assigned personnel. When entering a hazard zone with a partial crew (i.e., engineer remains at the engine to pump lines), the company officer must remove name tags of those members not entering the hazard zone. The name tags of these members may be returned to the member, placed on the company officer's helmet Velcro strip or placed in his/her coat pocket.

COMPANY IDENTIFICATION DESIGNATION - HELMETS

Firefighter helmets will be equipped with magnetic strips permanently attached to each side of the helmet.

Another set of magnetic tapes, each affixed with company IDs, will be attached to the helmet by laying them over the permanently attached magnetic tape. The helmet shall always reflect the ID of the company to which the firefighter is presently assigned.

Each company will be equipped with an extra supply of helmet IDs.

All passports and helmet ID equipment will be considered as safety equipment, will be inspected as other safety equipment, and will be repaired or replaced as soon as possible on a priority request.

TACTICAL BENCHMARKS

Several accountability benchmarks are included in tactical operations. The Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) involves a roll call of personnel assigned. For the company officer, a PAR is a confirmation that assigned crew members are visually accounted for. For the sector officer, a PAR is an accounting for all members assigned to that sector. Reports of PARs should be conducted face-to-face within the company or within the sector whenever possible.

Example:

"Engine-71 to East Sector, I have a PAR (all members accounted for)."

A personnel accountability report will be required for the following situations:

- Any report of a missing or trapped firefighter (Command initiates a PAR of all crews on the scene).
- Any change from offensive to defensive (Command initiates a PAR of all crews on the scene).
- Any sudden hazardous event at the incident - flash over, backdraft, collapse, etc. (a PAR is initiated by Command).
- By all crew(s) reporting an "all clear" (company officers of crews responsible for search and rescue will ensure they have a PAR for their crews at the time they report an all clear).
- At 30 minute elapsed time.
- At a report of fire under control.

PASSPORT IMPLEMENTATION - THE INCIDENT

The objective of the passport system is always to have the crew members' passports near the point of entry and that they are accurate, reflecting only those members entering the hazard zone. For those situations where it is not clear-cut as to when and where to turn in a passport, crews should consider the above-cited objective for their decision.

For single company incidents, the passport remains on the apparatus dash. The engineer will assume accountability sector responsibilities.

For 2-1 assignments and greater, the passport system will function as follows:

- The first arriving company will announce their accountability location in a follow-up report after alarm repeats their on-scene report/assumption of command. Example: "Command to Alarm - Engine-71 will be north side accountability."
- The first engine to each geographic side of the incident becomes the initial accountability location for all later arriving companies to that side of the incident.

- The passport of the first engine to each geographic side of the incident will remain attached to the dash.
- The engineer becomes the initial accountability officer until passports are collected later in the incident by the sector or accountability officer who assumes accountability responsibilities.
- Crews of the initial assignment that have apparatus parked in very close proximity (i.e., 50 feet or less) of the initial engine (accountability location) may leave their passports on the dash of their apparatus or take them to the first engine (accountability location).
- The engineer of the first engine (accountability location) will collect the passports from these additional companies, time permitting, and mount them on the status board at the accountability location.
- Any crew whose apparatus is more than 50 feet away must deliver their passports to the accountability engine and place the passports on the status board. The status board will always be located on the inside panel of the driver's door.
- Ladder companies on the initial assignment (first alarm) may leave their passports on the dash of the apparatus if they are parked at a position that would not permit easy delivery of the passports to the accountability engine.
- Any ladder company assigned to a sector will deliver the passport to the sector officer or a designated accountability officer (designated by the sector officer or Command).
- As the incident escalates, and sector officers and/or accountability officers are assigned, all passports will be delivered to these officers prior to entry into the hazard zone.
- As staff officers arrive on the scene and stage, they will be assigned accountability responsibilities for given sectors. These officers will report to their assigned sector officer to manage accountability for that sector (i.e., mini lobby sector).
- Where the sector officer is operating within the hazard zone, passports must remain outside the zone with a designated accountability officer (i.e., initial engineer or staff officer) serving as an accountability officer. A sector officer operating within the hazard zone will not have passport accountability responsibilities.
- Command must maintain an awareness of which engine companies are serving as accountability locations, and provide this information to companies being assigned to each geographic side or the incident (sector).

ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICERS

As the incident escalates and staff officers fill accountability positions for each sector, these accountability officers will be assigned to a radio channel designated by Command. Depending on the situation, accountability officers will report to either Command or Logistics.

At incidents with a critical need for accountability officers to assist sector officers, Command may choose to split up a company and distribute the crew members to different sectors to act as accountability officers.

ACCOUNTABILITY SECTOR

As the incident escalates to the level that accountability officers are assigned, Command should implement an accountability sector to coordinate with accountability officers.

The accountability sector officer will be assigned to Logistics and will operate on the assigned logistics radio

channel. The accountability sector officer should be located in the Command Post.

The accountability sector officer's responsibilities include:

- Ensure that accountability officers are assigned in each sector as necessary.
- Provide progress reports to Command.
- Initiate PARs upon benchmarks or as needed.

SHIFT CHANGE, TIME-TRADES, CONSTANT STAFFING, TRANSFER

Arriving crew members will be responsible for immediately updating the company passport as they arrive to duty - including any constant staff duty, time-trades, or following transfer from another station.

Arriving crew members will remove the name tag from the passport of the crew member they are replacing. For permanently assigned members, the name tag may be placed on an adjacent strip of Velcro on the dash of the apparatus.

For those crew members not permanently assigned, the name tag should be placed on Velcro strip of their helmet on the underside of the rear brim.

Arriving crew members will also ensure that their helmets reflect the company ID that they are assigned to. Company officers are responsible for ensuring that the passports helmet IDs always remain current. Passports must reflect only those members presently assigned to the company and only those crew members about to enter the hazard zone.

POINT OF ENTRY CONTROL

Passports will remain with the designated accountability officer near the "point of entry" to the hazard zone. Upon entry, crews will turn in their passport. Upon exit, the crew must retrieve their passports. The accountability status board will contain only the passports of those crews in the hazard zone.

Crews exiting at a different location than the original point of entry must immediately notify their original sector officer and/or accountability officer of their changed status. The passport must be retrieved.

Where physical distance/barriers prevent easy retrieval of the passport and where the crew is being re-assigned to another sector, a "make-up" passport must be assembled. Crew members will provide the new sector officer another name tag. Where another "make-up" passport is not available, the individual name tags will be placed on the accountability status board.

The original sector officer and/or accountability officer must be made aware of the change.

MULTI-STORY/HIGHRISE

Multi-story or high-rise incidents present only a minor modification in the standard approach to passport accountability.

- The first engine to each geographic side of the incident remains the accountability location.
- First-in crews that are parked in very close proximity (50 feet) of the first engine may leave their passports on the apparatus.
- Companies parking a greater distance away will deliver their passports to the initial engine and place the passports on the status board of the accountability engine.

- Once a lobby sector is established all crews reporting to the building will deliver their passports to the lobby sector.
- The lobby sector will be responsible for collecting the passports of the initial companies as soon as possible (may use incoming crews reporting to the building to pick them up).
- Once the resource sector is established, the resource sector officer will collect the passports of all crews assigned to fire combat positions. The resource sector will assign accountability officers at each point of entry to stairwells, etc.
- Passports for crews assigned to the lobby sector or any support sectors within the building (non-hazard zone crews) will be maintained by the sector officers.

TERMINATING THE PASSPORT SYSTEM

Passport accountability will be maintained through a report of "fire under control" or "situation stabilized," at which time a PAR for all crews must be obtained. Command will determine at that time, based on the situation and risk, as to whether to continue with the passport system. If visibility is still impaired or a significant hazardous condition still exists, Command may choose to extend the passport system further.

Upon termination and release from the incident, company officers and crew members will ensure that the passport is returned to the dash of their apparatus and that the passport is up-to-date.

RAPID INTERVENTION CREWS (RIC)

As the incident escalates, and/or crews are operating at a special hazard (i.e., confined space rescue), Command will assign "rapid intervention crews" (RICs) to each side of the incident or point of entry. These crews will serve as stand-by rescue teams during all hazardous operations. Their passports are to be given to the geographical accountability officer.

LOST/MISSING/TRAPPED FIREFIGHTER

An absent member of any crew will automatically be assumed lost or trapped in the hazard zone until otherwise determined safe. Company officers must immediately report any absent members by name to the sector officers or Command. For any reports of missing or trapped firefighters, Command must request the next greater assignment or alarm (i.e., 2-1 goes to a first alarm or a second alarm goes to a third alarm). Command must next initiate an immediate roll call (PAR) of all companies assigned to duty in the hazard zone. Command must also send the RIC to the last reported working area of the firefighter to begin a search. Simultaneously with these actions, Command must adjust on-scene strategies to a priority search and rescue effort.

Some of these strategy adjustments may include establishment of appropriate sectors or branches such as medical, rescue, safety, decon, rehab, etc.

Deployment of CIS Team, heavy equipment, TRT crews, etc., as well as a change in the strategic and tactical use of on scene aerial equipment and the location of master streams are considerations as well.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTABILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Firefighter - Responsible for staying with his/her crew at all times and ensuring that his/her name tag is on the passport at all times.

Engineer - The engineer of the first engine to each geographic side of the incident becomes the initial accountability officer. The engineer must collect passports from crews and apparatus assigned to his/her side of the incident (sector) and manage accountability until relieved by a sector officer or accountability officer.

Company Officer - Responsible for keeping his/her crew intact at all times and the passport is current and accurate. The passport must reflect only those personnel entering the hazard zone. The passport must be turned in at the point of entry and retrieved upon exit. All crews will work for Command or sectors - no freelancing. All crews will go in together, stay together, and come out together. Reduced visibility and increased risk will require an increased awareness by all crew members and tighter supervision from the company officer.

Sector Officer - Responsible for accounting for all crews in the assigned sector, maintaining an awareness of their exact location, and maintaining accurate passports of those crews in the hazard zone. In those situations where the sector officer must enter the hazard zone, passports will continue to be managed by the engineer of the first engine to each side of the incident or a designated accountability officer for his/her sector.

Accountability Officer - Responsible for teaming up with the assigned sector officer and to manage all accountability for that sector. The accountability officer must collect all passports from engineers, apparatus, or the sector officer. The accountability officer must maintain close coordination with other accountability officers.

Accountability Sector Officer - Responsible for managing accountability officers and system. Causes PARs to be initiated at tactical benchmarks or as needed.

Command - Command will always be responsible for including accountability as a major element in strategy and attack planning, and must consider and react to any barriers to effective accountability. Responsible for tracking the location of all crews. Must advise later assigned crews of which engine is serving as the accountability location for passports or that the sector or accountability officer will be accepting passports at the point of entry.

RULES OF THUMB

Passport implementation should consider the following basic rules of thumb:

- Passports never enter the hazard zone.
- Passports must be maintained at the point of entry to the hazard zone.
- Passports must reflect only those personnel presently in the hazard zone.
- Crews must turn in their passports upon entering and must retrieve their passports upon exit from the hazard zone.