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| **Rapid Intervention Teams** | Related Policies: Accountability Procedures; Operations at Structure Fires; SCBA; ICS; Building or Area Evacuations |
| *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 KY Statutes: |
| OSHA: 29 CFR 1910.134, 1910.156 |
| NFPA Standard: 1500 Ch. 8, 1561 |
| Date Implemented: | Review Date: |

Purpose: The purpose of this SOP is to provide a standardized method of ensuring that properly trained and equipped personnel are available to rescue members who are operating at working structure fires.

Policy: It is the policy of the fire department to provide personnel for the rescue of members operating at working structure fires in compliance with NFPA 1500, Ch. 8.8

Definitions

**Assemble:** The Rapid Intervention Team shall locate and physically bring the required equipment with them to their staging area.

**Available:** Means that Rapid Intervention Team has gathered the required equipment and is available for immediate deployment.

**Incident Commander –** The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and the release of resources**.** Where the IC 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.

**Mayday:** A radio code word indicating that a life is in danger, and immediate assistance is needed.

**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.

**Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT)** means a team of at least two members equipped with appropriate protective clothing, SCBA and such other specialized equipment as are necessary given the specifics of the operation,located on scene, immediately available for the rescue of a member or company should the need arise during the early stages of an incident for the rescue of a member or a crew if the need arises. An IRIT is intended to meet the requirements of an NFPA 1500 defined rapid intervention crew.

**Rapid Intervention Team:** At least four personnel supervised by a company officer, fully equipped with appropriate protective clothing, SCBA and such other specialized equipment as are necessary given the specifics of the operation,located on scene, immediately available for the rescue of a member or company should the need arise. Rapid Intervention Team may be abbreviated RIT, and the term is intended to be synonymous with the term rapid intervention crew (RIC).

**EDITOR’s Note:** NFPA 1500 allows a rapid intervention team to consist of two members. NFPA 1710 requires four members supervised by a company officer. The four-person level of RIT staffing is strongly recommended as a minimum. Departments that cannot meet this requirement should edit the policy to reflect their staffing levels.

**Working Structure Fire:** A fire in a structure that requires the use of a 1 ½” or larger fire attack hose line and also requires the use of SCBA for members entering the hazardous area

1. **Rapid Intervention Team Objectives and Planning**
2. There are six primary situations in which a Rapid Intervention Team may be needed at an emergency scene. They are:
3. Firefighter or multiple firefighters lost, disoriented or out of air.
4. Firefighter or firefighters who have become entangled.
5. Firefighter or multiple firefighters who are injured and are physically unable to remove themselves.
6. Firefighter or multiple firefighters cut off by fire.
7. Firefighter or firefighters who have fallen through a floor or roof.
8. Firefighter or firefighters entrapped due to structural collapse.
9. At structure fires in residential occupancies of three or less units, the RIT shall be configured and prepared to locate and remove two firefighters.
10. At structure fires in all other occupancies, the RIT shall be configured and prepared to locate and remove four firefighters.
11. The RIT reports to the Incident Commander or the Operations Section Chief, if that position has been filled. **ONLY THESE OFFICERS MAY DEPLOY THE RIT**.
12. **Under no circumstances shall the RIT self-deploy.**

# **Rapid Intervention Team Assignment**

1. In the initial stages of a working structure fire when only one team is operating in the hazardous area, a minimum of four members shall be required, consisting of two members working as a team to enter the hazardous area and two standby members present outside the hazardous area available for assistance or rescue.
2. The standby members shall be responsible for maintaining a constant awareness of the number and identity of members operating in the hazardous area, their location and function, and time of entry. In addition, one of the standby members shall be permitted to perform other duties outside of the hazardous area, such as the incident commander, aide, etc.
3. The standby members shall remain in radio, visual, voice or signal line communications with the entry team.
4. Standby members shall not be assigned a critical task(s) the stoppage of which to assist in or perform rescue would clearly jeopardize the safety and health of any fire fighter working at the incident. Standby members shall not engage in other activities that will inhibit the member’s ability to assist in or perform rescue, or are of such importance that they cannot be abandoned without placing other personnel in danger.
5. Standby members shall be equipped with full protective clothing, protective equipment, and SCBA appropriate for the risk that might be encountered and shall be immediately accessible if needed for rescue activities inside the hazardous area occurs.
6. Standby members shall don full protective clothing, protective equipment, and SCBA prior to entering the hazardous area.
7. Once a second crew is assigned or operating in the hazardous area, the incident shall no longer be considered to be in the initial stages and the Incident Commander shall ensure that an initial rapid intervention team is assigned by one of the following:
	1. Assigning two personnel to form an initial rapid intervention team (IRIT)
	2. Identifying on-scene members performing other functions that can be safely be stopped, and who can be tasked to redeploy as a rapid intervention team
	3. On scene members designated and dedicated as rapid intervention team.
8. As the incident expands in size or complexity, **including any requests for additional companies**, the Incident Commander shall ensure that a RIT, or multiple RITs, are provided upon the arrival of these additional companies/crews.

# **Operations at Structure Fires**

1. Upon arriving on scene or assignment as a RIT, the RIT Officer shall report to the Incident Commander. If more than one company/crew is assigned as a RIT Company, the IC shall designate which company officer shall be in overall command of the RIT, or assign each team a designated area of responsibility. While the RIT officer is conferring with the IC, the remaining members of the RIT will assemble all necessary equipment and prepare for deployment.
2. Unless given specific orders by the IC, the RIT Officer shall immediately begin a size up of the scene, including the building on fire, the exposures, and factors that will impact firefighting operations as well as the rescue of firefighters who may be trapped. These factors include:
3. Building construction
4. Fire conditions
5. Weather conditions
6. Access points
7. Hazardous conditions and materials
8. Obstacles to access (such as bars on windows, doors that are chained, locked or blocked, etc.)
9. Location of the Command Post and the locations of companies operating on scene
10. Location of the EMS – Rehab Sector
11. Where appropriate, the RIT Officer should brief the IC on any conditions which were observed during the size up, and which may impact fireground decision-making.
12. The RIT shall assemble the following equipment as soon as possible after their arrival on the scene. This should be done simultaneously with the RIT Officer conferring with the IC and conducting the size up.
13. Thermal Imaging Camera
14. SCBA RIT Pack with universal air connection
15. Minimum of 2 SCBAs (complete sets)
16. Minimum of 2 spare SCBA cylinders
17. Search rope
18. Handtools, including and least a halligan and an ax
19. Portable hydraulic forcible entry tool
20. Sledge hammer
21. Stokes Litter
22. Saws
23. Scene Specific Tools

**Editor’s Note:** *NFPA 1500, 2013 Ed. Ch. 8.8.5 requires that RITs at an incident where any SCBA being used are equipped with a RIC universal air connection (UAC) shall have specialized rescue equipment necessary to complete the RIC AUC connection to a supplied air source. The equipment must meet the requirements of NFPA 1981 and shall have a minimum of 1200 L of breathing air before entering the hazard area. Departments that do not have SCBA with this UAC fitting and do not anticipate working with mutual aid units that do, may delete “b” above. Note that a standard Scott 4.5 30 minute cylinder is rated at 1,280 liters.*

1. The RIT shall also ensure that the following equipment is readily available for their sole and exclusive use:
2. Positive Pressure Fan or smoke ejector
3. Hose line (appropriate size and length)
4. Ground ladder (appropriate size)

**NOTE:** **RIT Officers must be cognizant that hose lines and ground ladders, which are already in use at the fire scene, may not be available for their utilization in an emergency**. Also, locating an available hose line may not be sufficient if the apparatus that is pumping has no available discharge ports or available gpm capacity to feed an additional hose line. *It is the responsibility of the RIT Officer to ensure that these matters are evaluated and addressed*. If an additional engine company, complete with feeders, is needed to pump at a scene in order to ensure that the RIT will have a handline available, it is incumbent upon the RIT Officer to work through the Incident Commander to accomplish this task.

1. After completing the above tasks, the RIT shall position themselves at or adjacent to the command post. Given the specifics of a particular incident, the RIT may be located at a better tactical location, with the approval of the IC.
2. At all times members of the RIT shall monitor the fireground radio channel. Members shall be alert for urgent, distress or “Mayday” reports from members operating at the scene, the RIT Officer will ensure that the IC has received such messages.
3. Members of the RIT shall, to the greatest extent possible, maintain an awareness of the location of all companies operating at the scene.
4. Once assembled, the RIT shall remain together, intact as a unit throughout the incident, ready to be deployed by the Incident commander.

# **Command and Control**

1. The IC should specifically designate one or more companies as the RITs commensurate with the needs of the situation.
2. As the incident expands in size and complexity, including any requests for additional companies, the Incident Commander shall ensure that a RIT is provided upon the arrival of these additional units.
3. As a guideline, four firefighters is the minimum size for a RIT at a fire in a residential occupancy of three or less units. In larger occupancies or for multiple alarm fires, the RIT shall be composed of at least two (2) four-person companies or crews, preferably an engine and a ladder company, under the command of a single officer.
4. The IC may utilize the RIT to perform on-scene duties that will NOT INTERFERE with their primary mission. Such duties may include raising ground ladders, performing exterior recon and size-up, placing of fire-line tape, etc. Use of a RIT in this regard may only be considered AFTER the RIT has assembled the required equipment.
5. The RIT shall not be utilized to perform tasks which would:
6. Require them to utilize SCBA
7. Would tend to tire out crew members, particularly in warm weather
8. Would take them to a remote location of the scene
9. Would otherwise prevent or hamper immediate deployment.
10. The IC should always consider the use of multiple RITs where the logistics are such that a single RIT (even if made up of 2 or 3 individual companies/crews) cannot quickly deploy to all parts of an incident scene. Such circumstances include:
11. Large buildings
12. High rise buildings
13. Fires in large commercial complexes where multiple buildings are involved
14. Fires in residential apartment complexes involving multiple buildings (so-called Garden Apartments)
15. Where multiple RITs are utilized they shall be designated as RIT 1, RIT 2, RIT 3, etc.

**NOTE:** This provision refers to the existence of two or more designated RITs that will operate in entirely different parts of a fire scene. It does not refer to the use of two or three fire companies who are assigned to work together as a single RIT.

1. In extremely hot or extremely cold weather, the Incident Commander must consider providing relief for RIT personnel.
2. The Incident Commander shall maintain a RIT throughout the incident, until the incident is under control or personnel are no longer operating in a hazardous area.

## Deployment of Rapid Intervention Teams

In the event that a Mayday is reported, or a firefighter or firefighters are missing, lost, cutoff by fire, heat or smoke, or otherwise unable to leave the building without assistance, the Incident Commander shall:

1. Acknowledge the Mayday.
2. Obtain the LUNAR Information from the firefighter reporting the Mayday. LUNAR information refers to:

**L** – Location

**U** – Unit I.D.

**N** – Name of member

**A** – Assignment

**R** – Resources needed

1. 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).
2. Request additional resources (transmit an additional alarm).
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 may help relieve the problem of radio channel overload.
6. 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.
7. 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 the Rapid Intervention Group and perhaps another officer to assume responsibility for the firefighting operations.
8. Where the location of the firefighter reporting the Mayday is uncertain, either the Incident Commander or the Rapid Intervention Group should communicate with the firefighter 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, banging a tool, etc.
9. 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.
10. 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.

## Rapid Intervention Group Operations

1. Upon being deployed, the RIT shall be re-designated as the Rapid Intervention Group, under the initial command of the RIT Officer.
2. If sufficient radio channels are available, the Rapid Intervention Group should communicate with the IC (or Operations Section Chief when assigned) on a separate radio channel from the Mayday and fireground operations.

**NOTE:** There needs to be a clear channel of communication between the Rapid Intervention Group and the IC/Ops at all times. It is crucial to the safety of RIT personnel, as well as the trapped member(s), that all communications regarding the rescue effort be clear, concise, and unimpeded by urgent fireground messages concerning the operations at the scene and/or PAR/Roll calls. Such communication interruptions could have devastating consequences to the trapped member and/or RIT personnel. Use of a separate Rapid Intervention channel requires adequate personnel at the command post to manage multi-channel radio communications. An IC cannot possible be expected to monitor two or more radio channels by him/herself.

1. The Rapid Intervention Group supervisor shall ensure that at least one member of the team leaves their radio on the fireground channel being utilized for the incident, and monitors it for messages from the trapped member.
2. The objective of the Rapid Intervention Group shall be to:
3. Locate the trapped or missing member, utilizing such tactics as the Rapid Intervention Group supervisor shall determine
4. Ensure the member or members has adequate breathing air and is protected from immediate danger
5. Rescue or remove the member if at all possible, utilizing such tactics as the Rapid Intervention Group supervisor shall determine
6. If the missing or trapped member or members cannot be immediately removed, the Rapid Intervention Group supervisor shall utilize every available means to safeguard the members, including through the use of:
7. SCBA or supplied air
8. Handlines
9. Positive Pressure Ventilation/smoke ejector
10. EMS Personnel
11. Request from the IC, such additional resources to assist in the operation as may be needed.