

# Campbell County Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Operations

Mayday Procedure

401.07

## I. PURPOSE:

The nature of fire fighting places the fire fighter at risk for becoming lost, trapped or with equipment malfunctions. The toxic environment's where work is performed provides only a narrow window of survivability. Survival depends on a mix of predictable self-survival actions by the affected fire fighter(s), the Incident Commander and the Rapid Intervention Team. The purpose of this guideline is to provide action steps to be taken by the trapped/lost fire fighter(s) and the Incident Commander. Initiate the Rapid Intervention Team, and remove those in danger to a non toxic environment, in a quick and efficient manner.

## II. SCOPE:

This procedure applies to all Campbell County Fire Department (CCFD) firefighting personnel.

## III. PROCEDURE:

### 1. Definition:

The term Mayday is designated strictly for a fire fighter in immediate distress. Be it trapped, lost, or experiencing equipment malfunction.

### 2. Guidelines:

2.1 The number one basic self survival responsibility is to avoid getting into situations where a firefighter or team gets trapped, lost or low/out of air.

3.1 The rescue of trapped or lost firefighters within a burning building is extremely time sensitive due to our SCBA's providing a limited supply of air.

3.1.1 All teams entering the Hazard Zone shall have at least one portable radio and rescue tools. If it is possible, all members on the team should have individual portable radios.

3.1.2 Minimum entry crew size is two members. These members must remain in tact and together.

3.1.3 Crews must have been given an assignment and be working under the direct supervision of a Division/Group Officer or Command.

3.1.4 Crews will follow all SCBA guidelines, including, but not limited to PASS device usage.

3. Emergency Procedures: When a fire fighter(s) become lost/trapped or experience equipment malfunction, the following procedures must be followed.

3.1 Call For Help Immediately: Report on a portable radio " Mayday – Mayday – Mayday." Announce your situation while continuing to find your way out. Fire fighters should not delay notification of distress. Mayday announcement should

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occur as soon as the fire fighter thinks he/she may be in trouble. The longer the delay of notification, the smaller the window of survivability becomes.

3.2 Lost/trapped fire fighter(s) should give Command information: LUNAR

L = Location (as accurately as possible)

U = Unit ID ( Engine 31)

N = Name (names of lost or trapped crew members)

A = Air (current air status for individual(s) lost or trapped)

R = Resources you need (any special needs or information that may assist the RIT in locating and removing affected crew(s)).

3.3 THE TERM "MAYDAY" WILL BE RESERVED ONLY TO REPORT LOST OR TRAPPED FIREFIGHTERS. THE TERM "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" WILL BE USED TO REPORT ALL OTHER FIRE GROUND EMERGENCIES.

3.3.1 If a Mayday is heard, all other radio traffic on that channel will cease, until the Mayday operation is complete.

3.3.2 The Incident Commander will then designate a new radio frequency for all unaffected fire ground units to switch to.

3.3.3 The IC will also notify dispatch of the change in fire ground channels, and have dispatch announce this change.

4. Radio Channels:

4.1 Crews or personnel declaring a Mayday should remain on the assigned operations channel. Once contact is made with the IC, affected crew shall remain on that channel.

4.2 After a Mayday is broadcast, the stricken fire fighter(s), Rapid Intervention Team, and the Safety Officer will stay on the designated channel, until resolution of the incident is achieved.

4.3 All communications will be directed to the RIT officer. All non-affected companies shall switch to another channel as assigned by the IC and the communications center.

4.4 All companies shall continue to operate in their originally assigned Division/Group.

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5 Other Mayday Practices:

- 5.1 Activate PASS Device – As soon as a fire fighter recognizes he/she is lost or trapped, the PASS device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. If the device interferes with radio communications it may be turned off temporarily. Once messages are completed, the device must again be manually activated.
  
- 5.2 Crews Stay Together – Members that separate from each other make it more difficult for rescuers to locate all members of the crew. Crew members who stay together enhance their chances for ALL being rescued and allows easier, more efficient extraction.
  
- 5.3 Follow Hose or Lifeline Out - Crew members should stay with the hose line and follow it out whenever possible. The hose line should always be treated as the safety line to the outside. The RIT team may follow the hose line into the structure to locate distressed fire fighters. Where life line ropes are in use, follow the life line to the outside.
  
- 5.4 Searching for an Exit – A lost fire fighter should always attempt to exit out of the building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows, or other means of egress are not available, fire fighters should next attempt to reach an exterior wall. Once at an exterior wall the fire fighter can try to locate windows, doors, or hallways that generally lead to the outside. Rescuers will first search hallways, around windows and doors before sweeping large area's if victim location is unknown. Getting to hallways, doors, or windows will greatly increase the chances of being rescued early. Breaching walls for escape or fresh air can aid survivability. These actions will also provide predictable activities that will aid rescuers.
  
- 5.5 Retreat to a Safe Refuge – Where fire fighter cannot find a way out, but there is a safe refuge(protected room or floor) away from the fire that the fire fighter can retreat to, he/she should take advantage of this location. Command and the RIT team must then be notified of this location as soon as possible.
  
- 5.6 Stay Calm and Conserve Air – A conscious effort must be made by the fire fighter(s) to control breathing. Unnecessary talking or physical activity must cease, unless absolutely necessary. Fire fighters must control and pace their activities and breathing to extend their SCBA supply.

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- 5.7 Horizontal Position – If a fire fighter cannot get out, he/she should assume a horizontal position on the floor that maximizes the audible effects of the PASS device. The fire fighter should attempt to take this position at an exterior wall, doorway, or hallway that maximizes quick discovery by rescue crews.
- 5.8 Flashlight/Tapping Noise – In assuming a position to await rescuers, the fire fighter(s) should attempt to position their flashlight towards the ceiling. This will enhance the rescuers ability to see the light and locate the downed fire fighter. If able the fire fighter should attempt tapping noises to assist in location by rescuers, (hitting a tool on a metal door, tapping on the floor).
- 5.9 Company or Division / Group Officers – Company officers who are unable to locate a crew or fire fighters assigned to them, must immediately notify command and use Mayday to notify all personnel operating on the scene. When possible the officer should include who’s missing, last known location, and actions being taken. Fire fighting positions must not be abandoned during the rescue effort, the officers MUST control free-lancing. Command will initiate a rescue effort. On going fire suppression and ventilation must continue to afford the victims increased opportunity for survival.
- 5.10 Personal Accountability Report – Immediately following declaration of a Mayday, a PAR shall be taken. This is important to confirm if additional personnel are safe and accounted for. With the exception of the RIT and Safety Officer, the PAR shall be conducted on the alternate radio channel assigned by the IC and communication’s center, as to not interfere with direct communication between RIT and effected crew(s).
- 5.11 Assignment Upgrade – Depending on severity and scope of the incident, IC is strongly encouraged to upgrade the assignment if additional resources are, or might be needed. This will be up to the Incident Commander on a case by case basis.

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