



PRINCE GEORGE FIRE AND EMS

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Date: November 1, 2014

Title: Mayday

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I. PURPOSE

To provide a logical and consistent procedure for declaring, communicating, coordinating, managing, and leading MAYDAY situations **endangering fire and EMS personnel**, and the resulting rescue efforts.

II. DEFINITIONS

Air Management – Monitoring one's air supply, consuming the finite supply of air available in an SCBA cylinder in the most efficient manner, and exiting the IDLH atmosphere before the low-air alarm sounds.

CISD – Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.

ECC – Emergency Communications Center.

Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) – Any condition that would pose an immediate or delayed threat to life, cause irreversible adverse health effects, or interfere with an individual's ability to escape unaided from a hazardous environment. (*NFPA 1500, 2007 edition*)

LUNAR – Location, Unit, Name, Assignment, Resources, and Situation.

MAYDAY – An emergency distress signal indicating that one or more fire/EMS personnel need emergency assistance.

Non-RIC Incident – Any incident for which a RIC would not be established; any incident on which there is a minimal number of units responding including, but not limited to, a single engine and a single medic unit/ambulance to mitigate the incident. Examples include, but are not limited to: a fire marshal assisting a citizen; splitting one crew to respond a brush truck on small fires; any call where the crew is split to ensure specialty unit response; smoke investigations; vehicle fires; mulch fires; etc.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) – A report requested by and communicated to the incident commander (IC), or his designee, from fire crews operating at the scene as to their location and situation.

PASS – Personal Alert Safety System.

Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) – A dedicated crew of fire fighters who are assigned for rapid deployment to rescue lost or trapped members. (*NFPA 1710, 2010 edition*)

RIC-Required Incident – Any incident for which a RIC has been or will be established.



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III. GENERAL; SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

It is imperative that fire and EMS personnel use all due precautions and take preventative steps to keep from becoming lost or trapped, or victims of hazardous situations. All fire and EMS personnel, not just incident command staff, need to perform a realistic size-up and a risk/benefit analysis for all potentially hazardous situations.

Early recognition is the key element in surviving any emergency situation. Therefore, fire and EMS personnel must recognize MAYDAY situations and declare a MAYDAY **as soon as possible**. There is a narrow window of survivability for a firefighter who is out of air, lost, or trapped. **INDIVIDUAL FIREFIGHTERS MUST NOT DELAY REPORTING TO COMMAND THAT THEY HAVE BECOME LOST, TRAPPED, OR OTHERWISE NEED ASSISTANCE!**

IV. INCIDENTS REQUIRING AN RIC (IDLH INCIDENTS)

Fire and EMS personnel **must** declare a MAYDAY for any immediately life-threatening situation including, but not limited to:

A. SITUATIONS REQUIRING A MAYDAY DECLARATION

- Personnel are entangled, trapped, or pinned, and unable to immediately self-extricate.
- Personnel have fallen through a roof or floor, and cannot be accounted for, or cannot immediately self-extricate.
- Personnel are caught in a flashover or in imminent flashover conditions.
- Personnel have become lost or disoriented, or cannot find an exit, and have no immediate means to guide themselves out (e.g., hose line or search line).
- Personnel must rescue other personnel from the building or area.
- Any air management issue that places a firefighter in immediate danger.
- Personnel are experiencing a medical emergency or have sustained an injury requiring assistance.
- Any other situation in which personnel believe the safety of themselves or a crew member may be at immediate risk of serious injury or death.
- If personnel become unaccounted for, a MAYDAY can be initiated by a fellow crew member or their company officer. A MAYDAY can also be initiated by the Incident Commander as a result of a negative PAR.



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B. EMERGENCY (MAYDAY) REQUIRED ACTIONS AT A RIC-REQUIRED INCIDENT

As soon as it has been determined that someone is in danger and there is a need to declare and communicate a MAYDAY for themselves or someone else, the following appropriate actions should be accomplished: [NOTE: NOT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE APPLICABLE IN EVERY HAZARDOUS SITUATION.]

- Stay calm; conserve air supply as much as possible.
- Activate the emergency button, if possible; declare and communicate the MAYDAY.
- Key the microphone, say “MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!” then declare that you have emergency radio traffic.
- **Report Lunar** - Once receipt of the MAYDAY is acknowledged, proceed with the MAYDAY message, speaking as calmly and clearly as possible, to include “LUNAR” information:
 - L – Location.
 - U – Unit.
 - N – Name.
 - A – Assignment.
 - R – Resources and Situation.

Example: “Second floor, Alpha/Bravo corner; Prince George Engine 110; Firefighter Doe; Division 2 fire attack; egress is blocked, need ground ladder to second floor Alpha window, Alpha/Bravo corner.”

Attempt to communicate exact location, if known. If exact location is unknown, attempt to describe surroundings. Example: "Prince George Engine 110; Firefighter Doe; I'm trapped on the second floor, in a bedroom near the rear of the structure."

If the MAYDAY message is not acknowledged by the incident commander, continue to repeat the message until the message is acknowledged.

- **Activate PASS device** - As soon as a firefighter recognizes he/she is lost or trapped, verbally declare the Mayday, and then the PASS device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. The PASS device should remain "ON" until rescued. The lost or trapped firefighter should attempt to silence the PASS device when communicating on the radio. Once radio transmissions are completed, the PASS device should be reactivated.



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- **Search for an exit** - Depending on the situation: Search for an exit; attempt to follow a hose line/life line/search rope to safety; retreat to an area of safety; or, remain stationary and assume a position that maximizes the likelihood of discovery by rescuers. Update the incident commander of all actions taken to escape or relocate, status, and condition.
- Continually monitor air supply.
- Illuminate hand lights/flashlights/strobes.
- Make noise.
- If lost or trapped as a crew, maintain crew integrity.
- **NEVER GIVE UP!**
- From time to time, a MAYDAY activation may occur accidentally. An accidental MAYDAY may only be cleared if the phrase “Accidental activation” is transmitted. Any phrases other than the aforementioned “Accidental activation” will be considered to be an actual MAYDAY activation and will be treated as such. The ECC will not repeatedly ask if this is a real MAYDAY. Once it has been determined that there is no emergency, the ECC will announce: “Attention all personnel, accidental activation, no Mayday in progress.”

C. ACTIONS OF INCIDENT COMMANDER IN RESPONSE TO A DECLARED MAYDAY AT A RIC-REQUIRED INCIDENT

- Acknowledge/Call the MAYDAY.
- Clear radio traffic.
- Gather LUNAR information – Location, Unit, Name, Assignment, Resources & Situation.
- Request additional alarms/resources – to support rescue efforts, to support suppression efforts, for specialized operations/equipment needs (e.g., structural collapse rescue, scene lighting etc.), and for adequate on-scene medical resources.
- Confirm total number of missing or trapped firefighters.
- Have missing or trapped firefighter activate PASS device for short periods.



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- Deploy the RIC to last known position of the missing firefighter(s) or the area of highest probability. The RIC may be used as a reconnaissance team and their efforts supported with fresh resources as they arrive.
- Notify the ECC to announce on all appropriate radio channels that “A firefighter rescue is in progress at [name of incident].”
- Establish additional RIC(s).
- Announce on tactical channel: “Command to all personnel, we have a firefighter(s) missing. Firefighter(s) [Last Name(s)] is/are missing. (Rank may be substituted.) Can any unit confirm his/her/their safety?” Only a unit that can confirm the safety of the firefighter(s) will report.
- To limit confusion and increase direct and dedicated communication with personnel in distress: move incident operations to a different tactical channel (if appropriate); leave personnel declaring MAYDAY and rescue operations on original tactical channel.
- Consider changing strategy to high-priority rescue.
- Conduct PAR to be consistent with Accountability Procedure (consider withdrawing companies to complete).
- Consider establishing a transport unit for sick/injured personnel.
- Assign senior officers to rescue operations and suppression operations.
- Maintain crew assignments and crew integrity.
- Maintain hold on fire/do not abandon suppression efforts/positions unless absolutely necessary.
- Consider re-deployment/re-assignment of personnel/crews to accomplish rescue if doing so might result in a more rapid rescue than deployment of the RIC, and if doing so would not negatively impact fire control efforts.
- Have truck company/special services company force open any points of entry/egress and place high-powered lights at all points of entry/egress.
- Consider strategic ventilation, locations.
- Assign a safety officer to rescue operations.
- Consider establishing a Staging Area or Base.



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- Consider having law enforcement clear a route to the hospital.
- Consider medical transport of sick/injured personnel by air.
- Have ECC make notifications to include chief officers/executive staff.
- Consider requesting CISD Team for initial defusing of personnel.
- Announce when the firefighter(s) is/are located on suppression operations tactical channel/talk group.
- Notify ECC when the firefighter(s) is/are located and to make appropriate notifications.

D. ACTIONS OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER IN RESPONSE TO A DECLARED MAYDAY AT A RIC-REQUIRED INCIDENT

When the ECC receives a MAYDAY on a RIC-required incident (See Section II - Definitions) the dispatcher on that channel will:

- Ensure that the MAYDAY is acknowledged by the incident commander.
- Immediately sound “Alert Tone #2” (warble tone) on the dispatch channel and/or the appropriate tactical channel and announce, “Attention all personnel: Communications has received a MAYDAY activation from [radio/ unit number]; all traffic standby.”
- When notified by the incident commander, the ECC will sound “Alert Tone #2” (warble tone) on the dispatch channel and/or the appropriate tactical channel and announce “Attention all personnel: a firefighter rescue in progress at [name of incident].”
- Mark the time of the firefighter rescue in progress and notify the incident commander in 10 minute intervals for the duration of the rescue.
- Ensure that the firefighter rescue tactical channel is monitored, and depending on call volume and staffing, ensure that the command/ suppression tactical channel is monitored as well.
- Make positive contact with the Fire and EMS Director by phone to advise of Mayday and rescue situation.
- When notified by the incident commander, transmit a message on the dispatch channel and/or the appropriate tactical channel announcing that the firefighter rescue operation is complete (e.g. “Attention all personnel, the firefighter rescue is complete at [name of incident] and all personnel are accounted for.”



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- Make appropriate staff notifications announcing the firefighter rescue operation is complete and all personnel are accounted for.
- From time to time, a MAYDAY activation may occur accidentally. An accidental MAYDAY may only be cleared if the phrase “**Accidental activation**” is transmitted. Any phrases other than the aforementioned “Accidental activation” will be considered to be an actual MAYDAY activation and will be treated as such. The ECC will not repeatedly ask if this is a real MAYDAY. Once it has been determined that there is no emergency, the ECC will announce: “Attention all personnel, accidental activation, no Mayday in progress.”

E. ACTIONS OF RAPID INTERVENTION CREW IN RESPONSE TO A DECLARED MAYDAY AT A RIC-REQUIRED INCIDENT

- Deploy to last known position of the missing firefighter(s) or the area of highest probability – When assigned by IC.
- When the missing firefighter(s) is/are located:
 - Check breathing.
 - Support/re-supply air supply.
 - Check for consciousness.
 - Call for help.
 - De-activate PASS device.
 - Remove to outside or move to safe location.

F. ACTIONS OF OTHER PERSONNEL ON THE INCIDENT SCENE IN RESPONSE TO A DECLARED MAYDAY AT A RIC-REQUIRED INCIDENT

- Cease radio transmission once a MAYDAY is transmitted unless their traffic is critical.
- Continue working to complete their tactical assignments unless re-assigned by their ICS overhead supervisor.
- Crews assigned to the RIC will deploy only when directed by the incident commander.



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V. INCIDENTS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE AN RIC (NON-IDLH)

A. SITUATIONS REQUIRING A MAYDAY

- Personnel are being physically assaulted, threatened with physical assault, or threatened with weapons.
- Personnel are experiencing a medical emergency or have sustained an injury requiring assistance.
- Any other situation in which personnel believe the safety of themselves or a crew member may be at immediate risk of serious injury or death.
- These are also circumstances where units on scene at a call for service may not be able to implement the mayday policy. If this occurs, fire and/or EMS personnel may also, via radio, advise “signal 1” or “signal 2”. The CO will immediately spawn a law call sheet and send the area police unit. The CO will wait 15 seconds for additional traffic from the unit calling signal 1 or signal 2. If no further information is relayed, the CO will attempt to contact the unit twice asking “Can you clear your radio?” to ascertain if everything is ok. If the unit is able to respond, the unit will update the ECC with any additional information, which will be relayed to responding officers. If the unit calling signal 1 or signal 2 does not reply, the CO will attempt no further contact and advise officers responding that there is no further contact with the unit.

B. EMERGENCY (MAYDAY) REQUIRED ACTIONS AT A NON-RIC INCIDENT

The following will outline steps to be taken when declaring a MAYDAY at a non-RIC incident. (See Section II – Definitions) [NOTE: NOT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE APPLICABLE IN EVERY HAZARDOUS SITUATION.]

- Remain calm.
- Activate the emergency button; declare and communicate the MAYDAY, if it is safe to do so.

Key the microphone, say “MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!” then declare that you have emergency radio traffic. Example: “MEDIC 1, MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!” This should be done in a calm clear tone to assure the ECC operator receives the message.

If the member(s) declaring the MAYDAY is/are in a safe position to do so, transmit via radio your exact location and type of situation generating the MAYDAY. Example: “MEDIC 1, main lobby of the public safety building, active shooter.” This should be done



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in a calm clear tone to assure the ECC operator receives the message and initiates the appropriate resources to be dispatched.

- **Evacuation.**

If the member(s) are in a position to safely evacuate from the MAYDAY generator, the member(s) should retreat to a non-hazardous location.

Once retreat has been accomplished, communicate location to the ECC. Example:

“MEDIC 1, location moved to maintenance shop adjacent to public safety building.” This should be done in a calm clear tone to assure the ECC operator receives the message.

- **Termination of a declared MAYDAY.**

The MAYDAY must be terminated in order to return to normal operations.

The member(s) should notify the ECC immediately if any event occurs that mitigates the MAYDAY generator.

Once the situation has been resolved, the MAYDAY may be terminated.

- **Accidental activation.**

From time to time, a MAYDAY activation may occur accidentally. An accidental MAYDAY may only be cleared if the phrase “**Accidental activation**” is transmitted. Any phrases other than the aforementioned “Accidental activation” will be considered to be an actual MAYDAY activation and will be treated as such. The ECC will not repeatedly ask if this is a real MAYDAY; law enforcement and agency supervisory personnel will be immediately dispatched emergent priority to that unit’s last known location. Once it has been determined that there is no emergency, the ECC will announce: “Attention all personnel, accidental activation, no Mayday in progress.”

C. ACTIONS OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER IN RESPONSE TO A DECLARED MAYDAY AT A NON-RIC INCIDENT

- When the ECC receives a MAYDAY on a non-RIC incident, or from a unit not yet on-scene at a RIC-required incident, the dispatcher on that console shall:
- Immediately sound “Alert Tone #2” (warble tone) on the dispatch channel and/or the appropriate tactical channel and make the MAYDAY announcement, “Attention all personnel: Communications has received a MAYDAY activation from [radio/ unit number]; all traffic standby.”
- The dispatcher should wait approximately 15 seconds for additional traffic from the unit declaring the MAYDAY. If no additional radio traffic is received from the unit declaring the MAYDAY, the dispatcher will attempt to contact the unit twice, asking “Can you clear



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your radio?” to ascertain if everything is OK. If there is no acknowledgement, the ECC will dispatch law enforcement and agency supervisory personnel emergent priority to that unit’s last known location.

- The CO will make positive contact with the Fire and EMS Director by phone to notify of Mayday situation.
- The CO will make positive contact with the Fire and EMS Director when personnel are accounted for.
- From time to time, a MAYDAY activation may occur accidentally. An accidental MAYDAY may only be cleared if the phrase “Accidental activation” is transmitted. Any phrases other than the aforementioned “Accidental activation” will be considered to be an actual MAYDAY activation and will be treated as such. The ECC will not repeatedly ask if this is a real MAYDAY; law enforcement and agency supervisory personnel will be immediately dispatched emergent priority to that unit’s last known location. Once it has been determined that there is no emergency, the ECC will announce: “Attention all personnel, accidental activation, no Mayday in progress.”

VI. SIMULATED MAYDAY DECLARATIONS DURING TRAINING EXERCISES

- When personnel are instructed to declare a MAYDAY during training exercises in order to practice this procedure, personnel will differentiate training scenarios by prefacing the declaration in the following manner: **“This is a training message, MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! ...”**.
- Anytime that a MAYDAY is declared during training and is not preceded with the declaration of “training message”, the incident commander or lead instructor shall assume that the MAYDAY situation is actual and take appropriate action per Section VI.
- Training instructors who become aware of any “false activations” shall immediately notify the responsible member to re-transmit the MAYDAY using the appropriate format. They should also communicate to the lead instructor the status of the situation by radio, if available.