

	<b>TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE</b>  <b>Department Best Practices</b>	<b>A105</b>
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	<b>Effective:</b> 8/1/2017  <b>Rescinds:</b>
<b>MAYDAY and Rapid Intervention Operations</b>		<b>Reference:</b> AFD A105.2  <b>Application:</b> Shift Personnel

## I. Purpose

To establish strategic philosophy and tactics-tasks needed to safely and efficiently handle a MAYDAY situation.

## II. Background

Time and again, Close Call and Line of Duty Death reports have demonstrated that common denominators continue to contribute to lost and/or trapped firefighter situations. These are the following:

- A lack of initial and continuing size-up of the structure, smoke and fire conditions.
- A lack of accountability.
- A lack of proper, disciplined communication.
- A lack of coordinated and effective ventilation.

The initial Command and Crews set the stage for the outcome of the incident (“the fire goes as the first five minutes go”). The discipline they exhibit in initially forming a strategy and following through with individual, crew and division accountability may be what allows each firefighter to go home after a successful attack.

When a MAYDAY is called, the same conditions apply (“the MAYDAY goes as the first five minutes go”). Command must perform or delegate a size-up of the MAYDAY conditions as well as a size-up of what is needed to continue suppression efforts in progress. Only then can a determination be made as to the best route to handle the MAYDAY.

Most MAYDAYs are handled by other nearby firefighters, not by an organized Rapid Intervention Company (RIC). The interior crews (Inside Division) may be in the best position to handle the problem, and disciplined communication must continue with them. The problem must be defined before actions such as a full evacuation, change of mode of operation, and/or Rapid Intervention Company deployments are initiated. A definition of the problem is the first imperative. We need to figure out the best way to continue the attack on the initial problem and simultaneously handle the MAYDAY situation.

## The MAYDAY Philosophy:

- Company Officers and Individual firefighters must recognize conditions that lead to a MAYDAY, and have accountability for themselves and their crew/Division/Group.
- Once a MAYDAY is called, Command must
  - Quickly and accurately define the problem and set priorities;
  - Decide whether the MAYDAY can be resolved by inside crews;
  - Complete a size-up of conditions related to the MAYDAY and a size-up of on-going emergency operations;
  - Call early for additional resources;
  - Ensure fire suppression efforts continue.

At all structure fire responses, MFR policies require personnel assigned to ensure safety. The Two-in/Two-out requirement will be satisfied by the formation of an Outside Team from the first arriving apparatus. The Driver-Operator and one firefighter (the Outside Team Monitor-OTM) remain out of the Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health environment (IDLH) to staff and perform the functions of the Outside Team. As first alarm companies continue to arrive, a dedicated Rapid Intervention Company (RIC) will be established from that complement of resources. The company assigned as the RIC Crew will work under the supervision of a Division or Group Supervisor as incident needs dictate. If there is a RIC activation, this Crew becomes one of the Firefighter Rescue Crews that will make up the Mayday Firefighter Rescue Group, led by a Firefighter Rescue Group Supervisor.

When activated to perform a firefighter rescue, the purpose of the Firefighter Rescue Group is to locate the downed firefighter(s), communicate a size-up of conditions and needs, and when necessary, protect the firefighter in place until extrication is accomplished. If there are significant technical aspects associated with the MAYDAY rescue effort, it is important that crews having equipment and training in this discipline be part of the Firefighter Rescue Group.

Situations which will cause a Division Supervisor and RIC Officer to begin to prepare for a potential MAYDAY event will include but not be limited to the following:

- A firefighter reporting “MAYDAY” on any radio channel
- Low air reports by a firefighter inside the IDLH
- Crewmember not accounted for
- Structural collapse in the area of operation
- Rapid fire progression in the area of operation

*This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department SOG on MAYDAY and Rapid Intervention Operations. It has been adopted by Manchaca Fire Rescue as an Auto Aid partner to maximize standardization between partner agencies. Variations and additions to the language from the parent AFD document will be signified by text in italics. Generic changes that do not affect content such as formatting and changing “AFD” to “MFR” will not be noted.*

### III. Policy

- A. **Establishment of RIC.** Command will establish and maintain a RIC at potentially hazardous incidents through the stabilization phase. If there is a MAYDAY event, this Company will be immediately available to assist in the rescue efforts.

### IV. Best Practices

**The following best practices should be followed at all firefighting and emergency scene operations, except where deviation can be justified by Fire Officers. Any significant deviation should be communicated to responding/on-scene units as soon as possible.**

- A. **MAYDAY Preparation.** MAYDAY Event Preparation (before the event occurs)

- 1. **Command.** Command is responsible for:

- a. **Initial RIC team.** Designating one of the first alarm companies as the RIC at every potentially hazardous incident. Command will advise by radio which Company is designated as the RIC,
- b. **Spec Ops event.** On any alarm classified as a Special Operations incident, following Special Operations RIC protocols
- c. **ISO assignment.** Ensuring that an Incident Safety Officer (ISO) is assigned as soon as possible
- d. **Division/Group oversight.** Assigning and briefing Division/Group Supervisors to oversee all applicable responsibilities and tactical functions, including RIC
- e. **Interior size-up.** Receiving size-ups from initial interior crews and the Inside Division when established
- f. **Additional resources.** Requesting additional resources to establish a RIC when necessary
- g. **Maintenance of RIC.** Ensuring the RIC remains in place at least until the incident is stabilized

- 2. **Incident Safety Officer (ISO).** The Incident Safety Officer is responsible for:

- a. **Oversite.** Overall incident safety concerns
- b. **Division/Group readiness.** Ensuring that the Division/Group Supervisor responsible for RIC and the RIC Crew have the equipment and information they need to perform their assignments
- c. **TIC available.** Ensuring that each RIC has a working Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC)
- d. **Emergency channel.** Ensuring that the mobile radio dedicated to monitoring the emergency channel located at the Command Post is functioning and that the assigned incident emergency channel is selected. The Incident Safety Officer should call the RIC on the assigned incident emergency channel from the Command Post to test the Command Post and RIC's radios

- 3. **Division/Group Supervisor responsible for RIC.** The Division/Group Supervisor is responsible for:

- a. **Oversee RIC.** Ensuring that RIC has been assigned and the RIC functions are being properly addressed

- b. **Availability of RIC.** Ensuring that the RIC remains available until deactivated by Command
- c. **Softening tasks.** Ensuring that personnel perform appropriate softening of the structure, and work with the RIC, sizing up the structure for potential firefighter rescue needs. Softening refers to proactive RIC functions such as forcible entry/exit, laddering the building, etc.
- d. **Additional resources.** Requesting from Command additional resources when establishment of a Rapid Intervention Group is appropriate
- e. **Focus of RIC crew.** Ensuring that the designated RIC shall not be assigned other fire ground duties not related to the RIC function
- f. **Communications monitoring.** Monitoring fire ground radio traffic to note any changing conditions that may lead to a MAYDAY event
- g. **Periodic reports.** Keeping Command/Operations informed of significant changes on the fire ground.

4. **RIC Crew Leader.** The RIC Crew Leader is the Company Officer assigned to the RIC function. The RIC crew leader should normally report to and work with a Division/Group Supervisor once established. The RIC Crew Leader is responsible for:

- a. **Briefing.** Obtaining a briefing from the Supervisor or Command/Operations
- b. **Checklist.** Reviewing the RIC Crew Leader Checklist
- c. **Equipment.** Obtaining the RIC equipment
- d. **Perform 360.** Completing a 360 of the building, noting fire conditions, crew locations, doors, windows and apparatus placement. Sharing findings with the Division/Group Supervisor
- e. **Briefing from OTM.** Checking with the Outside Team Monitor to determine what companies, their location and how many firefighters are inside the IDLH
- f. **Channel monitoring.** Confirming that the fire ground and emergency radio channels are being monitored by the RIC members
- g. **RIC water supply.** Determining which engine(s) could supply the RIC fire flow needs if the RIC is deployed.

5. **RIC Water Supply Pump Operator(s).** Pump Operator(s) identified as potential RIC water supplies are responsible for:

- a. **Water supply.** Obtaining adequate water supply for the RIC fire flow needs
- b. **Readiness.** Ensuring that the apparatus water tank is full and the pump is engaged
- c. **Fireground channel.** Monitoring the fire ground radio channel while being prepared to switch to the designated radio channel if RIC is activated.

B. **Initial actions when a MAYDAY occurs.** *There are several considerations to take into account during a MAYDAY event.* Command SHOULD NOT immediately change the Incident Action Plan, order the evacuation of the structure, or activate the RIC without a plan.

1. **Defining the problem.** Command will begin the process of defining the problem. Considerations include:

- a. **Priority Radio Traffic.** Command declares “Priority Radio Traffic Only;”
- b. **Contact MAYDAY firefighter.** Contact the MAYDAY Firefighter to determine nature of emergency (low-air, lost, entrapped, etc.)
- c. **CAN reports.** Obtain a situation report from affected Division/Group Supervisor or interior crews
- d. **Needed response.** Determine if the MAYDAY Firefighter rescue can be handled with nearby crews or will a RIC Activation be needed
- e. **PAR.** Order a PAR beginning with crews operating in the IDLH,
- f. **Special building considerations.** Determine any special concerns related to building type (commercial, high-rise, etc.)
- g. **Organization.** If RIC is activated and becomes part of the Firefighter Rescue Group, staff another RIC
- h. **Backfill of duties.** Staff those essential functions vacated by the members who make up the Firefighter Rescue Group
- i. **Special needs.** Determine if specialized resources are needed. If there are technical rescue aspects, consider use of available Special Operations crews and assets
- j. **Additional resources.** Ensure that the Firefighter Rescue Group has appropriate resources to sustain their operation. Call for an additional alarm early

### C. MAYDAY event mitigation.

1. **Actions for mitigated event.** If the MAYDAY event is mitigated by inside crews, Command should take the following actions:
  - a. **Announcement.** Announce on the radio that the MAYDAY situation has been resolved.
  - b. **Relief crews.** Determine if additional personnel will be needed to relieve the inside crews to achieve incident stabilization.
  - c. **Greater alarm.** Determine if an additional alarm will be needed to conclude the incident.
2. **Command actions for RIC activation.** If Command determines that RIC must be activated, Command should take the following actions:
  - a. **Announcement.** Announce on the radio that RIC is being activated and ensure an appropriate action plan is in place.
  - b. **Firefighter Rescue Group Supervisor.** Designate a Firefighter Rescue Group Supervisor and ensure the Group is assigned the appropriate resources (personnel and equipment),
  - c. **Greater alarm.** Confirm an additional alarm is responding.
  - d. **Continued operations.** Ensure that required Operations Section functions are staffed and addressed.
  - e. **Additional RIC.** Staff a replacement RIC.
  - f. **MAYDAY Monitor.** If needed, appoint a MAYDAY Monitor to keep in radio contact with the MAYDAY Firefighter.

- g. **Continued size-up.** Continue ongoing size-up and ensure that all required ICS Sections, Branches and Command Staff functions are filled.
  - h. **Notifications.** Prompt Dispatch to notify *the MFR Chiefs and the AFD Shift Commander* that there has been a MAYDAY Event.
  - i. **Resolution.** Announce on the radio when the MAYDAY situation has been resolved.
3. **Incident Safety Officer actions.** If RIC is deployed, the Incident Safety Officer should take the following actions:
- a. **Continued functions.** Continue to function as overall Incident Safety Officer,
  - b. **Other duties.** If ordered by Command, assist with MAYDAY Firefighter Rescue coordination at the Command Post.
4. **Firefighter Rescue Group.** If RIC is deployed, a Firefighter Rescue Group should be established and the following actions should take place:
- a. **Primary role.** The Firefighter Rescue Group Supervisor should be designated by Command. The Group Supervisor's primary role will be to direct the firefighter rescue effort.
  - b. **Duties.** The Firefighter Rescue Group Supervisor will:
    - 1) Confer with Command in defining the problem and developing the MAYDAY Firefighter rescue action plan using the AWARE system (Air, Water, A Radio, and Extrication).
    - 2) Coordinate with the Firefighter Rescue Crew Leader(s) a search plan to determine the best route to locate and remove the MAYDAY Firefighter(s)
    - 3) Inform members of the Firefighter Rescue Group of the rescue plan
    - 4) Request from Command the resources necessary to support the rescue effort
      - a) Air Manager if needed
      - b) Personnel required to sustain a prolonged rescue effort (crew rotations, weather extremes)
      - c) Specialized equipment or training (e.g. supplied air respirator cart, shoring and/or extrication)
5. **Firefighter Rescue Crew Leader actions.** If RIC is deployed, the Firefighter Rescue Crew Leader(s) should take the following actions:
- a. **Determine plan.** Confer with Firefighter Rescue Group Supervisor to ensure a clear understanding of the rescue action plan.
  - b. **Air monitoring.** Retain primary responsibility for air monitoring of their personnel.
  - c. **Coordination.** Coordinate the actions of their Company with the actions of Crews operating with them.
  - d. **CAN reports.** Give timely status reports to the Group Supervisor (e.g. Conditions-Actions-Needs [C.A.N.] report).
  - e. **Monitor for fatigue.** Monitor the overall status of their firefighters operating in the IDLH to prevent safety issues associated with fatigue.

#### D. **Occupancy/Building Construction and Communications Considerations.**

1. **Occupancy and construction hazards.** Occupancy type (e.g. residential, commercial, high-rise or industrial) and building construction type (open or enclosed, Type I through Type V) each have unique problems regarding firefighter safety. Command, Company Officers and all Firefighters must be keenly aware of the hazards associated with each and adjust their strategies, tactics and actions accordingly.
2. **Disciplined communications.** Disciplined emergency scene communication is vital to a safe and effective operation. When a MAYDAY event occurs effective communications is never more important to avert a tragedy. Any particular communications model effectiveness will be dependent on the situation at hand.
3. **Guiding principles.** Regardless of the nature of the incident, Command and Company Officers shall be guided by the principles described in Sections IV.C.1-5 above while addressing MAYDAY event preparations and mitigation.