| | **TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5**<br>**MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE**<br><br>**Department Best Practices**<br><br>Authorized by:<br><br>_Fire Chief Chris Barron_ | **B103** |
|---|---|---|
| | | **Effective:** 8/1/2017 |
| | | **Rescinds:** |
| | **Firefighter Accountability** | **Reference:** AFD B103.1 |
| | | **Application:** Shift Personnel |

## I. Purpose

To enhance fireground safety by providing a method of tracking and accounting for companies and personnel at an incident scene as they move from one functional area to another.

## II. Background

Case studies reveal that a factor commonly contributing to firefighter fatalities is the loss of accountability of the firefighter. Often a crucial amount of time passes before others on a scene become aware that a firefighter is missing. An accountability system, faithfully utilized at all incidents in which firefighters enter a hazardous area, helps to ensure that a rescue can be mounted without delay should a firefighter become lost or trapped. For an accountability system to work, a commitment up and down the ranks has to occur:

- Incident Commanders are responsible for tracking and documenting company assignments utilizing tactical worksheets and incident action plans.

- Division Supervisors must know which companies are operating in their division, what their assignment is, and the number of firefighters on each company.

- Company Officers must realize they are responsible (accountable) for themselves and their crew. Maintaining company integrity is the responsibility of the Company Officer. The Company Officer must also know what division/group they are operating in and report task and company location updates to their Division Supervisor. Situations occur where a company necessarily has to be split up, but the Company Officer is still responsible for the whereabouts of his or her crewmembers.

- Firefighters must realize they are responsible (accountable) for themselves, and must know where their Company Officer is at all times. If they become separated, the firefighter knows they are responsible for reconnecting with their Officer. Cooperation, attitude and commitment are important for a successful accountability system.

History has demonstrated that accountability of individual firefighters is maintained primarily and most effectively by SOG pre-assignments initially and then through the Division Supervisors awareness of

companies and number of personnel operating in their area. At the top of this system is Command; who has the capability of tracking the companies assigned to the incident as well as the personnel who are logged in on those companies.

*This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department SOG on firefighter accountability. 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. **Command responsibility.** Command will maintain firefighter accountability at all incidents.

B. **Company assignment boards.** All Company Officers shall fill out the assignment board at the beginning of each shift. The assignment board will list the personnel staffing the apparatus for that shift along with the initial incident scene assignment for each individual. This should include who will be assigned the Outside Team Monitor position.

C. **Company Officer responsibilities.** All Company Officers shall maintain an accurate and current list of their company members on the CAD system. Company Officers shall adhere to applicable SOG's for the incident and report by radio any deviation to pre-assignments. Later arriving Company Officers shall report their company's presence to the Division/Group Supervisor when assigned.

D. **Division/Group responsibilities.** Division/Group Supervisors shall maintain accountability of all Companies and number of personnel operating in their charge.

E. **Firefighter responsibilities.** All Firefighters will be trained and follow the accountability policy and guidelines at all incidents.

## 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. **Terminology.** When referring to firefighter accountability, the following terms shall apply:

1. **MDC.** Mobile Data Computer

2. **PAR.** Personnel Accountability Report – a report given to or asked for by an Officer that all of the firefighters are accounted for and their whereabouts are known

3. **IDLH.** Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health

4. **Rally Point.** A rally point is a location outside IDLH or the structure where firefighters will gather when a PAR is called for

5. **Tactical Withdrawal**. A tactical withdrawal is an order to leave the IDLH or structure, safely and quickly, taking hose and tools while exiting.

6. **Emergency Evacuation.** An emergency evacuation is an order to immediately leave the IDLH or structure, leaving hose lines and equipment.

B. **Operations Units.**

1. **Accountability System Hardware: MDC Log-in.**

   a. **Shift change.** At shift change the Officer in charge of each apparatus will ensure log-in on the unit's MDC of all personnel riding that shift.

   b. **Updates during shift.** If at any time during the shift a personnel change occurs on the unit the Officer in charge will immediately update the log-in to reflect the actual members riding on the apparatus.

2. **Accountability System Personnel.**

   a. **Command information.** Command will maintain a listing of all apparatus and have access to a listing of all personnel present on the emergency scene.

   b. **Pass-on of accountability info.** Command must maintain knowledge of the first arriving companies and their locations and pass this information on when dividing the incident.

   c. **Tracking within incident subdivisions.** Command will coordinate with the Sections Chiefs, Branch Managers, Division/Group Supervisors and functional area Managers (Staging, Rehab) tracking of each company's movements and location on the incident scene in real-time.

   d. **Communication with Command.** Section Chiefs and Branch Managers will coordinate with Command the companies assigned to their area of the incident

   e. **Communication within Sections.** Section Chiefs and Branch Managers will coordinate with Division/Groups Supervisors which companies are assigned to the Supervisor.

f. **Communication within Divisions/Groups.** Division/Group Supervisors will coordinate with Company Officers their assignment, area of operation and reconciling the number of personnel riding.

g. **Supervision within Companies.** Company Officers will supervise the members of their company, brief them on their assignment, and be aware of their location at all times.

h. **Firefighter situational awareness.** Firefighters will maintain an awareness of the location of their officer and other company members at all times on the emergency scene.

3. **The PAR Procedure.**

a. **Use of Chain of Command.** When a PAR is taken, this roll call is relayed up the chain of command to the individual who initiated the PAR. Members will report to their Company Officer, each Company Officer will report to their Division/Group Supervisor, Division/Group Supervisors will report to their chain of command.

b. **Priority of PAR.** Those members operating in the IDLH will be accounted for first, then work outward to those working in increasingly less hazardous areas of the incident.

c. **Reporting PAR.** Firefighters can report to their Company Officer face to face (or by radio if necessary). Company Officers can report to their Division/Group Supervisor face to face (or by radio if necessary). Division/Group Supervisors, Branch Directors, and Section Chiefs should give PAR reports by radio or face to face. Fire Dispatch can monitor the PAR roll call and assist with tracking unit status but Command has ultimate responsibility for making sure all units are accounted for.

4. **Accountability System Emergency Protocols.**

a. **Tactical Withdrawal.** Any time Command, a Section Chief or Division/Group Supervisor deems it necessary a Tactical Withdrawal may be ordered and this should be followed by a PAR in the affected area of operation.

b. **Emergency Evacuation.** Any time Command, a Section Chief or Division/Group Supervisor deems it necessary an Emergency Evacuation may be ordered and this should be followed by a PAR in the affected area of operation.

c. **Rally Points.** If either of the above are ordered Company Officers will place as the highest priority obtaining a PAR for their crew. This can be facilitated by using an identified Rally Point where the crew is to assemble for PAR should they exit different points of the structure. Preferred Rally Points for different incident types are:

1) **Residential/Commercial.** For residential and/or commercial structure fires, the Rally Point for the Inside Division shall be the door where the fire attack line enters, just outside the IDLH.

2) **High-rise.** For high-rise structure fires, the Rally Point shall be the fire attack stairwell, just outside the IDLH.

d. **Radio discipline.** When members hear the terms "Tactical Withdrawal", "Emergency Evacuation", "Emergency Traffic", "Mayday", or "PAR" being used, they can be proactive by immediately becoming more disciplined in their radio traffic, even if Command has not yet called for "Priority Radio Traffic Only".

e. **Emergency communications.** If communicating Emergency information becomes an issue for Command he/she can notify Dispatch to sound an alert tone (refer to MFR Best Practies B402 Emergency Terminology) to assist with getting the "Emergency Traffic" message out. Another possibility would be for Command to request "Priority Radio Traffic Only" (refer to MFR Best Practices B401 Radio Communications)

5. **Accountability System for Special Operations.**

a. **Applicability of this document.** All aspects of this document that are applicable to Technical Rescue incidents will be in effect at those operations.

b. **NFPA compliance.** All requirements of NFPA 1670 (Training and Operations for Technical Rescue) shall be followed.

C. **Staff/support personnel and all other non-Operations members.**

1. **Checking in.** Non-Operations members who will be operating on the incident scene will first check in at the Command Post. Any staff/support member entering the fireground must be wearing proper protective clothing and must check in with the Division/Group Supervisor in charge of the area prior to entry.

D. **When a Supervisor or Company Officer is not able to obtain a positive PAR.**

1. **Firefighter not aware.** Usually, this will happen because a firefighter did not realize that a PAR has been requested.

2. **Partial crew missing.** If one or more members of the crew are accounted for, they can provide the name, rank, and probable location for their missing member(s)

3. **Entire crew missing.** If all members of a crew are unaccounted for, Command can use the MDC "Get Personnel" function under the "Scene Status" button. This will only be accurate if the MDC log-in was kept up-to-date for the apparatus.

4. **Calling MAYDAY.** If the Supervisor or Company Officer is not able to obtain a PAR after a reasonable length of time, consider calling a MAYDAY (see MFR Best Practices A105 MAYDAY and Rapid Intervention Operations).