

	TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE Department Best Practices	B402
	Authorized by:  Fire Chief Chris Barron	Effective: 2/13/2018 Rescinds: Reference: AFD 402.1 Application: Shift Personnel
Emergency Terminology		

I. Purpose

To clarify radio emergency terminology in order to ensure proper and clear communications for organizations utilizing the Austin/Travis County Regional Radio System.

II. Background

This document is a direct adaptation of the Austin Fire Department Policy on Emergency Terminology. 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. **Terminology.** The following terminology shall be the standardized radio terms utilized by organizations utilizing the Austin/Travis County Regional Radio System.

1. **MAYDAY.** “MAYDAY” is a radio transmission used to alert responders on an emergency that there is a firefighter in distress. When the term “MAYDAY” is used, it should be immediately followed by a description of the conditions that necessitated the “MAYDAY.” The most important questions the firefighter in distress needs to answer are “who is it, what is the problem, and where is the firefighter located?”
2. **Emergency traffic.** “Emergency Traffic” is a radio transmission used for emergency communications requiring immediate attention of all responders on an emergency scene. A declaration of “Emergency Traffic” may be communicated by any emergency responder.
3. **PAR.** “PAR” (Personnel Accountability Report) is a report given to or asked for by an Officer that all of the firefighters are accounted for and their whereabouts are known.

4. **Tactical withdrawal.** “Tactical Withdrawal” is an order to leave the structure, safely and quickly, taking hose and equipment while exiting.
5. **Emergency evacuation.** “Emergency Evacuation” is an order to immediately leave the structure leaving hose lines and equipment

IV. Best Practices

- A. **MAYDAY.** A “MAYDAY” may be called by any member. The declaration of a “MAYDAY” for a firefighter in distress will receive the highest priority consideration for subsequent radio traffic. Fire Dispatch will monitor the “MAYDAY” radio traffic and may need to verify Command received it. Command will follow the “MAYDAY” procedures described in MFR Best Practices A105 MAYDAY and Rapid Intervention Operations.
- B. **Emergency traffic.** The declaration of “Emergency Traffic” can be made by any member on the fireground who feels they need to communicate critical time-sensitive information to other personnel on scene. The member communicating the “Emergency Traffic” should immediately describe the issue or situation. Command should acknowledge the “Emergency Traffic” report. If Command does not immediately respond, Fire Dispatch shall repeat the “Emergency Traffic” message on the tactical channel(s) assigned to the incident. Examples of messages warranting the declaration of “Emergency Traffic” include immediate rescue of civilians, imminent structural collapse, explosions, extreme fire behavior, or a need to withdraw from the structure.
- C. **Tactical orders.** In response to the “Emergency Traffic” report, tactical orders may only be issued by the Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Operations Section Chief, or a Division/Group Supervisor.
- D. **Evacuation.** Not all “Emergency Traffic” declarations require members to leave a structure. However, if the situation does involve leaving a structure, Command should direct Fire Dispatch to transmit an alert tone followed by an order to leave the structure over the assigned tactical channel. Per MFR Best Practices B103 Firefighter Accountability, there are two types of orders that Command can give when having firefighters leave a structure (Tactical Withdrawal or Emergency Evacuation). Therefore, Command needs to specify which type of exit is ordered.
- E. **Post evacuation action.** Following an order to leave the structure or area, the Incident Commander should immediately initiate a “PAR”, starting with the Division or Group(s) that was/were inside the IDLH atmosphere.
- F. **Exterior personnel.** Personnel assigned responsibilities on the exterior of an involved structure (protecting exposures, operating pumps, etc.) are not immediately affected by a “leave the structure order” and must maintain their responsibility.

G. **PAR.** Command or a Division/Group Supervisor may request a “PAR” after certain tactical benchmarks occur. These include:

1. “MAYDAY” reported
2. Going from an offensive to defensive fire attack
3. A hazardous event (partial collapse, flashover, chemical release or explosion, etc.)
4. Any time Command deems necessary
5. During radio system failure (Refer to AFD Policy B401 Radio Communications)

NOTE: These tactical benchmarks shall not preclude any Division/Group Supervisor from conducting a “PAR” within their respective areas to better facilitate their ability to account for companies assigned to them.

H. **Radio discipline.** When members hear the terms “MAYDAY”, “Emergency Traffic”, 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” as described in MFR Best Practices B401 Radio Communications.