



## Fire Chiefs' Association of Broward County

### Standard Operating Guidelines

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**Subject: Uniform Rapid Intervention Crew and Mayday Operations**

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#### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To provide operational procedures for Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) activation. The purpose of a RIC is to assist firefighters who become lost, trapped, disoriented or down due to an emergency incident.

#### **II. Scope:**

- A. These procedures apply to all personnel to maximize safety during emergency situations.

#### **III. Responsibilities:**

- A. The Incident Commander shall be responsible for identifying the need for a Rapid Intervention Team (RIC). Establishment of the RIC shall be at every incident in which firefighters enter a hazardous area that could be immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH).

- B. Examples of when a RIC shall be established include, but are not limited to:

1. Offensive interior fire operations.
2. Hazardous materials incidents.
3. Trench rescue operations.
4. Large frame aircraft fire operations.
5. Boat and shipboard fire operations.
6. Any other incident posing a significant risk to firefighters.
7. The discretion of the Incident Commander or Chief Officer.

#### **IV. Objectives:**

1. To establish a team of firefighters ready to act as a rescue team for other firefighters.
2. To define when RIC is established and the actions they should take upon arrival at an incident.
3. To define what basic tools and equipment will be assembled for conducting RIC operations.
4. To define what chain of events must take place in the event of a "MAYDAY".
5. To define when additional RICs are warranted.

#### **V. Terminology:**

- A. To minimize misunderstanding, the terminology used below shall be mandatory. All members must be completely familiar with the terminology and use it exclusively for its intended purpose.
- B. The terms "MAYDAY" and "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" must only be used in situations where immediate communication is necessary to protect life or prevent injury.

1. Whenever a “MAYDAY” or “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” is transmitted, all communications on the frequency are to cease. Only those transmissions between the member initiating the communication, the Incident Commander or designee, and the Dispatch center are allowed.
  2. It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to take the fire ground operation to a different monitored frequency and keep the rescue operation on the original tactical frequency. Both channels shall be monitored by Dispatch and the Incident Commander.
  3. When a “MAYDAY” is declared, the Incident Commander will acknowledge it and determine the most appropriate course of action to affect a rescue. In some instances, operations should be stopped and shifted to rescue operations; however, other scenarios are better managed by continuing operations and conducting a separate rescue operation. It is the incident commander who will determine the most appropriate actions to take given in light of the hazards faced at the scene.
- C. MAYDAY – Mayday transmissions are an indication that a life threatening situation has developed. The “MAYDAY” transmission shall receive the highest communication priority from Dispatch, Incident Command, and all operating units. It should only be used under the following conditions:
- Working Fires:
1. Collapse of a roof or floor.
  2. Firefighter is disoriented, lost or trapped.
  3. Flashover has occurred.
  4. Discovery of another downed firefighter.
  5. Separated from crew and low on air.
  6. Tangled, pinned or stuck with a low pressure alarm.
  7. Tangled, pinned or stuck and unable to self-extricate within 60 seconds.
  8. Change in fire conditions that causes to inability to make immediate access to a known egress.
  9. Low air alarm activates and there is no exit within 60 seconds or firefighter is not on a hoseline of 200 feet or less.
- D. Confined Space/Trench Rescue Operations
1. Recognized change in mental or physical state (i.e. dizziness, headache, nausea, numbness/tingling, etc.).
  2. Suspected change in the mental or physical status of another firefighter operating in the IDLH.
  3. Any situation requiring the use of an escape bottle or buddy breathing.
  4. Discovery of another downed firefighter.
  5. Collapse causing any blockage of the egress.
  6. Collapse in the confined space with or without trapping firefighters.
  7. Firefighter judgment.
- E. Hazardous Materials Operations
1. Recognized change in mental or physical state (i.e. dizziness, headache, nausea, numbness/tingling, etc.).
  2. Suspected change in the mental or physical status of another firefighter operating in the IDLH.
  3. Discovery of another downed firefighter.
  4. Collapse of any confined space with or without trapping firefighters.

5. Drastic change in the nature or speed of a hazardous material release while firefighters are operating in the IDLH.
  6. Any change or collapse that impedes the ability of firefighters to make a quick egress.
  7. Firefighter judgment.
- F. EMERGENCY TRAFFIC – The “Emergency Traffic” transmission is used to indicate that a serious injury has occurred that is not immediately life threatening, or to inform members on the fire ground of a serious change in conditions, including but not limited to:
1. When a member suffers an injury that is not immediately life threatening but which requires medical attention and possibly hospital care.
  2. An interior attack is to be discontinued and an exterior attack instituted.
  3. Discovery of a structural problem indicating the danger of collapse.
  4. Fire is discovered entering an exposure to a degree that any delay may considerably enlarge the fire problem.
  5. Flashover or back draft conditions are apparent and/or imminent.
  6. Loss of water which would endanger members.
- G. Under no circumstances shall the term “Emergency Traffic” be used in place of the “MAYDAY” call. Upon securing the incident reference to the “Emergency Traffic”, Dispatch shall notify all units by initiating an emergency alert tone followed by “All units may resume normal radio traffic”.

**VI. Guidelines:**

- A. A RIC company shall be assigned during any working fire.
1. Chief Officers need to be aware and ensure the RIC assignment is filled.
  2. If additional information is provided at the time of initial dispatch (i.e. multiple calls, law enforcement on scene advising smoke and/or flames showing, etc.), the Chief Officers shall request a RIC assignment while responding.
- B. The initial RIC can be assembled from the 1<sup>st</sup> alarm assignment, but the additional RIC Company shall still be dispatched to replace the initial RIC Company as to not compromise firefighting efforts.
- C. When a company has been designated as RIC, they shall assume the radio designation of “RIC-1”. The terms “RIC-2”, “RIC-3”, etc. shall be used as this will provide distinction when multiple RICs are assembled.
- D. The primary task of RIC is to respond to firefighters in distress. Distress generally falls into three (3) categories:
1. Trapped.
  2. Disoriented or lost.
  3. Low air or out of air.
- E. The RIC shall assemble in full gear and breathing apparatus to a location away from the hazard area as designated by the incident commander. As a minimum, the following additional equipment shall be assembled by the RIC, if available:
1. Spare SCBA, mask, and bottle.
  2. Forcible entry tools.
  3. Cutting tools.
  4. Rope bags.

5. Lighting equipment.
  6. Stokes basket (if available).
  7. Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC).
- F. The initial RIC will also be responsible for taking measures to “safe” the building in the event of a “MAYDAY” and may include but is not limited to:
1. One RIC Officer shall perform a 360 degree survey of the structure to identify means of entry and egress, construction features, and potential hazards.
  2. Review pre-fire plans of the building, if available.
  3. Identify means of egress on upper floors and request/perform placement of ground ladders at those locations and aerial devices on multi-story occupancies.
  4. Remove of bars on doors and windows that may be needed for egress.
  5. Force entry of other doors and possible means of egress.
  6. Illuminate points of egress.
- G. The above tasks will be completed by the RIC. RIC members will stay together and maintain the integrity of the RIC, in a strategic location as deemed by the Rapid Intervention Crew Company Officer and Incident Commander, and await deployment if necessary.

## **VII. Transmission of the MAYDAY:**

- A. A unit or crewmember reporting an emergency will announce their unit identifier, followed by “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY”. The Incident Commander will gather all necessary information as indicated below and initiate the following procedures. Dispatch shall activate an alert tone and announce “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, all units stand by for MAYDAY traffic”. Dispatch will then receive all emergency information from the Incident Commander and repeat the information for all monitoring units one time.
- B. Firefighters calling the “MAYDAY” should include specific information. The Incident Commander and/or designee should listen for the following from the firefighter(s) calling the “MAYDAY”:
1. Location.
  2. Unit number.
  3. Names of crew members.
  4. Assignment and remaining air supply.
  5. Resources needed (injuries or entrapment).
  6. Following the MAYDAY, the firefighter should manually activate their PASS Device, turn on their hand lights and point them to the ceiling, turn their portable radio volume to “high”, and begin air conservation measures.
- C. When a “MAYDAY” is transmitted, the Incident Commander will initiate the sequence of events listed below to initiate the rescue operation. The Incident Commander may also initiate these procedures for an uncontrolled P.A.S.S device or other notification of need for assistance.
1. Deploy the RIC.
  2. Dispatch will automatically dispatch another alarm (i.e. a first alarm assignment will go to a second alarm)
  3. The Incident Commander will confirm that additional alarm assignment was automatically dispatched by the Dispatch.

4. The Incident Commander should consider requesting a Technical Rescue Team if the conditions warrant.
5. A different radio frequency/tactical channel will be assigned for the fire ground operation, and the rescue/RIC operation will remain on the original tactical frequency (in the event the victim(s) are trapped, they may not be able to reach their radio to change frequency). All units not specifically assigned as part of the rescue operation will change radio frequencies to the newly assigned channel. These units shall confirm with Dispatch on the new frequency.
6. A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) must be taken for all members operating on the fire ground in accordance with the Uniform Accountability Procedure.
7. Another Chief Officer other than the Incident Commander shall be assigned to the RIC operation to enable the Incident Commander to maintain focus on the original incident.
8. A second RIC must be assembled to serve as a backup and relief for the primary RIC. This second team will be assembled from the resources available on-scene. When the RIC is deployed, the second designated team shall be dispatched if not already on scene.
9. In addition to the above, the primary response rescue unit should be assigned only to the treatment of the firefighter(s) involved in the intervention. An additional rescue unit shall be dispatched for assignment as REHAB/MEDICAL Group and to stand-by for medical needs during fire ground operations.

Note: Anytime a “MAYDAY” is transmitted, firefighting positions must not be abandoned and the Company and Division/Group Officers must control freelancing.

The sooner the fire is brought under control and the smoke and heat are removed, the better the chance of survival for the trapped firefighter(s).

- D. Upon location of the down or trapped firefighter, the RIC should consider the following:
  1. Locate and shut off the firefighter’s P.A.S.S device if activating.
  2. Ascertain the air supply left in the SCBA and make arrangements for continuing air supply.
  3. Perform a secondary survey by sweeping the downed firefighter’s body with hands to determine possible entanglement or entrapment. Should these conditions exist, notify Command immediately.
- E. The RIC crew will give a situation report to the Incident Commander upon locating the firefighter(s) with the following information:
  1. Unit number – Crew that is making the transmission.
  2. Conditions – What they have encountered.
  3. Actions – What they are doing to rectify the situation.
  4. Resource needs – Additional equipment or manpower that may be needed.
- F. The RIC should advise if the rescue is either a “clean” or “dirty” rescue. Clean rescues involve careful manipulation of the firefighter for maximum safety. Examples would include broken bones, neck and/or back injuries. Clean rescues shall only take place when surrounding hazards are controlled. Dirty rescues involve rapid extrication of personnel due to surrounding circumstances or firefighter condition. Examples would include imminent explosion, heavy fire conditions, or the need for immediate medical attention. If RIC-1 cannot extricate the firefighter(s), they will need to advise RIC-2 of what will be needed to remove the victim(s), and have the RIC crews change to facilitate the removal of the victim(s).

#### G. RIC Terminology

1. LET Safe (location/extension of the fire, entrances and exits, type of occupancy/construction) the building: Making the building safer for crews working in and around the building by placing ladders, removing bars, board-ups, etc.
2. RICO (Rapid Intervention Crew Officer): The RICO is the team leader and will report to the Command Post. The RICO will enter the building with the RIC-1 crew when a "MAYDAY" is transmitted. The second Officer from the respective team that responds will report to the Command Post or assist the Incident Commander and/or Operations Officer with the "MAYDAY" operation. The remainder of the crew will be staged for entry in the most appropriate location to assist RIC-1 with manpower and additional equipment if necessary.

H. Passports with RIC-1 will have the PAR tags of the RIC at the Command Post with the Incident Commander.

I. An additional Chief Officer will be dispatched on all RIC assignments, internally and externally with the mutual aid request. They will serve as an additional resource at the Command Post.

#### **VIII. RIC Termination:**

A. Upon removal of the distressed individual or individuals, a (PAR) shall be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Accountability Procedure and all operations commenced. At the discretion of the Incident Commander, the RIC can be terminated when it appears that control of the situation has been achieved.

B. Critical incident stress management efforts may be considered in operations involving aid to co-workers from high levels of injury or other stressful traumatic situations involving RIC rescuers.

#### **IX. Summary:**

A. Engaging in a firefighter rescue within a burning building or other hazardous environment is most likely the most difficult assignment that a firefighter will ever perform - physically and mentally. Thirty percent (30%) of firefighter deaths and injuries are attributed to becoming lost or trapped in structures.

B. A firefighter's ability to survive may depend on individual actions and the actions of the Incident Commander as well as the RIC. A "MAYDAY" transmission indicates that firefighters' lives are in extreme danger. The action or lack of action taken immediately following the transmission of a "MAYDAY" will determine success or failure of the rescue efforts.

END OF SOG