Title: MAYDAY, Emergency Button Activation

WCVFRA Approval: 10/20/2016
Original Date: 10/22/2016 Supersedes Date: N/A
SOG Number: 2000-02 Number of Pages: 7

01. Purpose:

This procedure is for providing immediate assistance to lost, trapped, missing, disoriented or injured firefighters. This Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) applies to all personnel operating on an incident scene. This SOG describes conditions that warrant a MAYDAY, how to declare a MAYDAY, the Incident Commander’s role in the MAYDAY, actions of all personnel during a MAYDAY, and how to clear a MAYDAY.

02. Overview:

The rescue of a lost, trapped or missing firefighter(s) is extremely time sensitive. This guideline helps the IC manage the incident and assign resources to mitigate the situation.

All personnel must be able to recognize situations where they, their crew, or another crew may be in imminent danger. Personnel must declare a MAYDAY when they are involved in, or witness other personnel involved in distress.

03. Definitions:

Alert Tone 2 Specific sounding tone to signify a MAYDAY
ALS Advanced Life Support
EA/EBA Emergency Button Activation
ECC Emergency Communications Center
IC Incident Commander
IDLH: Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health is any condition that poses an immediate or delayed threat to life or that would cause irreversible adverse health effects or that would interfere with an individual's ability to escape unaided from a space.
MAYDAY: MAYDAY is an emergency distress signal indicating that one or more fire-rescue personnel need emergency assistance to escape a life threatening situation.
PAR: Personnel Accountability Report is a roll call conducted by IC/Accountability Manager. PAR is usually conducted via radio roll call and is completed with the company, division or group supervisor and shall include the number personnel. PAR should be completed 10 minutes after arrival of the first unit and then at the 20 minute mark and every 20 minutes after that. Required following a significant occurrence on an incident scene and following the transmission and/or resolution of a MAYDAY.

TalkGroup This is an assigned group on a trunked radio system. Unlike a conventional radio which assigns users a certain frequency, a trunk system takes a number of frequencies allocated to the system. Then the control channel coordinates the system so TalkGroups can share these frequencies seamlessly.

**Mayday Procedures**

04. **How to DECLARE a MAYDAY:**

As soon as you realize you are at risk or lost, communicate with your crew and command with a “MAYDAY” and your best possible location in the building (floor, side, and quadrant).

Verbally transmitting on your assigned tactical TalkGroup the following information:

- State - "MAYDAY / MAYDAY / MAYDAY"
- State the unit number three times, (e.g. “Engine 1, Engine 1, Engine 1”)
- Finish by stating, “Command acknowledge”
  - This will assist with getting the IC’s and other personnel’s attention to the situation.

Once the Mayday is acknowledged by command, the following information should be transmitted by the firefighter in distress their name, location, nature of the MAYDAY and their resource needs. (Who, Where, What)

- Position and name (e.g., “Firefighter John Doe”)
- Location (e.g., “Division 1 fire attack, quadrant B-Bravo”)
- Nature of emergency (e.g., “We have fallen from Division 1 to the basement, side Alpha, I member is missing; our current air supply is 1500 psi”)
- Resource needs (e.g., “need ladder to climb out”)
- Finish by stating, “Command acknowledge”
If not acknowledged by command, perform/transmit the following:

- Activate the Emergency Activation Button (EAB) on the portable radio, if possible.
- Activate your PASS device and briefly key your portable to get the attention of other firefighters or command. Deactivate your PASS whenever communicating via radio and reactivate once complete.
- State - "MAYDAY / MAYDAY / MAYDAY"
- State the unit number three times, (e.g. "Engine 1, Engine 1, Engine 1")
- State position and name (e.g., "Firefighter John Doe")
- State location (e.g., "Division 1 fire attack, quadrant B-Bravo")
- State the nature of the emergency (e.g., "We have fallen from Division 1 to the basement, side Alpha, 1 member is missing; our current air supply is 1500 psi")
- State resource needs (e.g., "need ladder to climb out")
- State "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday"
- Finish by stating, "Command acknowledge"

Once the Mayday transmissions are complete, the distressed firefighter should manually activate his or her PASS device in an effort to make the location known to crews operating nearby. If you are in a large open area and believe that you are lost, attempt to move to the closest wall. If you are conducting a search off of a wall, look for the nearest window.

**EXAMPLE:**

Firefighter: "MAYDAY / MAYDAY / MAYDAY, Engine 1, Engine 1, Engine 1"

"Command acknowledge"

IC: "All units a MAYDAY has been declared. MAYDAY go ahead with your traffic."

Firefighter: "Firefighter John Doe, Division One Fire Attack quadrant B-Bravo, fell from Division One to basement on Side Alpha, good on air, need ladder to climb out. Command acknowledge"

IC: "Main Street Command copied Firefighter John Doe, Engine 1, Division 1 - Fire Attack; fell from Division 1 to basement on Side Alpha, good on air, need attic ladder to climb out......"

IC: "Truck 1 from Main Street Command; take an attic ladder to Side Alpha for extrication of Engine 1 John Doe."

IC: "Main Street Command to all units a MAYDAY has been called/declared. emergency traffic only."

**Or:**

IC: "Washington County announce MAYDAY has been called."

ECC: (Alert Tone 2) "A MAYDAY has been transmitted, emergency traffic only."
The acronym **LUNAR/UCAN** may be used as a memory aid for transmitting critical MAYDAY information to the Incident Commander. **LUNAR/UCAN** stands for:

- **L** - Location
- **U** - Unit
- **N** - Name
- **A** - Assignment and air supply
- **R** - Resources needed
- **U** - Unit
- **C** - Conditions
- **A** - Actions
- **N** - Needs

After successfully transmitting the MAYDAY, crew members should activate their Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device(s) to assist rescue crews in finding their location. Deactivate when transmitting on radio if possible.

05. **Command’s Response to a MAYDAY:**

Upon receipt AND acknowledgement of a MAYDAY, the Incident Commander shall repeat the exact location of the MAYDAY crew member(s), the nature of the MAYDAY, and the resources needed to conduct rescue operations. The IC may immediately direct resources toward the rescue effort.

ECC shall announce the MAYDAY only if requested by the Incident Commander. When requested, ECC shall transmit an “Alert Tone 2”, followed by a verbal message "A MAYDAY HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED, EMERGENCY TRAFFIC ONLY"

Emergency Traffic is considered to be information critically related to the rescue effort including Conditions, Actions, or Needs related to the MAYDAY. ECC shall dispatch an additional ALS transport unit to the incident scene.

The Incident Commander may request units not directly involved in the MAYDAY to be moved to an alternate tactical talkgroup. Consideration should be made that crews in the area of the MAYDAY may be in the best position to accomplish a rescue. The IC should assign an officer to assume command of the incident operations on the newly assigned talkgroup until the termination of the MAYDAY. The Incident Commander may assign an officer to manage the MAYDAY event.

The Incident Commander should consider obtaining a PAR of units operating in the IDLH atmosphere as soon as possible without interrupting MAYDAY operations, beginning with those units operating within the IDLH atmosphere. Any crew or crew member not accounted for during the PAR must be considered an additional MAYDAY.

A Rapid Intervention Group (RIG) will be deployed to lead or assist in the rescue effort. The Incident Commander may reassign any units near the MAYDAY crew members to assist in rescue operations. A brief report will be given by the RIG/RIT to Command when the firefighter(s) in distress have been located and any additional resources needed. The incident commander will receive a brief progress report from the RIG/RIT every ten minutes until the MAYDAY operation is terminated.

All units must continue to conduct their tactical assignments until the Incident Commander instructs them otherwise, with due consideration for the existence of an active MAYDAY.
06. **How to Clear a MAYDAY:**

Once the MAYDAY situation has been stabilized/resolved and all operations can return to normal, the Incident Commander or Officer managing the MAYDAY event will advise ECC of the update/status change.

If requested by the Incident Commander, ECC will transmit an “Alert Tone 2” on all Incident TalkGroup and verbally announce “MAYDAY HAS BEEN TERMINATED, ALL UNITS ARE TO RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS”. If any units were moved to an alternate channel they can be moved back at this time if necessary. This can be coordinated by ECC.

A post incident analysis shall be conducted and documented any time a MAYDAY operation has occurred.

**Emergency Button Activation Procedures**

07. **Unit assigned to an incident in which command has been established:**

When an EA is activated with no MAYDAY voice transmission, ECC will notify the Incident Commander of the EA activation and the ECC will “super group / patch the TalkGroup the activation is on and the operational TalkGroup together after one (1) attempt is made to reach the person who activated the EA button. The Incident Commander should attempt to verbally contact the crew member with an activated EA in an effort to ‘Confirm” or “Deny’ the activation if the ECC is unable to reach the provider on the first attempt. If no response follows two requests, the Incident Commander must declare a MAYDAY.

Prepare to assign another tactical TalkGroup to the incident and move all units to that TalkGroup, once directed to do so by the IC.

08. **Initiation and Management of the Emergency Button Activation:**

Initiating the activation of the emergency button (EA) signifies a critical situation in which your imminent safety is threatened. **EA should never be initiated for any other reason.**

EA will send an emergency signal that takes precedence over any other signaling activity in progress on the selected TalkGroup. A data transmission is sent via the trunked control channel to all dispatch consoles within the Communications Center indicating an emergency condition and the unit identification. Any transmissions made by the unit initiating the EA will have priority over any other transmissions on the TalkGroup.

If the user changes TalkGroup during an EA, the emergency alarm will be moved to, and continue on the newly selected TalkGroup.

Termination of the EA is accomplished by redpressing the emergency button and holding for one to three seconds until the audible reset confirmation tone is heard.
09. **Radio User Responsibilities:**

   EA is accomplished by pressing the orange button on the top of the Motorola XTS portable radio or the red or “EMER” button on the Motorola mobile radio. “EMERGENCY” will flash on the display. If the radio is out of range, a tone will sound and “NO ACK” will flash on the display. Upon initiation of an EA, the user should immediately attempt to relay any details to the ECC, beginning with “confirm” and followed by any pertinent information to assist those that may be responding to assist whether it be police or other Fire/EMS providers.

   If the EA is the result of a mayday status, announce, if possible, the mayday information as outlined in Section 04 of this document.

   If the EA was accidental, advise the ECC “(Unit Number) Deny”.

**Washington County ECC Responsibilities**

10. **Unit not assigned to an incident or an incident in which Command has not yet been established:**

   After the EA has been activated the radio’s use a status called “Hot Mic”. Hot Mic is a process when the mic stays OPEN for 10 seconds.

   If an Emergency Button Activation is made and during the initial 10 second “hot mic” the unit advises Confirmed, the dispatcher WILL NOT RESPOND. THEY WILL AUTOMATICALLY ALERT ALL POLICE AGENCIES OF THE ACTIVATION IMMEDIATELY and monitor the TalkGroup accordingly.

   **EXAMPLES:**

   - Activation received on TalkGroup and you hear unit advise “put the gun down, don’t shoot.” You will not acknowledge this as they have already confirmed based on what they have said. You will dispatch assistance immediately.

   - Activation received on TalkGroup and you hear unit advise “put the knife down or anything that resembles a distress.” You will automatically start help and not try to obtain a confirm message since it was received based on what was originally said.

   If an EA is activated and nothing is said during the hot mic, the ECC will wait the 10 seconds to see if they are able to hear any transmissions they may deem this an emergent situation. **The worst thing to do for the crew in a possible hostile environment is to ask “Confirm or Deny”**.

   After the Hot Mic with no sounds/signs of a hostile environment, the ECC shall attempt to raise the unit in question by stating “Washington County to (Unit Number), confirm or deny”.

   **EXAMPLES:**

   - “Ambulance 98, confirm or deny?”
   - “Engine 98, confirm or deny?”

   No immediate response shall prompt the ECC to initiate this transmission two more times.
If there is no response, attempt to contact any other units that are/may be assigned with the unit that initiated the EA.

If no response is received or the activation is confirmed, the ECC shall immediately initiate the following actions:

- Notify Police Department of the EA, unit’s designation, last known location and destination.
- Notify the Duty Officer at the affected Fire/EMS Station
- Dispatch the closest available suppression and EMS units (one each) to the unit’s last known location and/or destination and have them perform a level 2 stage until the scene is secure. If the EA involves a Boat, also dispatch one additional boat.

⚠️ **Note:** The emergency button is most effective if the location or assignment of the radio with the activated emergency button is known prior to its activation. When radios are not in their normal apparatus position or with their normally assigned officer, the Emergency Communications Specialist may not be able to send assistance or may send the assistance to the wrong location based on the information provided through the alias. The number one way to receive assistance is to verbally acknowledge the EA with the appropriate designation at that time.

11. **Unit assigned to an incident or not assigned from another jurisdiction:**

   Notify the appropriate ECC of the EA and follow above guideline.

---

Approved WCVFRA:  James Sprecher Jr., President