



WASHINGTON COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE ASSOCIATION STANDARDS MANUAL

Title: Rapid Intervention Team Operational Guidelines

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Purpose:

The purpose of this SOG is to establish command procedures, identify optional levels of rapid intervention capability, minimum training and equipment requirements for functioning RIT teams and to briefly define survivability skills to assist fire and rescue personnel who may become trapped or missing while operating within hazardous environments.

This SOG will apply to all fire and rescue operations where personnel are required to enter hazardous environments that present an immediate danger to life and health (IDLH). Although this SOG has been developed primarily for structural fire events, it is also applicable to hazardous materials incidents, confined space entry situations, and structural collapse events.

There is a narrow window of survivability for a firefighter who is out of SCBA air supply or trapped. Individual firefighters must not delay reporting to Command if they become lost, trapped, or otherwise in need of assistance. Company officers must not delay reporting to Command that they cannot account for members of their crew. Command officers must always assume that the missing firefighter is lost in the building until they can be accounted for.

Consistent use of the accountability system, vigilance by crew leaders and officers ensuring firefighter safety as well as ongoing training will overcome many of the inherent hazards faced by firefighting personnel every day. However, a plan must be in place in the event the unthinkable happens and a firefighter needs rescued.



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Definitions:

Emergency Traffic: Term used to communicate any urgent or important message other than a lost or trapped firefighter.

FRC: Fire and rescue communications

IC: Incident commander

IDLH: An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiant substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

.LUNAR Report: Report provided by the firefighter transmitting the Mayday. LUNAR report should be provided immediately by the firefighter stating his/her Location, **U**nit number, **N**ame, **A**ssignment, and **R**esources needed by the RIT.

Mayday: The radio signal used for any distressed firefighter needing assistance for any reason. No other term shall be substituted.

PAR: Personal Accountability Report

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A team consisting of at least a four-member crew, to include three firefighters and one fire officer, all of whom must meet the minimum qualifications of a RIT member. The team must be immediately available to respond to requests for help from lost, trapped or incapacitated firefighters. The RIT reports directly to the Incident Commander.

RIT Air Supply Bag: A specially designed kit that contains at a minimum a 60-minute SCBA air cylinder, high-pressure hose, air regulator, and spare facepiece. The purpose of the bag is to provide the capability of transfilling or providing air supply to trapped, lost or incapacitated firefighters. The RIT should have an Air Supply Bag capable of fitting each type of SCBA operating on the incident.



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Command Procedures:

Command procedures upon receipt of a lost, trapped, or incapacitated firefighter notification should include:

- Confirm the Mayday report and LUNAR information from the firefighter in need of assistance
- Initiate a PAR check to confirm accountability of all personnel to determine total amount of missing firefighters.
- Have FRC initiate an emergency fire ground announcement that a mayday event has occurred. Headquarters should switch fire ground operation radio frequency to an alternate channel and maintain the current tactical channel for the firefighter in need of assistance, Command, and the RIT.
- Redirect the incident action plan and incident priorities to a high priority search and rescue operation.
- FRC should monitor all radio channels.
- Assign the RIT or RIT Group to search and rescue operations in the known area or last known area where firefighters need assistance. Assign another crew to the RIT staging area.
- Immediately request additional appropriate resources to meet the needs of the event as needed, including:
 - Additional staffing
 - Specialized resources – Technical Rescue
 - EMS assets
- Initiate and/or maintain fire attack positions and reinforce with additional companies as needed.



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- Expand the Command organization. Request and assign additional officers of an appropriate level to the rescue, fire operations, command or other critical areas.
 - Withdraw and control unassigned resources from the search and rescue area.
 - Maintain strong supervision in all areas. Control and restrict all unauthorized entries into the structure or rescue area.
 - Assess the ability to increase egress points from the building without spreading the fire.
 - Consider assigning a Public Information Officer to handle and control the release of information to the media.

RIT Assignment

Rapid assembly of a RIT team is extremely important, especially during the initial stages of an incident. It has been identified that there is a higher risk of incident during the first minutes of a fire attack. The intent of this SOG is to ensure the RIT function is operational within the initial stages of an incident by being pre-assigned. The incident commander holds the ultimate responsibility for establishment of the RIT. This guideline provides a general establishment procedure, however incident conditions, resource availability and the IC will ultimately dictate how and when the RIT is assembled.

- In accordance with standardized dispatch procedures, a minimum of three engine companies are dispatched on all structural fire assignments. The third arriving engine company will serve as the primary RIT group, with additional staffing supporting the group, as necessary.
- If the third arriving engine company is otherwise assigned by the IC, the fourth due engine company, which is deployed with the “working fire”



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dispatch or special service may be required to serve in the RIT capacity. The incident commander may be required to utilize the third engine to complete tactical objectives therefore provisions must be made for implementation of a RIT.

Staging and Deploying of RIT

Depending on the overall situation at the fire scene, the RIT stages in the most advantageous place possible. There is no ideal location for all situations, however the staging area should allow for direct communications between the RIT and the Incident Commander.

Adverse weather conditions such as extreme cold, deep snow, ice, extreme heat, humidity, and heavy rain can impede the ability of the RIT to deploy. The RIT should be located in a sheltered area that will protect them from the extreme conditions and also allow for effective deployment. Examples may include office or apartment building lobbies, garages, rehab unit, bus, or portable tents. At the discretion of the Incident Commander, the RIT can dress down from their turnout gear and SCBA during periods of extreme heat and humidity. It is important that the RIT does not become fatigued while in staging and is ready to respond quickly to a mayday event.

Rapid Intervention Team Operational Guidelines

Level 1 RIT

Level 1 RIT consists of the third due engine assigned from the initial alarm or by special service assignment on an emergency event that involves the potential for operations in an IDLH atmosphere.

Level 1 RIT should be established as soon as possible within the scope of operations.

The objectives of the initial RIT is to:

- Search, re-con, and locate lost/trapped firefighters



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- Remove the firefighter to a safe location if possible or provide an air supply to the trapped or incapacitated firefighter.
 - Communicate with Command on resource requirements needed to protect and rescue the trapped firefighter.

Level 1 RIT Planning

- Report to and confer with the Incident Commander
- Perform a reconnaissance of the structure.
- Establish a tool staging area for RIT tools.
- Assess emergency conditions and forecast potential rescue problems.
- Confirm location of all units working in the hazard zones.
- Retrieve and review building preplan (if available).
- Assess building construction features for unique rescue challenges
- Determine all access points into the building including placement of ground and aerial ladders.
- Determine most rapid access to units operating in hazard zone (including the need for forced entry and wall breaching)
- Perform the initial actions needed for rapid access/egress (i.e.: place ladders, force doors, remove window bars, etc.)
- Assess the ability to quickly provide medical care to injured firefighters after removal from the hazard zone.
- Locate/stage at or near the Command Post or other strategic positions as assigned by the Incident Commander.



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- Monitor radio traffic
 - Perform periodic secondary reconnaissance of building and unit locations.
 - Plan where to acquire and deploy protective hose line if needed for rescue.

Level 2 RIT

Level 2 RIT consists of a group of more than one RIT. The establishment of Level 2 RIT is typically achieved through the request for additional units or resources specifically for this function.

The need for a Level 2 RIT response is based on the Incident Commander's judgment of the incident conditions. The purpose of a Level 2 RIT is to have an enhanced rescue capability available to the Incident Commander during significant and/or difficult fire ground incidents, prior to a lost or trapped event occurring. Deteriorating conditions, large commercial building fires or other complex fire ground situations may warrant the request for this resource.

Level 2 RIT will consist of at least two, four person RIT crews and a Group Officer. The Level 2 RIT will be referred to as the RIT Group within the Incident Management System structure.

The RIT Group will operate as any other Group within the IMS, with the primary and sole function of firefighter rescue. The RIT Group can request additional resources such as Special Operations 20, collapse equipment or other special equipment, as needed through the Incident Commander.

Planning for Level 2 RIT should follow the same outline as Level 1 RIT

RIT Rescue Action Plan

Develop a rescue action plan to include the search parameters for lost firefighters:



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- Last known location
 - LUNAR report information
 - Listen for additional radio communications
 - Listen for PASS operation
 - Information from other operating units
 - Use of thermal imaging cameras
 - Physical search

Initiate actions to place protective hose lines and establish ventilation in area where firefighter is trapped. Be careful not to take actions that will intensify or draw fire towards the trapped firefighter.

Identify the primary rescue plan and optional rescue plans (such as wall breach, floor openings, etc.).

Assignment of a separate radio channel for the continued fire ground operations. RIT, Command, and the trapped firefighter shall not change radio frequencies.

Coordinate rescue operations with fire fighting operations.

Identify support needs and request additional resources quickly.

Identify or create access openings to the trapped firefighter.

Provide capability to supply air to the trapped firefighter. Make sure to account for differences in SCBA equipment used on the fire ground.

Anticipate extrication requirements and challenges.

Confirm location of EMS support outside of any hazard zone.

RIT Reconnaissance

There may be occasions when the RIT may locate a trapped or downed firefighter and the conditions may not allow for rapid extrication from the hazard



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area. In this situation, a second RIT team should be established forming a RIT Group. The focus of the first RIT team is to protect the trapped firefighter in place until the fire can be controlled or more resources established to complete the rescue.

A search line should be deployed directly to the location of the trapped/downed firefighter. This will allow other crews a rapid way in and out of the hazard area.

A RIT Air Supply Bag should be used to supplement/replace the breathing apparatus of the firefighter.

A hose line should be deployed in the area to protect the area. Use caution flowing large volumes of water and consider the potential for flooding and structural collapse due to the weight of the water.

Other devices such as sump pumps for flooding, fire blankets, or other shielding material may be considered.

RIT Equipment

The equipment used by the RIT will vary greatly based on the dynamics of the fire scene, building construction, building dimensions, and the potential for unique rescue challenges that have been identified as part of the building walk around.

A tool staging area is to be established for both Level 1 and Level 2 RIT operations.

The tool staging area should be positioned in an area that allows the quickest access to where potential problems have been forecast during the reconnaissance. The tool staging area will be built-up as the RIT capability is changed. While not a standard, it is encouraged to use a Yellow tarp or a tarp that clearly indicates the RIT tool staging area. Tools staged in the RIT staging area are for the sole use of the RIT. Minimum tools for the staging area should include:



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- PPE and SCBA for all RIT members
 - Portable radios for all RIT members, minimum 1 for each 2 person team
 - Hand lights for all RIT members
 - RIT Air Supply Bag
 - Search Rope (min. 150')
 - Saws (electric, battery and gas)
 - Folding ladder
 - 14' roof ladder
 - Portable lights with cord reel
 - Thermal Imaging Camera
 - Forcible entry hand tools
 - Tarp for staging equipment identified solely for RIT

Additional tools or specialized equipment may be needed based on structure and conditions.

Minimum Training requirements

To ensure appropriate and efficient response by RIT personnel, minimum training qualifications must be identified. Personnel must meet the minimum qualifications to serve as a member of a RIT. These requirements include;

Required;

- FF II
- Haz Mat Operations

One of the following;

- Rescue Technician, or equivalent
- Truck Company Operations
- Firefighter Survival & Rescue



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Personnel meeting these qualifications must be easily identified on the incident scene. This will be accomplished by a helmet marker indicating RIT, which will be provided by the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association. The emblem will be a 1" tall by 3" wide sticker with the letters RIT in reflective material. It will be the responsibility of the individual company chief or training officer to certify RIT members, in accordance with this guideline.

Each individual company may develop additional internal qualifications over and above the basic training required by this standard for their company. The intent of this standard is to outline basic training levels for RIT personnel. Company officers have the ultimate responsibility to determine the abilities of their personnel.

Firefighter Survival Considerations

Self-survival techniques are examples of things you can do to save yourself. As a firefighter you should be familiar with the limitations of your PPE, the types of buildings within your response area, building construction features, and the proper use of standard tools. The purpose of this section is not to train the firefighter in survival techniques but only to list techniques available. All firefighters should seek training in Firefighter Survival and become familiar with these techniques.

Mayday and PASS Operations – As soon as you realize that you are at risk or lost, communicate with your crew and Command with a Mayday and/or activate your PASS device. Remember to reset your PASS device during radio transmissions so that you can be heard and understood.

- A MAYDAY is a special term, which indicates that one or more Fire Service personnel are in a life-threatening situation and need immediate help.



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1. **MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY** will be the radio term used to notify the Incident Commander that personnel are lost or trapped, or in need of immediate medical assistance within the environment where LIFE THREATENING CONDITIONS (S) may exist.
 2. Examples of a MAYDAY situation include; lost or disoriented, sudden chest pains or trouble breathing in a fire suppression operation, low air alarm with no egress point, trapped in a collapse, etc.
 3. When a PASS Device has been activated for more than 1 minute within the area where Life Threatening Condition(s) may exist, it will be treated as a distress signal and Command will determine the need for a MAYDAY.
 4. Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) – A report given by a company officer or member indicating whether or not the officer or member has visual contact with the remaining members of their crew.
- MAYDAY Transmittal Procedure
 1. Any personnel becoming lost, disoriented, or trapped that can contact Command shall utilize the term **MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY**.
 2. Personnel declaring a MAYDAY shall provide the following information if possible. The acronym **LUNAR** shall be utilized:
 - Location
 - Unit Number
 - Name
 - Assignment
 - Resources needed for rescue
 3. Once personnel have called a MAYDAY and provided the information needed (LUNAR), they will activate their PASS Device manually, and intermittently.
 4. In the event personnel are unable to communicate via radio, they shall activate the PASS Device **manually**, and



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intermittently, for periods of at least 1 minute (this will establish a MAYDAY vs. the pre-alert for inactivity).

Wall Sounding – Use a tool or other object to bang on an adjacent wall or other building component to help rescuers identify your location.

Drywall Kick Through/Breach – Use your tool, feet, or other object (not your hands) to create a hole for escape into a lower hazard area.

Two Arm Hang and Drop – For escape from second story window. It will reduce the height of the fall approximately 7 feet.

Ladder Bailout – Used for a rapid descent of the ladder. Used only in emergencies when conditions are rapidly deteriorating.

Personal Rope Escape – Allows for a quick escape from upper floors using a personal rope and no hardware.