

# LOS ANGELES AREA OPERATIONS BULLETIN

**LAAOB #14-01**  
**Rapid Intervention**

**July 31, 2014**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs provide assistance to one another through agreements at the local and regional levels. This presents an operational challenge such as providing for the safety and accountability of firefighters at an emergency. Specifically for the timely rescue of firefighters who find themselves in life-threatening situations.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has two standards that contain specific requirements regarding the safety and accountability of firefighters:

1. NFPA1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program.
2. NFPA 1561, Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System.

**Additionally**, Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations mandates the manner in which fire departments provide for the rescue of personnel who become lost, trapped, or injured at the scene of an incident.

## **II. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline for Departments to follow that ensure all safety mandates specific to the accountability of firefighters at multi-agency incidents, are followed.

This document focuses specifically on providing for the rescue of firefighters through the implementation of area-wide Rapid Intervention Standard Operating Guideline (SOG). These guidelines are not meant to conflict with any department's policy or individual SOG, nor any Operational Area policies or guidelines. These guidelines address the use of common terminology, multi-agency communication procedures, firefighter survival procedures, expectations of command officers, and Rapid Intervention procedures.

## **III. GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**ACCOUNTABILITY** – Maintaining the status and location of all resources committed to an incident.

**CLEARTEXT** – The use of plain language is intended to describe a clear picture and reduce confusion at incidents, particularly where different agencies are working together. Clear Text uses plain English without Ten Codes and without agency specific terminology.

**COMMAND CHANNEL** – A radio channel, designated by the IC, which is provided for communications between the IC and tactical-level management components (i.e. Divisions and Groups) during emergency incidents.

**COMPANY UNITY** – A term used to indicate that a fire company or unit shall remain together in a cohesive, identifiable working group, to ensure personnel accountability and the safety of all personnel. A company officer or unit leader shall be responsible for the adequate supervision, control, communication, and safety of the personnel of the company or unit.

**EMERGENCY/ALERT CHANNEL** – The radio channel utilized by firefighters reporting a Mayday. When the Emergency Alert Button is activated, some handheld radios automatically switch to this channel and lock in the “repeat” mode until the radio is reset.

**“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC”** – The hailing term used to clear designated radio channels and alert incident personnel when a deteriorating or extremely hazardous condition exists, or there is a critical change in tactics that on-scene personnel need to be advised.

**EMERGENCY RADIO TONE** – A distinctive high/low tone initiated by the IC or Communications center on the Command and Incident Tactical Channel(s).

**EMERGENCY ALERT BUTTON (EAB)** – The orange button located on the handheld radio, and on the lapel microphone of some radios. This button activates the emergency notification feature of the handheld radio, and is a critical component for firefighter safety. Depressing the button alerts the communications center and/or Incident Command of a Mayday. The EAB is commonly referred to as the Emergency Trigger or E-Trigger.

**ESCAPE ROUTE** – A pre-planned and clearly identified route of travel that firefighting personnel are to take to access safety zones or other low risk areas.

**EVACUATION SIGNAL** – A measure taken that audibly signals to all personnel that there is an immediate need to evacuate a hazardous area of the incident. It will consist of repeated short blasts of the air horn for approximately 10 seconds, followed by a 10-second period of silence. This sequence of air horn blasts for 10 seconds followed by a 10-second period of silence will last 50 seconds. The Incident Commander shall designate specific apparatus to sound the evacuation signal using air horns. This should be done in conjunction with the radio announcement of “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” following the Emergency Radio Tone. Clear directions must be given to scene personnel to evacuate the hazard area.

**“FIREFIGHTER DOWN”, “FIREFIGHTER MISSING”, or “FIREFIGHTER TRAPPED”**  
– Clear text terms used for radio communications to notify personnel on-scene at an emergency that a “Mayday” has or is occurring.

**IMMEDIATELY DANGEROUS TO LIFE OR HEALTH (IDLH)** – Any atmosphere that poses an immediate hazard to life or an atmosphere that produces immediate irreversible debilitating effects on the health of a human.

**INCIDENT TACTICAL CHANNEL(S)** – The radio channel(s) designated by the agencies communications center or by the IC for tactical communications. Additional tactical channels may be required, depending on the scope and complexity of the incident.

**“MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY”** – The hailing term used to clear designated radio channel(s) and alert incident personnel when a firefighter’s life is in danger and immediate assistance is required.

**PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (PAR)** – A verbal roll call of personnel and companies assigned to an incident. This roll call can be given by individual companies, or by Divisions and Groups.

**RADIO IDENTIFIER** – The unique pre-assigned alphanumeric code assigned to each radio. This alphanumeric code is transmitted each time the “push to talk” button is depressed.

**RAPID INTERVENTION COMPANY/CREW (RIC)** – A company/crew, with fully equipped responders, who are on the scene of an incident specifically assigned to initiate the immediate rescue of a firefighter.

**RAPID INTERVENTION GROUP (RIG)** – A functional component of the Incident Command System consisting of resources who are on the scene of an incident specifically assigned to initiate the immediate rescue of a firefighter under the direction of a Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor.

**RAPID INTERVENTION TACTICAL CHANNEL** – The assigned tactical channel used by the Rapid Intervention Company/Crew or Group. Personnel assigned to a Rapid Intervention Company/Crew or Group will operate on this channel when communicating with other assigned Rapid Intervention personnel. This channel is not to be mistaken for the Emergency/Alert Channel, nor should it ever be assigned as the Emergency/Alert Channel.

**SELF-SURVIVAL PROCEDURES** – Actions a firefighter performs during a “MAYDAY” to alert rescuers and improves survivability.

**TWO OUT** – A company consisting of a minimum of two fully equipped responders who are on site and specifically assigned to initiate the immediate rescue of a firefighter.

#### **IV. COMMUNICATION**

During multi-agency incidents, communication procedures must provide for the transmission and reception of both routine and emergency messages. Typically, these messages fall into four broad categories:

##### **1. Routine Tactical**

A. Tactical direction from the IC to the assisting agency resource. B. Tactical reports from the assisting agency resource to the IC. C. Periodic PAR's as needed or required by policy.

##### **2. Command**

A. Overall incident management.  
B. Routine messages to the communications center.

##### **3. Emergency Traffic**

A. Change in operations, offensive to defensive operations; withdraw of personnel from structure, etc.  
B. Notification of fire ground hazard, wires down, sagging roof, etc.

##### **4. Mayday**

A. Assisting agency resources must be able to transmit a Mayday situation in a manner that will be received by the IC, when they have a firefighter who is down, missing or trapped.  
B. The IC must be able to notify all resources, including the assisting agency resources, whenever a Mayday situation exists in order to clear radio traffic in the case of a down, missing, or trapped firefighter.  
C. The IC must be able to receive a Mayday from the assisting agency resource in order to initiate the appropriate response.

#### **Multi-agency Communications Options**

##### **1. Agency Representative**

Incident Commanders must ensure that they have a communication plan in place that provides for radio communications with all resources operating in the hazardous area. Consider requesting an agency representative from assisting departments to report to the ICP when inter-agency communications may be challenging.

A. Personnel from the assisting agency will communicate with their Agency Representative per agency policy.  
B. The Agency Representative/BC should remain at the ICP.  
C. The IC on any extended and/or greater alarm incident shall request an

assisting Agency Representative if not already assigned when a firefighter from the assisting agency experiences a Mayday.

D. Caution is required when agencies do not have common communications and information is being relayed through an Agency Representative, as the company officer will not be able to hear communications between the IC and the other resources assigned to the incident.

**2. Each firefighter of the assisting agency comes equipped with a portable radio that is able to communicate on the Incident Tactical Channel.**

A. The IC and personnel from the assisting agency will communicate on the Incident Tactical Channel.

B. The firefighter should transmit Mayday alerts on the Incident Tactical Channel. C. All personnel operating on the incident shall clear radio traffic.

**3. Only the company officer from the assisting agency has a portable radio that is able to communicate on the Incident Tactical Channel (either the company officer brings a radio or obtains one from the ICP)**

A. The IC should request an agency representative from an assisting agency to report to the ICP to maintain communications with assisting agency firefighters.

B. The IC and company officer will communicate on the Incident Tactical Channel.

C. The company officer will communicate incident information and Mayday alerts with his/her crew using their agency's portable radio.

D. The company officer must acknowledge a Mayday transmitted by one of his/her personnel and transmit the Mayday to the IC on the Incident Tactical Channel. Caution must be exercised when utilizing this option.

E. Crewmembers must maintain situational awareness and be prepared to initiate communication, as it does not take into account the company officer becoming incapacitated and being unable to communicate.

F. If the company officer does not acknowledge a Mayday, the firefighter should activate their EAB.

**4. The company officer from the assisting agency does not have a portable radio that can communicate with the ICP.**

A. The company officer shall leave a firefighter at the ICP to provide a communication link between his/her company and the IC.

B. The company officer and the IC will engage in routine tactical communications through the firefighter providing the communication link at the ICP.

C. Personnel, including the company officer, will transmit Mayday on the tactical frequency normally used by their agency.

D. The firefighter providing the communication link at the ICP shall advise the IC

of the Mayday.

E. If the firefighter providing the communication link at the ICP does not acknowledge a Mayday, the firefighter should activate the EAB.

F. The communications center must confirm the receipt of a Mayday with the IC. G. *Caution* is required when using this option, as the company officer will not be able to hear communications between the IC and the other resources assigned to the incident.

## **5. IC equipped to communicate with assisting agency**

A. The IC and personnel from the assisting agency will communicate on the Incident Tactical Channel.

B. The firefighter should transmit Mayday alerts on the Incident Tactical Channel. C. The IC shall request an Agency Representative to assist monitoring the assisting agency's Dispatch Channel and Mayday/Alert Channel.

D. If the IC is equipped with only one radio providing this capability, he/she should monitor the needed frequencies utilizing the Scan feature.

## **EAB Considerations**

- There will be times when an EAB will be accidentally activated on an incident. The IC and resources assigned to Rapid Intervention must assume that any firefighter operating at an incident that has activated his/her EAB is in need of rescue until the activation is confirmed false.
- Some agencies utilize radios equipped with an EAB that, when activated, is not monitored by their communications center. In this case, it is the responsibility of the IC to monitor the Emergency/Alert Channel and respond to requests for help on that frequency.
- Caution must be exercised when it is recognized that an EAB utilizes a simplex or direct channel. These EAB activations and are not monitored by the communications center. The IC will need to monitor for activations and make the appropriate notifications to the communications center.

## **V. FIREFIGHTER SURVIVAL PROCEDURES**

### **Person(s) Needing Rescue**

All Los Angeles Area Fire Department personnel should perform the Self Survival procedures when experiencing a Mayday situation.

An individual assigned to an incident shall use the hailing term "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" to announce a Firefighter Down, Missing or Trapped. This hailing shall be used for themselves, or for another firefighter that is in danger and requires immediate assistance.

## Initiate a Mayday

The following situations require the immediate initiation of a Mayday call on the Incident Tactical Channel or by activating the EAB:

1. Injured and/or Disabled (Firefighter Down) resulting in reduced ability to exit safely.
2. Separated from Crew or lost (Firefighter Missing). Loss of visibility or no physical contact with hose line and/or partner.
3. Trapped, pinned, and/or entangled in debris (Firefighter Trapped) mobility compromised due to heat, structural collapse, debris, and/or inoperable/blocked doors/exits.
4. Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) malfunction or low air alarm activation in an IDLH and unable to reach an exit.
5. Any life threatening condition that cannot be resolved in 30 seconds. The 30- second rule serves as a reminder to focus on self-rescue and to gather as much information about the situation as possible.

## Take Survival Actions

Once a Mayday is called, the distressed firefighter shall perform Self Survival procedures using the mnemonic **G-R-A-B L-I-V-E-S**. The sequence in which these actions are performed is dependent on the situation encountered.

### 1. Check Air in SCBA Air Cylinder

#### **G**RAB LIVES – Gauge

A. Firefighter checks air remaining in SCBA air cylinder. Knowing the quantity of air in the air cylinder will give an indication of the time necessary to find a more tenable atmosphere. If possible, this shall be reported to the IC.

### 2. Initiate a Mayday on the Tactical Radio Channel

#### **G**RAB LIVES – Radio

A. The distressed firefighter shall notify the IC of the Mayday using the handheld radio. This can be accomplished by using the microphone or the EAB.

B. Once the distressed firefighter keys the microphone or activates the EAB on the handheld radio, his/her initial radio transmission shall be: “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY”

C. All radio traffic shall cease after hearing the hailing term.

D. Incident command will respond by stating: “All units on the \_\_\_\_\_ incident clear this channel for a Mayday. Unit calling Mayday identify.” E. The distressed firefighter will identify the nature of the Mayday by communicating the following:

- **WHO** is calling the Mayday? “This is FF Smith from Engine 1...”
- **WHAT** is the emergency? “I’m lost...”
- **WHERE** is the firefighter located? “On the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.”

F. If unable to contact the IC, the distressed firefighter shall:

- 1). Announce a “MAYDAY” using another frequency monitored by resources assigned to the incident and/or the communications center.
- 2). Continue making “MAYDAY” calls until answered.

G. The IC, Operations Section Chief (OSC), or Rapid Intervention Group (RIG) Supervisor will communicate directly with the distressed firefighter and confirm all of his/her transmissions are correctly understood. They shall also communicate the following to the distressed firefighter:

- 1). Ascertain the quantity of air remaining in the distressed firefighter’s SCBA. Knowledge of the amount of air in the SCBA can determine the time needed to make a rescue.
- 2). Provide a reminder of the “**G-R-A-B L-I-V-E-S**” procedure for the distressed firefighter to assist the crew in the rescue process.
- 3). Rescue Evaluation: Identify specific tools required to assist with the rescue operation, routes of access, methods of rescue, and known hazards.

### 3. Activate Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) and Allow PASS Light to Be Seen By Rescuers

**GRAB LIVES** – Activate

- The PASS device must be manually activated immediately after using the radio to announce the Mayday. The audible PASS device should remain on until rescued. The device should be turned off to communicate via the radio. Firefighters can maximize the strength of the device’s audible alarm and light by positioning the device so it is best heard and seen by rescuers.

#### 4. Conserve Air, Control Breathing

##### GRAB B LIVES – Control Breathing

- Firefighters must control their breathing and conserve air anytime they don the SCBA. Because air is limited and work effort and duration can be unpredictable, it is critical that firefighters learn to control their anxiety and breathe rhythmically.
- This task is performed by consciously controlling how much air is breathed and how much physical effort is exerted. The air in ones cylinder can be further extended by employing the survival breathing technique. The survival breathing technique is performed by extending exhalation two times that of inhalation.

#### 5. Stay Low

##### GRAB LIVES – Stay Low

- Firefighters must position themselves near the floor to avoid the super-heated toxic air collecting at the ceiling and banking down to the floor. Staying low also aids in visualizing the hose-line and finding an exit.

#### 6. Shine Flashlight at 45 Degree Angle

##### GRAB LIVES – Illuminate

- Personal lights shall be activated and remain “On” when firefighters are working in an IDLH environment. If the flashlight was inadvertently turned “Off,” the firefighter must turn the flashlight “On”. With the flashlight “On” the distressed firefighter shall point the light at a 45° angle and shine it outward where a rescuer may see it.

#### 7. Make Noise

##### GRAB LIVES – Volume, Make noise

- Noise originating from the distressed firefighter can get the attention of rescuers. In addition to the audible alarm on the PASS device, the firefighter must also use a hand tool to make noise as it is struck against a hard surface. Because Rapid Intervention Company personnel will be located on the perimeter of the building during an incident, it is best if the sound is generated using an exterior wall. An axe, pike pole, rubbish hook, or any type of forcible entry tool can be used to make the noise. Be loud, be heard, be rescued.

## 8. Find an Exit

### GRAB LIVES – Exit

- Identifying a viable exit is the most critical element of the Self Survival procedures. An exit must be located quickly when fire conditions change rapidly resulting in the sudden increase of heat and rapid loss of visibility. A distressed firefighter can best find an exit by moving toward one that was identified during entry. Viable exits are doorways and windows. Exits can also be created by breaching walls and passing through the spaces created between the wall studs. Hose lines can also aid in locating an exit. Once a hose line is found, couplings should be used to determine the direction of travel outside the building.
- Firefighters shall perform the technical Self Survival skills of upper floor egress, with or without a ladder in place, disentanglement, and breaching and passing through walls if necessary.

## 9. Shield Airway

### GRAB LIVES – Shield airway

- When the air in the SCBA is exhausted, firefighters should disconnect their 2<sup>nd</sup> stage regulator and cover their air intake port with the chin portion of their hood or a gloved hand. Shielding the port will only prevent debris from entering the mask...it will not filter smoke.

The Self Survival procedures should be constantly performed throughout the rescue operations. The distressed firefighter shall keep the rescuers advised of the following information: location, air cylinder quantity, physical status/limitations, and special rescue tool needs.

# Self Survival Procedures

<b>G</b> auge	A. CHECK AIR GAUGE
<b>R</b> adio	B. RADIO FOR ASSISTANCE
<b>A</b> ctivate	C. ACTIVATE PASS
<b>B</b> reathing	D. CONSERVE AIR
<b>L</b> ow	E. STAY LOW
<b>I</b> lluminate	F. SHINE FLASHLIGHT
<b>V</b> olume	G. MAKE A LOUD NOISE
<b>E</b> xit	H. FIND AN EXIT
<b>S</b> hield Airway	I. PROTECT AIRWAY

## VI EXPECTATIONS OF COMMAND

### Incident Commander Responsibilities

In the initial stages of the incident, the IC shall maintain accountability by documenting situation and resource status. On large or complex incidents, additional staff may be assigned to oversee these functions. Each Branch Director, Division and Group Supervisor, and Company Officer is responsible for maintaining accountability of all personnel and resources under their command.

At an emergency incident, the IC shall be responsible for the overall management of the incident and the safety of all personnel involved at the scene. The IC shall:

- Be responsible for overall personnel accountability for the incident.
- Designate Two Out team, Rapid Intervention Crew/Company, or Rapid Intervention Group according to the safety needs of the incident.
- Maintain an awareness of the location and function of all companies or crews at the scene of an incident.
- Initiate an accountability worksheet at the beginning of the incident and maintain the system throughout the operation.
- Provide for additional accountability based on the size, complexity, or needs of the incident. This can be accomplished by reducing the span of control.
- Provide for communications and interoperability with mutual aid resources.
- Provide resources for the rescue of personnel operating at emergency incidents.

## **Branch Director/Division and Group Supervisor Responsibilities**

- Maintain accountability of RIC Teams at all times.
- Supervise and account for companies and/or crews operating in their specific area of responsibility.
- Obtain briefings from the IC.
- Verify RIC Tactical Channel(s).
- Position companies for effective deployment.
- Facilitate the tracking and accountability of assigned companies and crews.
- Determine what needs to be done for a RIC operation should a Mayday be transmitted.
- Formulate a secondary plan of action (i.e. alternate means and location of ingress and egress).
- Oversee and coordinate all RIC operations and deployments, reporting directly to the IC/Operations.
- Monitor conditions and request the IC to dispatch additional RIC Team for support and incident coverage.
- Monitor the standby times of the RIC Team. Relief crews may be needed due to weather conditions / duration.

## **Company Officer Responsibilities**

- Directly accountable for members under their command.
- Maintain an ongoing awareness of the location and condition of all company personnel.

## **Report of a “MAYDAY” Situation**

Incident Commanders are responsible for ensuring the following actions are taken:

- Assign the appropriate number of resources to rapid intervention based on the size and complexity of the incident.
- Assign a paramedic resource and a transport resource to rapid intervention.
- Assign a Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor when two or more companies are assigned the responsibility for rapid intervention.
- Assign a separate tactical channel for use by resources assigned to rapid intervention (Rapid Intervention Tactical Channel).
- Monitor the appropriate radio frequencies including Dispatch, the Incident Tactical Channel, Command Channel, Emergency/Alert Channel, and the Rapid Intervention Tactical Channel.
- Assign a member to communicate with the down, missing, or trapped firefighter on whatever channel the firefighter is requesting assistance. The IC may fulfill this role or may designate someone, such as the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor, to handle this responsibility.

- Notify all units to hold radio traffic for a Firefighter Mayday. Activate the Emergency Radio Tone on the appropriate radio frequencies consistent with individual agency policy.
- Assign additional resources to back-up the Rapid Intervention Company/Group when deployed for a Mayday situation.
- Request additional resources/alerts.
- Modify incident strategy to focus on the firefighter rescue while continuing fire suppression efforts.
- Conduct a PAR at the conclusion of the Mayday, before clearing the Mayday traffic and resuming normal radio traffic.

Rapid Intervention Company Officers or Rapid Intervention Group Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the following actions are taken:

- Request an adequate number of resources to fulfill the rapid intervention mission based on the size and complexity of the incident.
- Assemble the appropriate equipment to perform a firefighter rescue based on the incident.
- Monitor the appropriate radio frequencies including the Incident Tactical Channel, Command Channel, Emergency/Alert Channel and the Rapid Intervention Tactical Channel.
- Maintain an awareness of the location and function of all companies or crews at the scene of an incident.
- Maintain accountability for all resources assigned to rapid intervention.
- Communicate with the missing, downed or trapped firefighter on whatever channel the firefighter is requesting assistance on, as directed by the IC.
- Request additional resources from the IC to supplement the Rapid Intervention Company/Group in the event of deployment.
- Keep command informed of the progress of the firefighter rescue.
- Notify command when the down, missing, or trapped firefighter has been located and rescued.

Company Officers are responsible for ensuring the following actions are taken:

- All company personnel participate in the Personnel Accountability System.
- All company personnel monitor the designated Incident Tactical Channel.
- Maintain strict radio discipline when a Mayday is announced.
- Maintain strict company discipline at all times. This is critical during a Mayday.
- Maintain current assignment during a Mayday, unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander, Operations Section Chief, or Division/Group Supervisor unless they are certain they are in the best position to facilitate the rescue.
- Comply with all requests for a PAR by the Incident Commander, Operations Section Chief, or Division/Group Supervisor.

The successful resolution of a Mayday relies on all personnel maintaining strict discipline, following agency policies and SOG's, and demonstrating appropriate

initiative. Firefighters should exercise care to avoid situations that would require rescue. Officers at all levels must be prepared to respond in a timely and appropriate manner.

## VII RAPID INTERVENTION PROCEDURES

### Rapid Intervention and ICS

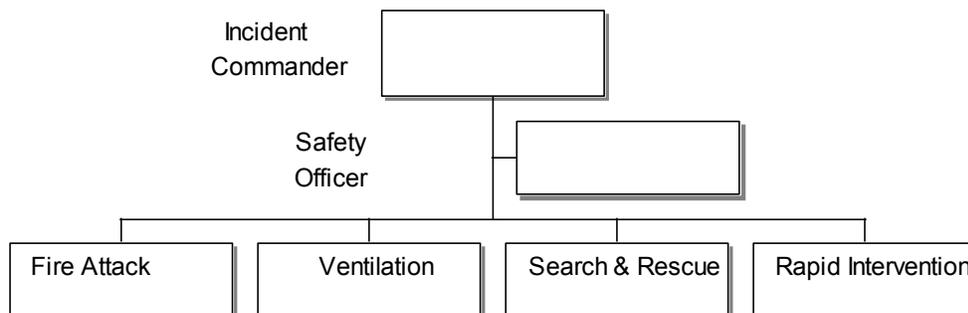
In the initial stages of an incident where only one company is operating in the hazardous area, a minimum of four personnel are required to initiate operations in the IDLH if there is no immediate life threat. Two personnel working as a crew may enter the hazardous area and two individuals must remain outside the hazardous area for assistance or rescue. This is normally referred to as the “Two In/Two Out” rule. It is understood that the resources arriving at the incident will have varying staffing levels. If the initial resources cannot provide for “Two Out”, the second arriving resource should be assigned “Two Out.” Firefighters assigned “Two Out”, have the sole responsibility of being ready to deploy immediately from a position that will allow the quickest access to a firefighter in distress.

As the incident expands in size or complexity, which includes a request for additional resources beyond an initial attack assignment, the IC shall assign a dedicated Rapid Intervention Company/Crew to be in the Standby Mode. When rescue scenarios become more complex or when two or more Rapid Intervention Companies/Crews are assigned, the IC should consider establishing a Rapid Intervention Group under the supervision of a Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor.

Within the command structure of the incident, the Rapid Intervention Group will report directly to the Operations Section Chief. If the Operations position is not filled, the Rapid Intervention Group will report directly to the IC.

When an incident creates a situation where the Incident Commander requests a second alarm, an Urban Search and Rescue Company should be considered as a resource to assist the Rapid Intervention Group.

The following is a diagram of the ICS with a Rapid Intervention Company in place:



## Standard Operating Guidelines

The responsibility of a Rapid Intervention can be separated into three modes:

1. **STANDBY MODE** – The mode that shall be assumed by at least one dedicated Rapid Intervention Company/Crew as an incident expands in scope or complexity, including an IC's request for additional resources beyond the initial attack assignment. In this mode, the Rapid Intervention Company/Crew will have the necessary equipment to perform a firefighter rescue and will be ready in full personal protective equipment, including a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).
2. **SUPPORT MODE** – A mode that the Rapid Intervention Group can assume to create conditions at the incident that will support firefighters, should an emergency evacuation or firefighter rescue be necessary. Additional Rapid Intervention Companies/Crews may assume this mode only after the initial Rapid Intervention Company/Crew has assumed the Standby Mode. The Support Mode shall never replace the Standby Mode. Tasks undertaken during the Support Mode include deploying additional ladders, opening doors or windows, deploying additional lighting, repositioning of apparatus, etc. All measures that are taken during the Support Mode must be conducted in coordination with incident operations so as not to interfere with the strategy and tactics established by the IC.
3. **DEPLOYMENT MODE** – When a Rapid Intervention Company/Crew is actively participating in a firefighter search and/or rescue. Resources in the Standby Mode will switch to the Deployment Mode when notified of a Mayday situation or at the direction of the IC or Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor.

### Establishing the Rapid Intervention Group

When a Rapid Intervention Group is established, the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor will normally establish an operating position in close proximity to the ICP. This will facilitate resource tracking and allow the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor to monitor the IC's strategy and tactics.

The Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor must ensure the following steps are taken immediately: (Use the acronym RIG)

- **R – Request** additional companies to meet the needs of the Rapid Intervention mission. It is the responsibility of the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor to ensure that the proper staffing level has been provided.
- **I – Initiate** a Rapid Intervention Company to assume the Standby Mode. The Standby Mode must be assumed as soon as possible to provide for potential firefighter rescue.

- **G – Gather** Information and set up the Rapid Intervention Group Command Status Board or other suitable means of providing accountability. This is the point where the personnel who are not in the Standby Mode will begin a reconnaissance to determine the building layout as well as other building features.

The Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor should request a Paramedic Rescue(s) to stand by in the immediate area of the deployed Rapid Intervention Company/Crew for each down, missing, or trapped firefighter. The personnel assigned to the Paramedic Rescue(s) should be dedicated to the Rapid Intervention Group and ready to provide immediate medical treatment to the rescued firefighter(s). For this reason, paramedics should not be reassigned to any other function during this time.

### **The Rapid Intervention Group Command Status Board**

The function of a Rapid Intervention Group has the potential to be overwhelming for a Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor. For this reason, the Rapid Intervention Group Command Status Board has been designed to track and control resources assigned to the Rapid Intervention Group and provide an overview of situation status. Initial incident information must be properly documented so that if a firefighter rescue is needed, the Rapid Intervention Group will know exactly what to do in the fastest timeframe possible.

The following information should be included regardless of the means by which the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor provides accountability:

- Situation status sketch including layout of the building, company placement and ICS assignments. (Divisions, Groups, etc).
- Radio frequency assignments (Command, Tactical, Rapid Intervention).
- Timeline of the incident.
- Timeline of each deployed Rapid Intervention Company and sketch of their location.

It should be noted that not all agencies use a Command Status Board, as there are a variety of ways to provide accountability for the Rapid Intervention Group.

### **Location of Rapid Intervention Companies/Crews**

The location of individual Rapid Intervention Companies/Crews in the Standby Mode is extremely important to ensure that the least amount of time is taken to accomplish a firefighter rescue. The Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor must ensure that as the geographic location of firefighters in the IDLH environment changes, the Rapid Intervention Company's/Crew's location changes as well. If a large structure is prohibiting a Rapid Intervention Company/Crew from deploying quickly to all areas of the incident, additional Rapid Intervention Companies/Crews should be added.

In high-rise fire incidents, the Rapid Intervention Company/Crew should be located in Staging. This will allow for a rapid deployment if the need for a firefighter rescue arises. Paramedics assigned to Rapid Intervention shall bring all necessary equipment to Staging.

In the event that a need for a firefighter rescue presents itself, companies operating near the down, missing, or trapped firefighter may be in the best position to affect a rescue. Company Officers or personnel in the immediate area of a firefighter rescue situation should take whatever safe action is necessary to assist in the firefighter rescue.

The IC should give specific instructions to these companies and ensure that they understand their assignments. It is imperative that the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor quickly determine the effect that adjacent crews are having on the rescue and report this information to the IC immediately.

Firefighting efforts must intensify in the area that a firefighter is believed to be down, missing, or trapped. Additional resources may need to be assigned to support fire suppression operations in addition to Rapid Intervention operations. Company Officers who feel that their company can affect the rescue must take into consideration the following:

- Their company's current position.
- The time their company has been "on air".
- The location of the firefighter requiring the rescue.
- Accountability for their company's actions (must keep their supervisor informed).

It must be stressed that abandoning all firefighting operations to conduct a firefighter rescue could have a detrimental effect on the outcome of the rescue. All companies must maintain strict discipline to ensure a positive outcome.

Companies should not become part of the rescue problem and endanger even more firefighters. Especially if others are in a better position and/or better equipped to affect a safe rescue. It is also important to understand the principle of potential rescuers becoming victims.

### **Company Unity and Accountability**

Company officers are responsible for the accountability of their company. Accountability is managed by maintaining company unity throughout the incident. Company unity is a critical factor in the overall management and effectiveness of ICS. Proper accountability will reduce the need for a firefighter rescue operation at an incident.

## Rapid Intervention Tools and Equipment

Equipment and tool considerations for a Rapid Intervention Company/Crew or Group will not be the same for every incident. Equipment and tools that are required for a particular rescue may not be needed for another. In some cases, trying to use less practical equipment may delay the deployment of a Rapid Intervention Company/Crew. This is especially true when responding into a known rescue situation. Consideration should be given to the following factors when selecting equipment and tools:

- Building size and configuration (basement, multi-floor, etc).
- Building construction (masonry, wood frame, etc).
- Building collapse hazards during the rescue.
- Personnel available to complete the rescue.
- Accessibility and obstacles (barred windows, steel doors, etc).
- Visibility (current and predicted).

Only the minimum tools necessary to complete a rescue should be taken by the Rapid Intervention Company/Crew. Consistent and realistic training with different firefighter rescue scenarios will make selecting equipment for future incidents much easier.

Incidents can vary in scope and severity. There is no all-encompassing list of tools for every incident. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to the following items as a starting point:

- Thermal Imaging Camera(s)
- RIC Kit(s)
- Litter Basket or Skedco Sled
- Lightweight Forcible Entry Tools. (Halligan, Axe, etc)
- Rotary Saw
- Chain Saw
- Inside Ladder (10', 12' or 14')
- Pike Pole and/or Rubbish Hook
- Additional Lifeline Rope Bags
- Carry-Alls
- Cyalume© Light Sticks
- Lighting Equipment (portable generator, lights, cords, etc)
- Spare Air Bottles

An example of a basic RIC Kit may include the following:

- Nylon Bag with Sling and Carrying Handles
- 60 Minute Air Bottle
- 1<sup>st</sup> Stage Pressure Regulator with 6' of Intermediate Pressure Hose and a Universal Air Connection
- 1 Face Piece (compatible with other components)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Regulator
- 100' of Minimum 3/8" Kern-Mantle Rope with Knots Tied Every 10'

- Flashlight
- External 2" Carabineer
- Medical Shears (penny cutters)
- Heavy Duty Wire/Cable Cutters
- External PASS Device
- Portable Strobe Light
- Search Slings

Apparatus that contain a RIC Kit may have an identifying feature on the exterior of the compartment where the RIC Kit is located with the letters "RIC". These letters should be made of 2" reflective tape.

APPENDIX A

FIREFIGHTER MAYDAY

Look at radio screen & document Radio ID \_\_\_\_\_

**Transmit: "All units assigned to the \_\_\_\_\_ Incident, clear this channel for a MAYDAY. Unit calling MAYDAY identify".**

Receive & Document:

WHO Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT Lost Trapped Injured Out of Air SCBA Malfunction

Other \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE Floor \_\_\_\_\_, Side \_\_\_\_\_

Area \_\_\_\_\_, Division \_\_\_\_\_

**Transmit: "Firefighter \_\_\_\_\_ I copy your Mayday (Repeat WHO, WHAT, WHERE information to FF). RIC is being deployed. Initiate your G-R-A-B-L-I-V-E-S procedures".**

Deploy RIC/RIG

**Transmit: (On Command and TAC Channels) "All units on the incident, we have a Firefighter Mayday. Maintain your current assignments and keep this channel clear."**

**Transmit: "FF \_\_\_\_\_ remain calm, control your breathing, turn on your PASS alarm and shine your flashlight. RIC is coming to get you".**

**Transmit Request(s) to Dispatch:**

- "Requesting \_\_\_\_\_ additional alarm(s) including \_\_\_\_\_ ambulance(s)"**
- "Requesting \_\_\_\_\_ Communication Plan" or "Requesting additional frequency(s)"**

Assign additional companies to RIC & RIC Group Supervisor

Conduct a Roll-Call PAR prior to clearing the Mayday

# Appendix B

## BURBANK FIRE DEPARTMENT RAPID INTERVENTION GUIDELINE

### I. OPERATIONS

#### A. RAPID INTERVENTION ASSIGNMENT PRIORITIES

##### 1. Single Company Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)

###### Position Responsibilities

###### Captain

- Captain check in at the CP
- Obtain additional Radio for Captain
- Obtain Comm. Plan
  - 1 Radio to Monitor Incident Tac
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Radio to Monitor RIC priority Radio Frequencies
    - Red 9
    - Red 16 / XLC AXS
    - Red 14 / AXS REV

- Initiate a 360 degree observation of incident to gather resource and situation status
- Based on 360 - Develop a mental Rapid Intervention Plan (*Ensure that adequate resources are requested to meet objectives: i.e. additional Crew(s) for Standby, Support or Deployment*)
- Brief crew of objectives

###### Engineer

- Obtain red RIC pouch from rig
- Report to IC/ Command Post
- Face to face with IC
- Obtain an additional 2 radios
- (Each Radio on its own tac) Monitor RIC priority Radio Frequencies

Red 9  
Red 16 / XLC AXS  
Red 14 / AXS REV

**(NOTE)** Incident information will be obtained by listening to incident tac through BC Rig at ICP alongside the IC

- Listen to incident tac at ICP for information to fill out the R I Status Form.
- Assume Accountability Officer responsibilities
  - Confirm the RIC Tac (Red 9)
  - Radio check with RIC personnel
  - Initiation of the R I Status Form in RIC packet

### **Firefighter(s)**

- Obtain RIC Kit
  - Establish the initial “stand-by mode” area  
*(This area is to reflect a good area to deploy from if MAYDAY occurs. This should be initially located where the interior crews entered until a better deployment area is identified)*
  - Establish the initial Equipment Cache (RIC kit/TIC)
- Improve the equipment cache as needed
- Assigned Firefighter(s) to monitor RIC Tac Channel (Red 9)
- Obtain Deployment Objectives from Captain

## **2. Receiving the MAYDAY**

- IC will receive the MAYDAY and follow the MAYDAY algorithm (Appendix A)
- IC will notify all companies of the MAYDAY and instruct all companies to hold traffic
- IC will receive and document pertinent situation information and remind FF to follow GRAB LIVES procedures
- IC will deploy RIC Team and available crews working in close proximity, reminding crews performing vital tasks to continue their operations

**For protracted rescues where radio communications are vital to support fire attack and rescue simultaneously, the downed FF may be asked if they are able to change radio channel and speak directly to RIC.**

- IC will instruct MAYDAY FF to push his Emergency trigger
- Once Emergency trigger has been activated, the Accountability Officer will assume communications with MAYDAY FF

## **3. Deployment Mode (Single Company)**

### **Incident Commander (IC)**

- IC will inform RIC of pertinent situation information
- IC will Deploy RIC
- Relay information as needed to RIC via RIC Tac (Red 9)

### **Accountability Officer**

- Obtain from the IC - WHO/WHAT/WHERE
- Fill out the “Rescue Tracking” section of the R I Status Form.
- Time on Air
- Communicate with MAYDAY FF *(only after the IC has completed the Appendix B script and the task has been assigned by the IC)*

**(NOTE)** *If emergency trigger activation is received on both Red 16 XLC AXS and Red 14 AXS REV then communications should take place on Red 16 XLC AXS)*

- Relay information as needed to RIC via RIC Tac (Red 9)

**Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)**

- RIC will acknowledge the initiation of “Deployment Mode”
- Once deployed, Captain and firefighter(s) will be on RIC Tac. (Red 9) *(The RIC Captain has the option to utilize a second radio to monitor Mayday communications knowing that RED 9 is the assigned RIC operational channel)*
- Captain to ensure that all members are locked on RIC Tac. (Red 9)
- Perform Radio check

**4. Additional Company/Companies Rapid Intervention Group**

**(RIG)**

**Position Responsibilities**

**(NOTE)** Rapid Intervention Group (RIG) now established

**Captain**

- Incoming Captain to be assigned and assume RIG
- Captain and crew will check in at the CP
- Obtain additional Radio for Captain
- Obtain Comm. Plan
  - 1 Radio to Monitor Incident Tac
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Radio to Monitor RIC priority Radio Frequencies

Red 9  
Red 16 / XLC AXS  
Red 14 / AXS REV

- Face to Face with IC (Briefing)
- Check in with Accountability Officer
- Take control of Rapid Intervention Company(s)  
**(NOTE)** *Companies shall return to original unit designation at this point*
- Take control of Communications with companies assigned

**(NOTE)** *Accountability Officer (Engineer) remains at ICP (1 radio for each TAC is located in BC-1 gang charger. They are labeled RED 9, AXS Reverse, and XLC AXS)*

- *Now communicating with RIG on Red 9*
- *Monitoring Red 16 / XLC AXS  
Red 14 / AXS REV  
( IC is also monitoring)*
- *Continues to develop R I Status Form*

### **Engineer and Firefighter(s)**

- Obtain a second RIC Kit
- Establish a secondary equipment cache
- Back up the initial RIC
- Support Mode Responsibilities

- **On a working fire the IC needs to add at minimum, one additional company to RIC**
- **IF RIC cannot be established with units on the 1st alarm, this indicates the need for additional company(s) based on the size and complexity of the incident**
- **If a MAYDAY occurs, an additional alarm will be called. Additional companies will be used to support the RIC operations**

## **II. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. RAPID INTERVENTION COMMUNICATION PLAN**

#### **1. SCAN LISTS**

##### **TRUNKED**

1. Incident Tac
2. Incident Command Tac

##### **CONVENTIONAL**

1. Red 9 RIC Tac
2. Red 16 / XLC ACCESS (EAB)
3. Red 14 / AXS REV

#### **3. EXPLANATION OF E-TRIGGER RADIO PATHWAYS**

- a. If E-Trigger is pushed and the signal is able to reach a repeater, both Red 16 / XLC AXS and Red 14 / AXS REV will receive the activation
  - i. ***Communicate with the down firefighter on Red 16 / XLC AXS***
- b. If E-Trigger is pushed and the signal is NOT able to reach a repeater, Red 14 / AXS REV will receive the activation
  - i. ***Communicate with the mayday FF (who is on Red 16 XLC AXS because of the E-Trigger) via Red 14 AXS Reverse***

**(NOTE)** Members on Red 14 / AXS REV at the incident can hear communication from the down firefighter. When communicating back to the down firefighter on Red 14 / AXS REV, the down firefighter (and anyone else on Red 16 within the reception area) can hear this communication. No one on Red 14 / AXS REV can hear the communication back to the down firefighter

*(because Red 14 cannot communicate with Red 14),  
including Verdugo.*

In the normal operating area of Verdugo Fire agencies, almost all emergency activations will be repeated through the Verdugo communications infrastructure, but there is always a chance that when a member is in an area that necessitates activation of the emergency trigger, they may not be able to reach the infrastructure.

H1 AXS REV (zone 1, channel 14) is the reverse of XLC Access (zone 1, channel 16), meaning that it emulates the infrastructure on a local basis, just without the repeat capabilities. A person talking on XLC AXS will be heard by someone listening on AXS REV (zone 1, channel 14), and someone on AXS REV (zone 1, channel 14) will be heard by someone listening on XLC AXS (zone 1, channel 16). A member talking on XLC AXS (zone 1, channel 16) can be heard by someone else on XLC AXS (zone 1, channel 16) when the repeater is accessed, but someone talking on AXS REV (zone 1, channel 14) **cannot** be heard by someone else on AXS REV (zone 1, channel 14).

A brief review: (see diagram for visual review)

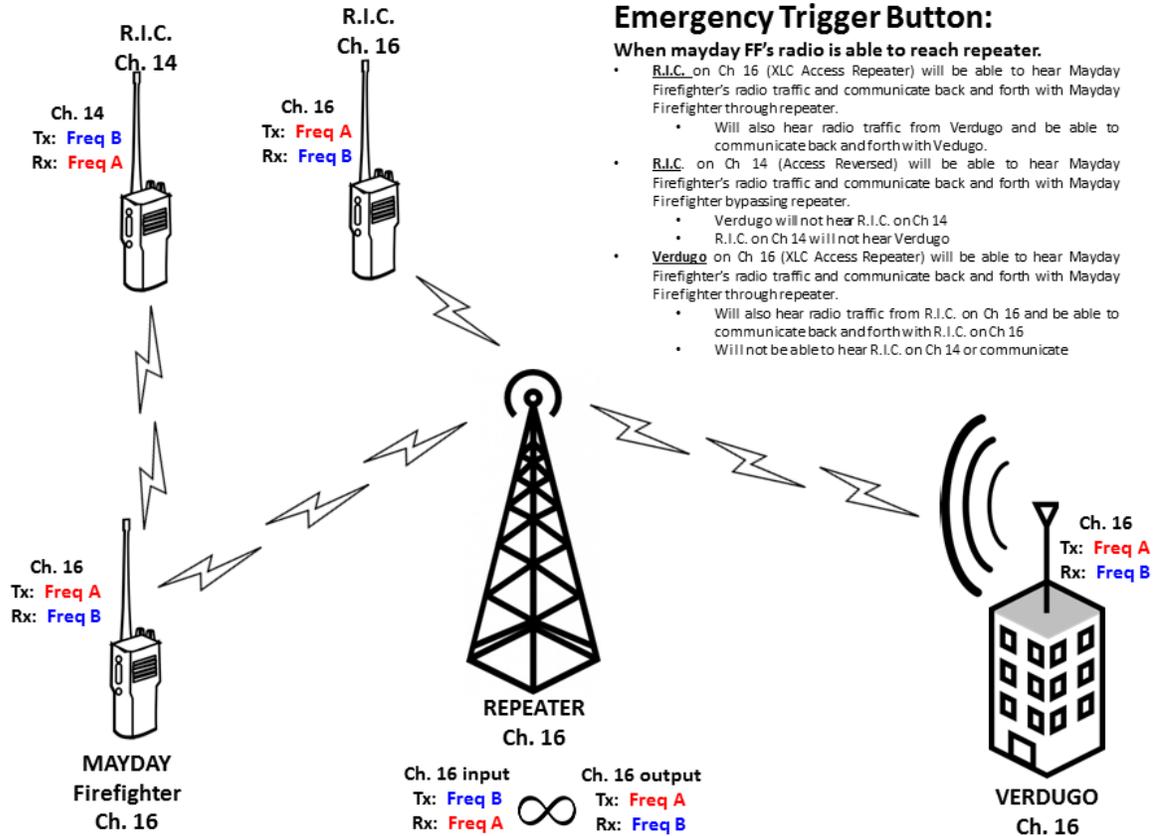
14 cannot communicate with 14 with or without a repeater.

When unable to reach a repeater 16 cannot communicate with 16. You must use 14 to communicate with 16, and 16 to communicate with 14.

When a repeater is reached 16 can communicate with 16

RIC must monitor zone 1, channels 14 and 16 for these reasons. See attached diagrams to assist in understanding this concept.

# EXAMPLE!



### Emergency Trigger Button:

When mayday FF's radio is able to reach repeater.

- **R.I.C.** on Ch 16 (XLC Access Repeater) will be able to hear Mayday Firefighter's radio traffic and communicate back and forth with Mayday Firefighter through repeater.
  - Will also hear radio traffic from Verdugo and be able to communicate back and forth with Verdugo.
- **R.I.C.** on Ch 14 (Access Reversed) will be able to hear Mayday Firefighter's radio traffic and communicate back and forth with Mayday Firefighter bypassing repeater.
  - Verdugo will not hear R.I.C. on Ch 14
  - R.I.C. on Ch 14 will not hear Verdugo
- **Verdugo** on Ch 16 (XLC Access Repeater) will be able to hear Mayday Firefighter's radio traffic and communicate back and forth with Mayday Firefighter through repeater.
  - Will also hear radio traffic from R.I.C. on Ch 16 and be able to communicate back and forth with R.I.C. on Ch 16
  - Will not be able to hear R.I.C. on Ch 14 or communicate

