

**FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION OF BROWARD COUNTY**  
**Mutual Aid and Communications Committee**

**SUBJECT:** Personnel Accountability Procedure for  
Broward County (FL) Fire-Rescue Agencies

**DATE:** March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011

---

**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 geographical area, within the “hazard zone” of an incident. Use of the system will provide enhanced personal safety for the individual firefighters and will provide the incident command organization staff with an effective 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, the hot zone at a hazmat incident, etc.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability involves a personal commitment to work within the safety system at an incident. 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. Division/Group Officers will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews assigned them. This will require the Division/Group Officer to be in his/her assigned area and maintain close supervision of crews assigned to them.

All crews will work for Command or Divisions – no “freelancing.” Crews arriving on the scene should remain intact for all intents and purposes. A minimum crew size will be considered two members and a radio will be required. A supervisor should accompany all crews entering a hazard zone. All crews will go in together, stay together, and come out together. The crew will exit the hazard zone if communications fail.

**PASSPORTS – PAR Tags**

To enhance accountability and to improve tracking of firefighters and units assigned to an incident, the “PASSPORT” system will be used. PASSPORTS involve PAR Tags with the crewmember names that attach to the PASSPORT with the unit’s number, i.e. Rescue 71, Engine 27, etc. The PASSPORT is given to an Accountability Officer or designee.

The Accountability Officer may be a driver, a Division/Group Officer, or a designated Accountability Officer, depending on the nature, type, and complexity of the incident.

## **SYSTEM COMPONENTS**

This system utilizes a PASSPORT system to track assignments of personnel working within the hazard zone.

1. **PAR Tags:**

Each member of the division will be assigned a plastic PAR Tag. The PAR Tag is approximately 1/2" x 2" and engraved with the member's last name and the initial of the first name. This PAR Tag will be stored on the collar of each member's bunker coat, helmet, or other similar location while off duty and not in the cab of the apparatus.

2. **COLORS:**

White	-	Chief Officers
Red	-	Company Officers
Yellow	-	Firefighters/Paramedics/Drivers/Others

3. **PASSPORTS:**

Each emergency vehicle will be assigned a Passport. The passport unit is approximately 2" x 3" and engraved with the apparatus or unit number. The Passport will be attached to a Velcro area located in a conspicuous location in the cab of the vehicle.

4. **STATUS BOARDS:**

Status boards will be carried by the Battalion Chief, the Duty Officer, or other designated supervisors.

- Blue Boards – To be used on single alarm assignments for tracking units. Equipped with Velcro in order to attach Passports. Capable of tracking single alarm assignments.
- Magnetic Boards – To be used on 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm assignments or higher for tracking units, or if preferred by the Incident Commander. Passports shall still be maintained in order to account for crew members assigned to units.

5. **MAGNETIC UNIT TAGS FOR STATUS BOARDS:**

Unit Identification tags are to be pre-made 1"x2" magnets with each Battalion's units as well as surrounding mutual aid units that would likely respond. Each magnetic board shall be equipped with an ample supply of blanks unit tags to accommodate any units not already pre-made. Magnetic Unit Tag colors are as follows:

Rescue	-	Blue
Engine	-	Light Grey
Aerial	-	Red
Chief	-	White
Special Units	-	Green

## **TACTICAL BENCHMARK**

Several accountability benchmarks are included in tactical operations. The Personnel Accountability Report (or “PAR”) involves a roll call of personnel assigned. For the Company Officer, a “PAR” is confirmation that members assigned to his/her crew are accounted for. For the Division Officer, a “PAR” is an accounting of all crewmembers assigned to his/her division. PAR checks should be conducted face-to-face within the company or with the Division Officer whenever possible.

Whenever possible, PAR checks shall be conducted by the Incident Commander or the Accountability Officer. The Incident Commander shall request Dispatch to set off the tones and have all units standby for a PAR check. PAR checks should begin with units in the hazard zone.

Units answering PAR should advise of the number of members assigned to that crew and their location, i.e. “Engine 32 has a PAR of 3 ventilating Division C, Charlie”. At the discretion of the Incident Commander, crew member names may also be required information.

PAR checks may only be interrupted by priority or emergency traffic.

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

1. Any report of a missing or trapped firefighter (Command initiates a report of all crews on the scene).
2. Any change from offensive to defensive operations (Command initiates a report of all crews on-scene to ensure all companies have exited the hazard area).
3. Any sudden hazardous events at the incident – flashover, back draft, collapse, etc. (Command initiates a report of all crews on the scene).
4. At each 30-minute interval of elapsed incident time, or at the discretion of the IC.
5. All units reporting “PAR” shall advise if a member assigned is not physically located with that crew, i.e. “Engine 18 has par of 2, Driver is at the pump panel of Engine 18”. In such cases, command should check with the Driver directly, i.e., “Engine 18 Alpha, do you have PAR?”

## **GENERAL RULES**

The following rules must be followed for the accountability system to function properly:

1. PASSPORTS never enter the hazard zone.
2. PASSPORTS must be maintained at the Command vehicle during large or complex operations.
3. PASSPORTS must reflect only personnel and units assigned to the incident.
4. Units assigned must stay intact whenever possible to maintain accountability.

## **PASSPORT IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of the Accountability Procedure will occur at all incidents, including training exercises. The objective of the PASSPORT system is to have PASSPORTS at the Command Post and that they are kept accurate, reflecting only those members entering the hazard zone.

For single company incidents, the PASSPORT will remain in a conspicuous location. The Driver/Operator will assume accountability responsibilities. On multi-company operations where SCBA is used, PASSPORTS will be delivered to the Command Post or Accountability Officer prior to entering the hazard zone.

## **LOST/MISSING FIREFIGHTERS**

An absent member of a crew will be assumed lost or trapped in the hazard zone until otherwise determined safe. Company Officers must immediately report any absent member to Incident Command. For any reports of missing firefighters, Command should consider the next greater alarm assignment (i.e., first alarm to second alarm, second alarm to third alarm).

At their discretion, Command may conduct an immediate PAR check of all companies assigned in the hazard zone. Searches will begin in the last reported working area of the lost firefighter.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. COMMAND**

Command will be responsible for including personnel accountability as a major element of strategy and tactics. Command will react to all barriers that influence incident accountability and will ensure that all companies entering a hazard zone have radios and are supervised. Command will make every effort to keep crews intact, however, if companies are split, Command will ensure continued accountability by updating status boards. On 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm assignments or higher, Command shall assign at least one Accountability Officer.

### **2. DIVISION/GROUP OFFICERS**

Division/Group Officers will maintain accurate tracking of assigned companies. This requires the Division/Group Officer to be in the assigned location to monitor the companies assigned to the division/group.

3. **COMPANY OFFICERS**

Company Officers will ensure the PASSPORT unit reflects the names of the personnel currently assigned to the company. The Company Officer will keep all members assigned to the hazard zone intact at all times. If a situation occurs that the entire crew is not assigned to the hazard zone, an individual must leave the hazard zone, or an individual is reassigned, (i.e., the Driver/Operator is at the Apparatus pumping), the Driver's or individual's name will be turned upside down to indicate that the Driver or individual are not in the hazard zone.

4. **SINGLE COMPANY RESPONSE**

For single company responses, the PASSPORT until will remain in a conspicuous location in the front of the cab.

5. **MULTI-COMPANY RESPONSE**

On multi-company responses, the PASSPORT units will be given to Command or the Accountability Officer if practical, or left in a conspicuous location in the front of the vehicle.

6. **2<sup>ND</sup> ALARM OR GREATER RESPONSES**

Units arriving on a 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm assignment, unless assigned by Command, shall report first to the Staging Officer who shall insure that the Unit's Passport reflects the crew assignment. Once assigned by the Incident Commander, the Company Officer shall then give the Passport to the Accountability Officer or designee.

7. **TERMINATING THE PASSPORT SYSTEM**

PASSPORT accountability will be maintained until Command is terminated. Upon completion of assignments and release from the incident, Company Officers will pick up the PASSPORT at the Command Post and return it to the apparatus dash.