



## Division 06

## Fire and Rescue Operations

### Chapter 04 – Mayday Procedure

March 2009

#### POLICY

This General Order shall establish a procedure to be used when calling for assistance and to notify all personnel on the emergency scene that an imminent life-threatening situation exists.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Mayday** - a radio term used to alert the Incident Commander or other persons on the emergency scene that personnel are in an imminent life-threatening situation.

**Personnel Accountability Report or Roll Call (PAR)** - a term used to track and report the location, status, and welfare of personnel assigned to a given crew.

**Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)** - a crew specifically designated by the Incident Commander at the scene of an emergency beyond the initial stages, consisting of a minimum of four personnel, one preferably being a company officer. The RIC shall be primarily available for the rescue of Fire/EMS Department members should the need arise. Depending on the size and complexity of the incident, the Incident Commander shall establish one or more RICs. The RIC normally replaces or enhances the standby team (2in, 2out), which was required during the initial stages of the incident.

**Mayday Alert Tone** - a distinct audible signal broadcast for 5 seconds over all operational radio channels by Public Safety Communications (PSC) to notify personnel that a member involved in operations of the

Department is missing, trapped, or in need of assistance.

**“Condition 1” and “Condition 2”** - the radio terms used to notify all members of the current operational status of PSC.

During normal circumstances, PSC operates under “Condition 1.” This means that emergency and non-emergency conversations are permitted on the radio channels, on the direct telephone line from each worksite to PSC, and on the business telephone lines into PSC.

PSC will announce a change in their operational status to “Condition 2” at times when a significant incident or other situation occurs, which at the determination of the PSC supervisor, has the potential to negatively impact the dispatch of calls, message processing, or the assistance being provided to an Incident Commander.

When PSC is operating under “Condition 2” all non-emergency and non-essential conversations on the radio channels, and any telephone line from the worksite, are to be eliminated or delayed until “Condition 1” is restored.

#### PROCEDURES

##### 1. Verbal Report of a Missing Member(s)

When the Group/Division/Sector Officer is notified or becomes aware that a member(s) may be missing, he/she shall immediately contact the Incident Commander. The Group/Division/Sector Officer and Unit Officer from the missing member’s(s) last assignment shall ensure that a systematic search is conducted in the area of the



member's(s) last known location. Assistance shall be requested if the crews already operating in the area cannot carry out this task.

The Incident Commander shall immediately request that PSC transmit the Mayday alert tone. PSC shall immediately transmit the Mayday alert tone on the fireground radio channel for 5 seconds and announce to units on the fireground to standby for an emergency message.

**Dispatcher:** "All units operating on the fireground at 123 Main Street, standby for an emergency message."

The Incident Commander shall make an announcement to all units identifying the missing member(s), his/her/their last known location and directing anyone knowing the whereabouts of the missing member(s) to immediately notify Command or another designated officer (preferably the Accountability Officer) via radio.

**Command:** "Main Street Command to all units, Fire Fighter Smith with Engine 1 is unaccounted for; he was last reported to be operating in the basement sector. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Fire Fighter Smith should immediately notify the Accountability Officer."

At the conclusion of the announcement by Command, PSC shall transmit the Mayday alert tone for 5 seconds on all operational radio channels, except the original fireground channel, repeating the information and directions that were transmitted by the Incident Commander on the fireground radio channel. PSC will change their operational status to "Condition 2."

**Dispatcher:** "Communications to all units, Main Street Command reports that Fire

Fighter Smith with Engine 1 is unaccounted for; he was last reported to be operating in the basement sector. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Fire Fighter Smith should immediately notify the Main Street Accountability Officer. Communications to all stations and units on the air, Communications is now on Condition 2."

All radio traffic on the fireground radio channel not associated with the Mayday or PAR shall cease. The Incident Commander shall designate an officer to assume responsibility for monitoring the fireground radio channel from a location on the incident scene that is away from distractions and other noises. Then, the Incident Commander shall confirm, via direct radio contact, that all units and the Sector Officer from the missing member's(s) last assignment and/or any unit currently operating in the immediate area are aware he/she/they is now missing. The Incident Commander shall also complete a PAR of these specific units during this radio conversation.

The Incident Commander shall also deploy the RIC to assist with conducting a systematic search in the area of his/her/their last known location. If the missing member(s) is accounted for after the announcement, and after the systematic search of the area, the RIC will be directed to return to their previous location and standby. Moreover, the Incident Commander shall designate a secondary RIC whenever the primary crew is deployed. This shall be done using uncommitted units already on the incident scene or by requesting additional units.

The Incident Commander shall provide the Accountability Officer with the PAR for the units he/she contacted. The Accountability Officer shall conduct a PAR of all other Groups/Divisions/Sectors (pausing as necessary so that a radio call for help can be



heard) to ensure that all other members are accounted for. The PAR shall be done in order of Groups/Divisions/Sectors within the most hazardous areas first, then working outward until all members are accounted for.

The Group/Division/Sector Officers shall be called at least twice. If there is no answer, anyone within the immediate area and answering the PAR will be directed to check on the welfare of non-answering Group/Division/Sector. If additional member(s) within a Group/Division/Sector are not accounted for, the Incident Commander shall deploy the secondary RIC to assist with conducting a systematic search in the area of the missing member's last known location.

When the missing member(s) within a Group/Division/Sector is located, the Incident Commander shall notify PSC that the Mayday has been cleared. PSC shall repeat this information on all operational radio channels and return to a "Condition 1" operational status.

**Command:** "Main Street Command to Communications, Fire Fighter Smith has been accounted for and the Mayday can be cleared."

**Dispatcher:** "OK Main Street Command. Attention all stations, units on the air, and operating at 123 Main Street, Fire Fighter Smith has been accounted for and the Mayday has been cleared. Communications is now back on Condition 1."

## 2. Emergency Identifier Activation

The Emergency Identifier (EI) feature of the portable radios should be used to make PSC aware of problems during non-fire related incidents. However, if PSC receives an EI activation from a unit that is operating on the

scene, they shall immediately notify the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander shall implement the same action as outlined in Section A., Verbal Report of a Missing Member(s).

## 3. PASS Device Activation

During any operation involving the use of PASS devices, all personnel in the immediate vicinity on the scene shall acknowledge the activation of a PASS device (lasting for greater than five seconds). This shall be done by immediately proceeding to the location of the alarm and confirming the status of the member(s) via radio with the Incident Commander.

## 4. Confirmed Report from a Trapped or Lost Member(s)

When a member(s) becomes trapped, disoriented, lost, or injured, and needs assistance, he/she/they shall attempt to notify his/her/their Unit Officer, or someone in the immediate area that assistance is needed.

If there is no response from anyone in the immediate area, a radio message shall be transmitted by the member(s) to the Group/Division/Sector Officer or Incident Commander.

The radio message shall begin with; "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday," and shall include the following information:

- L **Location** (i.e., floor/quadrant/wing)
- U **Unit** (i.e., Engine 2)
- N **Name** (i.e., F/F Smith)
- A **Assignment** (i.e., checking for extension)
- R **Resources** needed (i.e., ceiling fell, need manpower and stokes)



\*\*Include pertinent information of physical condition, status of SCBA and other beneficial information

**Firefighter:** “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. This is Fire Fighter Smith with Engine 1. I have fallen through the floor into the basement and I can’t find the way out, I am not trapped but I think my leg is broken. I am in Quadrant A and running low on air.”

After completing the radio message, the member’s(s) PASS device shall be activated and remain activated, if possible, to draw attention to the area where assistance is needed. Trapped or lost members shall remain together at all times, attempting to perform any self-rescue techniques they have been taught. They shall remain in the immediate area unless they are able to find and follow a hose line to the exterior of the structure. Any change in their location, status, condition, etc., shall be reported via a radio message.

When the Incident Commander receives a Mayday, he/she shall immediately acknowledge it and repeat the LUNAR information.

**Command:** “Command to Fire Fighter Smith, I copy your Mayday and understand you have fallen into the basement Quadrant A area, you are running low on air, you are not trapped but your leg may be broken, we have deployed the RIC.”

He/she shall ensure that the Group/Division/Sector Officer and units operating in the same areas as the member(s) are aware of the situation.

**Command:** “Command to the Basement Sector, did you copy the Mayday from Fire Fighter Smith?”

**Basement Sector:** “Affirmative, Engine 2 will attempt to locate and assist Fire Fighter Smith.”

When crews are working in the same immediate area as the trapped or lost member(s), they may make an initial rescue attempt provided that they notify the Incident Commander of their location, their current operational duties, and receive direction to attempt the initial rescue. If they are unable to quickly affect the rescue or locate the missing member(s), they shall be directed to return to their operational assignment upon being relieved by the RIC crew.

All Group/Division/Sector Officers shall ensure that any rescue or search for the member(s) is coordinated and at the direction of the Incident Commander. When a quick rescue cannot be accomplished, the Incident Commander shall request that PSC transmit the Mayday alert tone.

The Incident Commander shall deploy the RIC to assist with the rescue of the trapped or lost member(s).

**Command:** “Command to the RIC, report to the basement Quadrant A, did you copy the Mayday from Fire Fighter Smith?”

**RIC:** “RIC is OK, we are deploying with 4 personnel.”

PSC shall immediately transmit the Mayday alert tone on the fireground radio channel for 5 seconds and announce to units on the fireground to standby for an emergency message.

**Dispatcher:** “All units operating on the fireground at 123 Main Street, standby for emergency message.”



At the conclusion of the announcement by PSC, the Incident Commander shall make the following announcements to all units identifying the trapped or lost member(s) and repeat the applicable LUNAR information.

The Incident Commander shall identify which units or RIC has been assigned to assist the trapped or lost member(s). All units shall be directed to maintain radio silence on the fireground radio channel unless the radio traffic is related to the trapped or missing member(s) or another emergency condition that develops.

If it becomes necessary to continue operational radio traffic, an alternate radio channel can be used for that purpose provided that an announcement is made to indicate the channel change.

**Command:** “Main Street Command to all units, Fire Fighter Smith with Engine 1 is trapped in the basement Quadrant A sector. Engine 2 and the RIC are handling his rescue; all other units should maintain radio silence unless you have an emergency.”

The Incident Commander shall ensure that the units on the fireground continue their operational assignments, unless doing so places the trapped or lost member(s) in imminent danger.

PSC shall announce the change in their operational status to “Condition 2” until the trapped or lost member(s) is located.

When the missing member(s) is located, the Incident Commander shall notify PSC that the Mayday has been cleared. PSC shall return to “Condition 1” operational status.

**5. Rapid Intervention Crew Deployment**

The RIC will be deployed in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

The Incident Commander may reassign control of the RIC to the Operations Sector if warranted by the scope of the incident. Therefore, the reference to Incident Commander in Section II and III may be applicable to the Operations Sector Officer.

**6. Responsibilities**

All Operational Personnel shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring that his/her/their Unit or Sector Officer is apprised of his/her/their location and progress.
- Complying with the procedures established in this General Order.

Incident Commanders, Group/Division/Sector Officers and Unit Officers shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining the whereabouts and well being of his/her crew and any members assigned to his/her functional area.
- Maintaining an accurate accountability of these members and be prepared to reply to a PAR request without delay.

**REFERENCES**

N/A

**FORMS/ATTACHMENTS**

N/A