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| **Mayday Procedures** | Related Policies: Operations at Structure Fires; Accountability Procedures; SCBA; Rapid Intervention Teams; ICS; Water Supply Tactical Options;  |
| *This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.* |
| Applicable SC Statutes: |
| OSHA: |
| NFPA Standard: 1500, 1561 |
| Date Implemented: | Review Date: |

1. **Purpose:** To establish a standard operating procedure to:
2. establish a radio message that would indicate that a firefighter is in a life-threatening situation and in need of immediate assistance; and
3. identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel at an incident where a Mayday has been transmitted.
4. **Policy:** The Fire Department recognizes the need to adopt a universal code word to indicate that a member is in need of immediate assistance, and adopts the code word “Mayday” to indicate a member’s life is in danger and immediate assistance is needed.
5. **Definitions**
6. **Mayday:** A radio code word indicating that a life is in danger, and immediate assistance is needed.
7. **Mayday Cleared:** A radio code word indicating that a previously declared Mayday has been resolved and the firefighter or firefighters who were in danger are no longer at risk. Only the Incident Commander shall declare a Mayday cleared.
8. **Situations that Require Transmitting a Mayday Message**
9. An officer or firefighter at the scene of an incident shall transmit a “MAYDAY” message to the Incident Commander whenever he/she:
10. believes himself or herself to be in a life-threatening situation
11. observes another firefighter or firefighters in a life-threatening situation
12. **Mayday Parameters at Structure Fires**
13. There are four universal “Mayday Parameters” developed by the National Fire Academy that apply to structure fires. Each parameter is considered to be an indicator that a firefighter is in a life-threatening situation and needs to call a Mayday. The four Mayday Parameters are:
14. **Fall** – Falls involving a change in elevation such as falling through a floor, roof or into a hole.
15. **Collapse** – Collapse involving structural members of the building or substantial objects onto a member.
16. **Lost or Trapped** – Member becomes lost, trapped or disoriented in an IDLH atmosphere.
17. **Stuck** – Member becomes entangled or trapped in an IDLH atmosphere.
18. Once a Mayday situation arises, the window of survivability for the victim can be small, due to the inevitable lag time between the calling of the Mayday and arrival of personnel to assist the firefighter in need.
19. To some extent the window of survivability and the Mayday Parameters are a function of the occupancy in which the fire occurs. A firefighter who loses contact with a hose line and becomes disoriented in a small, single story residential structure may have a larger window of survivability than a similarly disoriented firefighter in a large commercial occupancy such as a Walmart or Home Depot. For that reason all firefighters and officers must consider the occupancy and the circumstances when determining when to call a Mayday.
20. It is imperative that firefighters error on the side of caution and report a Mayday as soon as they are confronted with a Mayday Parameter. The Mayday can always be canceled if it is not needed. But if firefighters wait to call a Mayday, the window of survivability can close quickly.
21. **Procedures for Transmission of the Mayday Message**
22. The officer or firefighter reporting the Mayday shall repeat the word “MAYDAY” three times, and identify his/her company/crew, or use his/her rank and name.

EXAMPLE:

1. MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, Command this is Engine 16.
2. MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, Command this is Firefighter Smith.
3. Upon the report of a “Mayday”, all routine radio traffic on the channel being used must stop. Only Emergency Radio Traffic related to the Mayday will be permitted.
4. The Incident Commander shall acknowledge the Mayday and establish radio contact with the member reporting the Mayday.
5. In the event that the Incident Commander does not acknowledge the Mayday, Dispatch shall acknowledge the Mayday, immediately clear the airwaves using Emergency Traffic, and ensure the Incident Commander acknowledges the Mayday.
6. After acknowledgement by the Incident Commander, the officer or firefighter reporting the Mayday shall provide the following information:

**L**ocation - Where the member believes they are.

**U**nit - Company the member is assigned to.

**N**ame - Member’s name.

**A**ssignment – What member was doing (Roof vent, search & rescue)

**R**esources Needed - Any specific resources member can identify

1. These components are known as a LUNAR Message. If calling a Mayday for another member, provide Command with as many of the ‘LUNAR’ components as possible.

EXAMPLE:

1. Engine 16 Bravo to Command, this is Firefighter Smith, I am lost on the third floor Side Delta. I am separated from my line and can’t find my way out. I am low on air. I need help finding the exit.
2. Firefighter Smith to Command, I am on the roof, I am with Ladder 1 but I am cut off by fire on Side Alpha and cannot make it back to my ladder. I need a ladder to Side Bravo.
3. All members shall be alert to avoid calling additional Mayday messages for situations of which the Incident Commander is already aware.
4. The activation of the Emergency Button on a portable radio will be treated as a Mayday transmission until confirmed otherwise. If voice communication is not possible or effective to report a Mayday transmission to the Incident Commander, the Emergency Button should be used.
5. Upon receipt of the Emergency Button signal, Dispatch shall inform the Incident Commander of the existence of the signal and the identity of the portable radio. Thereafter, all procedures for a Mayday shall be implemented including Emergency Traffic.
6. **Missing, Lost or Trapped Firefighters**
7. In the event that a member becomes missing, lost, or trapped in a structure fire, the member shall employ the following procedures:
8. Report a MAYDAY, as prescribed above.
9. Upon acknowledgment by the Incident Commander, provide as much information about your location and situation as possible using **LUNAR** as a guide.
10. Manually activate your PASS device. If lost or disoriented, get to a wall, preferably an outside wall, so as to expedite search efforts. Otherwise, remain in place.

NOTE: One situation that would dictate against moving toward an outside wall would be the presence of rows of stock or machinery that would make a perimeter search of the exterior walls impossible.

1. If you are with other firefighters who are also lost or disoriented, remain together (do not split up).
2. Lay down, get into the “down firefighter” position, shine a hand light upward, remain calm and conserve air.
3. Monitor the radio for messages or information requests by command or the rescue sector.
4. **Command Procedures**
5. Upon receiving a MAYDAY Message, the Incident Commander shall:

1. Acknowledge the Mayday.
2. Obtain the LUNAR Information from the firefighter reporting the Mayday.
3. Instruct the firefighter(s) reporting the Mayday to activate his/her PASS device, get to a wall, and await arrival of the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).
4. Request additional resources (transmit an additional alarm)
5. Upon determining the nature of the Mayday emergency, the Incident Commander shall deploy appropriate resources (including the RIT) to assist the members in trouble. The RIT should be designated as the Rapid Intervention Group.
6. Assign new RIT(s) to replace any RIT(s) that have been deployed. To avoid confusion, the new RIT should be designated with a numerical designation different from the previously deployed RITs. For example, if a single RIT was assigned at a given fire, once it was deployed, the new RIT should be designated RIT 2.
7. If available, request another radio channel from dispatch for firefighting operations. If conditions warrant, move firefighting operations to the new channel, leaving the existing channel available to communicate with the firefighter or crew reporting the Mayday. This will help to limit confusion and decrease the distress of the disoriented firefighter. Rapid intervention operations normally involve heavy radio traffic from the firefighter or crew calling the Mayday and moving fire operations to a new channel relieves this pressure.
8. As soon as possible, conduct a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) roll call to ensure that all other members are accounted for. At the discretion of the Incident Commander the PAR/roll call may be delayed until the Mayday has been mitigated.
9. Communicate with the firefighter reporting the Mayday to help determine his/her location. This may include trying to orient the firefighter by fireground sounds such as saws operating on Side Alpha, sounding a siren on Side Bravo, etc.
10. Depending upon the extent of the fire and the anticipated complexity of the rapid intervention effort, the incident Commander should consider appointing an experienced chief or officer to command Rapid Intervention Group and perhaps another officer to assume responsibility for the firefighting operations.
11. A Mayday situation may be “cleared“ (cancelled) when the firefighter reporting the Mayday has been rescued or the situation has been resolved. Only the Incident Commander may order a Mayday to be “cleared”, although other officers may make a recommendation to clear the Mayday based upon first-hand knowledge that the particular firefighter who requested the Mayday has been rescued or the situation has been resolved.
12. The Incident Commander must communicate the fact that the Mayday has been cleared to all units operating on the scene. The Incident Commander – and only the Incident Commander - shall conclude the “Mayday” by transmitting “Mayday cleared, resume normal radio traffic.” If not previously completed, a PAR/Roll Call must be completed immediately upon the Mayday being cleared.
13. Where the Incident Commander has designated an Operations Section Chief to be responsible for all tactical operations, the references in this policy to the Incident Commander shall be applicable to the Operations Section Chief. That includes the previous paragraph.
14. **Procedures for Companies Not Involved in the Mayday**
15. All companies not in the immediate vicinity of the company or members in trouble **shall maintain their positions**, unless otherwise instructed by the Incident Commander. If a missing or downed firefighter is to survive, the fire must be kept away from the area where the firefighter is located.
16. All companies/crews shall continue to carry out their operational assignments while closely monitoring the radio for additional information or assignments. All radio traffic must cease with exception of Emergency Traffic related to the Mayday, or notification of a secondary emergency such as the need to abandon a position due to deteriorating conditions. All personnel shall remain alert for an instruction to change radio channels.
17. Mayday situations have been resolved because firefighters have continued to perform their assigned duties, and extinguished the fire, completed the ventilation assignment, etc. On the other hand, Mayday situations have turned tragic because firefighters have abandoned their positions in an uncoordinated attempt to help the trapped members.