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| ***REPLACE WITH YOUR MASTHEAD*** | | |
| **VFIS logo black JPG** | **SOG Title:** | |
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| **ABC Fire Department General Operating Guideline** | | |

**Recommended Practice for Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) Deployment**

***This is a sample of a standard operating guideline (SOG) on this topic. You should review the content, modify as appropriate for your organization, have it reviewed by your leadership team and if appropriate your legal counsel. Once adopted, make sure the SOG is communicated to members, implemented and performance monitored for effective implementation.***

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this Recommended Practice is to provide a standardized protocol for training and operations for rapid intervention.

**Scope:**

This recommended practice applies to all units that respond and operate as a RIC to fire and/or rescue incidents within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This procedure will define the RIC concept, outline the requirements for a unit intending to fulfill the role of a RIC, and discuss procedures regarding the dispatch, staging, operation and management of a RIC.

**Definitions:**

**RAPID INTERVENTION CREW (RIC)**

The RIC is a team of firefighters specially trained and equipped to perform the rescue of a firefighter in distress. The sole purpose of the RIC is to be immediately available to assist a firefighter who becomes trapped, lost or incapacitated.

**RIC EQUIPMENT**

All RIC members should have donned SCBA's with their facepiece in the standby position. The RIC should be prepared to quickly go in service with the appropriate equipment for different types of structures encountered. This equipment should include: life belts, rope, hand tool s for cutting and breaching walls, portable radios, forcible entry tools, hand lights ("sling" mode to allow for use of hands), and a Stokes basket which may be used to carry the RIC equipment to the RIC staging area. If the opportunity permits, RIC equipment may be laid out onto a salvage cover, etc., for easy access and identification.

**"MAYDAY – MAYDAY - MAYDAY" RADIO TRANSMISSION**

This term shall be used ONLY to report a firefighter who is in distress, lost, trapped, out of air, or down; when a collapse has occurred or is imminent; or where any other circumstance that can seriously injure or kill the firefighter is present.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIGNAL**

If the incident commander (IC) determines a need to evacuate the incident, fire building, etc. due to incident scene conditions that dictate the urgent need to order the immediate departure of all firefighters from the area of imminent danger, the IC shall:

* Announce over the fire ground channel the order to “evacuate”
* Notify EDS to evacuate the incident
* Call for a personal accountability report (PAR)

Once the order to evacuate is announced, each on-scene apparatus will activate their air horn for 10 to 15 seconds

**Procedure:**

**DISPATCH**

* EDS will automatically dispatch a RIC company upon a confirmed report of a structure fire and/or fire units have been placed in service. Additionally, on special operations such as river emergencies, confined space rescues, hazardous materials responses, etc., the incident commander should consider requesting a RIC to respond at any time, if deemed necessary.
* Via fire radio, the dispatcher shall notify the assigned unit of its designation as the RIC.
* Via fire radio, the dispatcher shall notify the Incident Commander of the identity of the responding RIC.
* If EDS receives a report from the emergency scene that the RIC has been placed in service to assist a firefighter who becomes trapped or is in distress, EDS will dispatch an additional fire company to function as a RIC.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

* The RIC should operate on the designated emergency scene frequency and remain in direct contact with the incident commander and/or the operations sector. If deployed, the RIC officer should attempt to establish radio contact with the firefighter in trouble. If this is not possible, the time and place in which the firefighter in distress was last seen should be determined.
* For clarity, emergency scene designation should be "RIC" followed by the company designation, i.e.; "Command to RIC - 54."
* Although the unit's primary mission is to rescue a trapped or lost firefighter, team members must remember their personal safety is a top priority and proper communications are essential to safe operations. The members included in the search should be in constant communication with the Incident Commander or his/her designate, and provide frequent progress reports on:
  + Hazards encountered
  + Barriers/obstructions
  + Victim location and condition
  + Any needs

**"MAYDAY – MAYDAY - MAYDAY" RADIO TRANSMISSION**

* It is strongly recommended that all fire companies/units should be aware of and adhere to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Dispatch Procedure for Mayday procedures. An updated copy of the Mayday Procedure will be disseminated along with this procedure.
* Any member may use the "MAYDAY" transmission to report a lost or trapped firefighter. This report should occur as soon as a firefighter perceives that a situation is rapidly developing, which is a direct threat to his/her life or the life of another firefighter. Ideally, the transmission should occur on the fireground frequency. However, the incident commander must be aware that circumstances may dictate that the transmission could occur on another channel. Upon receiving this report the Incident Commander should notify EDS that he has received a “MAYDAY” report, and if needed, request additional assistance.
* The use of the term “MAYDAY” will mandate that all other radio transmissions temporarily cease. This allows the firefighter, making the report, adequate airtime to complete his/her transmission without interference, which will allow the needed help to be activated immediately.
* The incident commander should make an emergency-scene wide announcement when the “MAYDAY” emergency is under control.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

* It is strongly recommended that all fire companies/units be aware of and adhere to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Dispatch Procedure for Incident Evacuation. An updated copy of the Incident Evacuation Procedure will be disseminated along with this RIC Procedure to all field fire units.

**Guidelines:**

**EMERGENCY SCENE GUIDELINES**

* The RIC should be prepared to go into service at a moment's notice. The RIC's activity at the emergency scene should be consistent with their mission to assist a firefighter who becomes trapped or is in distress.
* Upon arrival, the RIC should report to the command post unless otherwise directed by the incident commander. When directed by the incident commander, the RIC officer, accompanied by another member of the RIC, should survey the entire incident scene performing a quick, thorough size-up. **(To be effective, the RIC has to be proactive, continually sizing up the situation, remaining aware of the location of the firefighters inside the structure and obstacles to potential rescue operations.)**
* If necessary, the RIC officer should take advantage of all preplan information about the structure. The RIC officer should monitor the fireground radio frequency, note fire conditions and the location of all fire companies, evaluate portable and main ladder placement for firefighter egress, alert the incident commander or the safety officer to unusual structural features and locate all access points to all sectors of emergency scene.
* After conferring with the incident commander, the RIC officer should establish an area to stage the RIC's equipment. It is important to stage all necessary RIC equipment in an expedient manner. The RIC officer, accompanied by one member of the RIC, may perform the incident scene survey while the remaining RIC members assemble the RIC equipment. Once the incident scene survey has been completed and the RIC's equipment is in place, the entire RIC should remain near the Command Post, within verbal contact distance, in order for rapid deployment. The RIC officer should brief all members of the RIC as to the results of his/her incident scene survey.
* The RIC should "stand fast" ready to take immediate action as directed by the Incident Commander. While "standing fast", the RIC should determine the availability and location of aerial, tower, and portable ladders, portable lights, power hydraulic tools and/or other tools and equipment which might be needed to perform rescue duties.
* The RIC should operate on the designated emergency scene frequency. Portable radio messages should be monitored for any indication of members in distress.
* Hazardous materials and confined space incident protocols provide for rapid intervention rescue entry teams. Due to the highly technical nature and inherent hazards associated with this type of incidents, federal and state regulations mandate stand-by rescue entry teams with specialized training. Specially trained stand-by rescue entry teams, equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be in place whenever entry teams are deployed. Therefore, if the incident commander requests a RIC to respond to a confirmed operation for either hazardous materials or confined space rescue, the RIC should report to the incident commander for an assignment to support those specialized rescue teams already in place.
* In the event the incident commander receives a report of a firefighter trapped or in distress, the incident commander should brief the RIC officer on the following information:
  1. **L**ocation
  2. **U**nit
  3. **N**ame
  4. **A**ssignment
  5. **R**escue (needs)
* The RIC should use its numerical company identification when placed into service and shall remain together and work as a complete team whenever possible. The incident commander may assign companies, as needed, to assist the RIC. However, the incident commander should be aware that it will be the normal reaction of companies at the scene to suspend firefighting activities and begin to try and assist missing members. The incident commander should make every attempt to continue firefighting activities while at the same time, assisting the trapped or missing firefighter.
* When the RIC is deployed, the incident commander should restructure the strategy and tactics to include a high priority firefighter rescue effort. The incident commander should establish an additional RIC, create a rescue division or group within ICS and may need to call for additional resources. A chief officer should be assigned to oversee the rescue operation.
* Inside the building, the RIC should advance to where the victims were last reported to be located and listen for PASS signals, tapping, cries for help, etc. RIC members should protect against becoming victims themselves.
* If fire is in the search area, back-up teams with charged hoselines must immediately follow the first in rescue team.
* When a RIC member reaches a downed firefighter:
  1. If required, utilize RIC EQUIPMENT
  2. Turn off member's PASS to facilitate communication
  3. Provide "nature and conditions" to incident commander
  4. Consider any ventilation options to improve condition
* The RIC should continue search and rescue operations until the missing or trapped firefighter is located and removed, the RIC relieved, or the RIC is ordered to abandon the operation.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

* If prior to the arrival of the RIC, the Incident Command determines that a member may need assistance, he/she shall designate any of the following for assistance/rescue:
  1. Companies in the stand-by position
  2. Companies who are in the process of taking up their equipment
  3. Available members, i.e., uncommitted drivers/operators, etc.
  4. Companies not committed yet

Once the arriving RIC is placed in service, those individuals should return to their former duties.

**RESTRICTIONS**

The RIC should not be used to provide relief for operating units. The incident commander should anticipate this net and have other units other than the RIC, available for the purpose.

The RIC should not be used for firefighting.

**RIC EQUIPMENT**

* Each RIC company should be equipped with relevant search and rescue equipment in one, easy to carry, cotton/nylon bag. It is critical that all of the equipment carried including the accompanying hand tools, rescue ropes and guidelines remain intact as one unit for quick deployment.
* The below listed equipment is recommended to be part of any RIC team's deployment:
  + One (1) - SCBA cylinder ( 1 hour)
  + One (1) - SCBA face piece (standard size)
  + One (1) - SCBA regulator
  + One (1) - pressure reducer with 20' low pressure hose and fittings for Emergency Breathing Support System (EBSS) with a 6' extension hose
  + One (1) - 125' search and rescue rope with a locking "D" ring attached
  + Five (5) - I5 ' guide lines, with non-locking "D" rings
  + Two (2) - straps of nylon webbing ( l6ft and 30ft)
  + Hand tools: tin snips, wire cutters, 3"serrated knife, chalk, four (4) sprinkler wedges (to be used as door stop), three (3) light sticks, 4-piece small tool set, and one (1) multi-tipped screwdriver
  + One (1) - I00' Kernmantle rescue rope sections, 7mm
  + Power saw with appropriate blades
  + Halligan and sledgehammer
  + Thermal imaging camera with extra battery
  + Hand light for each member of the team

***This is a sample guideline furnished to you by VFIS. Your organization should review this guideline and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization’s needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm or damage to personnel, property and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your VFIS Risk Control representative.***

**References:**

NFPA Standard 1500 for Safety and Health for Firefighting

NFPA Standard 1407 for Training Fire Service Rapid Intervention Crews

Montgomery County Department of Public Safety Recommended Practice 2009-1