

# Rapid Intervention Team & MAYDAY Procedure

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## Scope:

This SOP meets or exceeds the intent of applicable sections within Chapter 6, Emergency Operations, of NFPA 1500, Standards on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program. It also intends to meet requirements of the OSHA Respirator Protection Standard 1910.134 and OSHA 2 in/2 out Rule 308-134e.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) is to outline the procedures used for the rescue of personnel operating at emergency incidents if the need arises. It further outlines the procedures for members entering an IDLH atmosphere or working in an environment recognized to be unstable.

Personnel assigned to perform this function will be designated as the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT). The composition and structure of the RIT shall be flexible depending on the type, size and complexity of the incident. Level 1 RIT will consist of no less than two trained members.

## Definitions:

### **IDLH:**

- Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health
- Oxygen level below 19.5%
- Lower Explosive Limits in excess of 10%
- Toxins in excess of the Permissible Exposure Level
- Confined Space, collapse or any other situation recognized to be unstable and could cause injury or death
- An atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. The interior of a structure involved in fire, beyond the incipient stage, is considered an IDLH atmosphere.

### **Incipient Stage Fire:**

- A fire in the initial stage which can be controlled or extinguished using portable extinguishers, or small hose systems, without the need for protective clothing or a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).

### **Personal Accountability Report (PAR)**

- Report given to Command or Operations that all members of the crew are accounted for.

### **Level 1 Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)**

- A team consisting of a minimum of two trained members.

### **Level 2 Rapid Intervention Team: (RIT)**

- A team consisting of a minimum of four trained members whose duties are to track, and rescue if needed, emergency personnel that enter a structure involved in fire beyond the incipient stage (IDLH atmosphere), or the rescue of emergency personnel who fall victim to an unstable situation (e.g. confined space, collapse) at an emergency scene (IDLH). RIT teams shall be referred to as RIT-1, RIT-2, etc.

### **MAYDAY:**

- A verbal notification to the Incident Commander that immediate action is required to rescue or assist emergency personnel operating in emergency incidents.

### **RIT Group Leader:**

- Sector Officer whose function is the tracking of the entry teams and performs no other function but tracking and rapid intervention.

### **TIC:**

- Thermal Imaging Camera

### **RIT Kit: (Rescue Equipment)**

- Desirable Equipment: secured Hand Line, Transceiver, RIT Kit, Forcible Entry Tools, Rescue Rope, Hand Light and Thermal Imaging Camera.
- After conducting a size-up of the incident scene, RIT may determine the need for additional equipment not listed above (e.g. Cutting Torch, Circular Saw, Ladders, etc.). RIT shall attempt to obtain this equipment by utilizing the apparatus at the incident scene.
- RIT Kit to have as a minimum the following equipment: SCBA cylinder, spare mask, regulator, flashlight, search rope, door chocks and wire cutters.

### **Implementation:**

- RIT shall be implemented during the initial stages of an incident.
- Multiple RITs may be established on large incidents.
- RITs shall be assigned to the RIT Group Leader. If a RIT Group Leader is not designated, then RIT will report directly to the Incident Commander. If activated, the RIT Group Leader will report to command.
- RIT shall report to the Command Post unless given a different assignment. They shall bring their RIT Kit with them.
- After RIT surveys the incident scene, RIT shall gather and/or call for any additional tools or equipment, not carried in the RIT Kit that may be needed to affect a rescue. RIT shall place the equipment on a tarp in their designated sector.
- The RIT Group Leader is responsible for the tracking of the Entry Teams. He should work with the Accountability Officer when possible to accomplish this. If the Accountability Officer is not available, the RIT Group Leader will be responsible for tracking of the entry teams.
- RIT members, except for the RIT Group Leader, may be utilized for other support activities at the incident scene. However, these activities shall not, if abandoned due to rescue operations, place any personnel at additional risks.
- RIT members must maintain visual or voice contact with one another at all times.
- RIT shall announce via radio to the Incident Commander that RIT has been established.

### **Entry Team:**

- No Entry Team shall enter into an IDLH until RIT has been established.  
(See Exceptions to Two-in/Two-out)

### **MAYDAY Procedure:**

- Anytime emergency personnel operating on an incident feel they are trapped, injured or lost, they shall signal a MAYDAY alert. Immediately following the MAYDAY alert, those personnel shall activate their “emergency identification button” on their transceiver and activate the manual alarm on their PASS devices.
- They shall transmit the word “MAYDAY” via radio by announcing in increments of three “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY” followed by a radio message to Command identifying themselves along with their location. Information pertaining to the location should be as specific as possible. **(e.g. MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, Engine 8 to Command, we are trapped in the basement on side 3.** This shall be repeated until acknowledged by either the Incident Commander or Radio. If the Incident Commander does not acknowledge the MAYDAY alert, Radio shall immediately relay this information to command.
- Command shall deploy the necessary resources needed to assist with a rescue.

- Other members operating on the scene should be aware of the “MAYDAY” situation. However, they must continue with their assigned tasks. The task they are currently performing may very well limit injury to the person or persons in distress as well as assist the RIT team.
- Upon the Mayday call, a Personal Accountability Report (PAR) shall be initiated for all other crews.
- The RIT team shall notify the RIT Group Leader that the person(s) have been located and the actions being taken to remove them or if additional assistance is needed.

#### **Exceptions to Two-in/Two-out:**

- If the initial attack personnel find a known life hazard situation where immediate action could prevent the loss of life, deviation from the two-in/two-out standard may be permitted.
- If rescue operations are initiated without a RIT in place, Command shall be notified and a RIT shall be established as available crews can be assigned.
- A written report of deviation from this SOG containing all pertinent information including the source of the rescue report and the outcome shall be submitted by the Company Commander to the Safety Officer.
- The Safety Officer, after reviewing the written report of deviation, shall forward a report to the Chief.

#### **Rapid Intervention:**

- RIT will only be deployed upon orders from the Incident Commander.
- A backup RIT shall be established whenever the initial RIT is deployed.
- Upon the report of a lost or trapped firefighter the RIT Group Leader will immediately see that all RIT members abandon any support activities they may be involved in and concentrate their efforts on rescue.
- RIT Group Leader shall compare information with the Accountability Officer in determining the last known location of the missing personnel. In the event that an Accountability Officer has not been assigned the RIT Group Leader will handle accountability.
- RIT members shall utilize the information from their on-going scene size-up to help determine the type of rescue that they may encounter.
- RIT shall be deployed to the last known location of the lost or trapped personnel.
- If a self rescue or a quick grab and go rescue is not possible, RIT members shall use the “AWARE” principle while determining the method of rescue as well as the estimated time it will take to complete the rescue.
- When RIT is deployed, the rescue shall come under the command of the RIT Group Leader. Other members must continue with their assigned tasks. Fire suppression units may switch to another channel so as not to interfere with RIT rescue activities.

#### **AWARE Principle:**

- Trapped emergency responder’s hopes of survival depend on the following four critical needs being met.
  1. **Air:** RIT should first provide the victim with a redundant (primary and secondary) supply of air.
  2. **Water:** If the rescue involves fire, the next consideration is to provide a defensible space for the victim by using a hose line or distributor to protect the victim.
  3. **A Radio:** If the victim is conscious and able to communicate, RIT may want to provide the trapped victim with a transceiver to monitor his condition. Depending upon the size of the incident, a separate radio channel may be designated for the victim to use.
  4. **Extrication:** Removal of the victim.

#### **Termination of RIT:**

- RIT can only be terminated when the incident does not meet any of the definitions of an IDLH.