

Campbell County Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure		
Operations	Rescue of Lost or Trapped Firefighter	<i>406.01</i>

I. PURPOSE:

The rescue of trapped or lost firefighters in a burning building is especially time sensitive. There is a very narrow "window of survivability" for a firefighter who is out of SCBA air supply or trapped by approaching fire. Individual firefighters must not delay reporting to command if they become lost, trapped or in need of assistance. Company officers must also not delay the reporting of lost firefighters or inability to complete accountability reports. Command and sector officers must always assume that the missing firefighter is lost in the building until the firefighter can be accounted for. Command must also restructure the strategy and action plan to include a priority rescue effort.

II. SCOPE:

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

III. PROCEDURE:

1. Lost or trapped firefighters:

Rescue needs generally fall into two categories. Either the firefighter is trapped by a collapse, OR, lost in a smoke filled and burning building. The most significant problem and difference between the two categories are that the search area can be substantially larger for a lost firefighters than that encountered in a collapse situation. On the other hand, a collapse presents a major extrication situation. In some cases, lost or trapped firefighter may be able to radio to command that they are lost and in need of rescue, prior to being incapacitated. Other problems may include: a possible secondary collapse, separated and scattered crews and confusion of the last known location of the crew (or member). Early PAR's and information as to the number of missing firefighters, identities, and whereabouts are critical.

2. "MAYDAY" Radio Message:

The radio message "MAYDAY" will be used by lost firefighters to report their status as being in trouble and needing rescue. Any member may use "MAYDAY" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "MAYDAY" will receive priority radio traffic followed by the emergency traffic tone.

3. Command Response to a Missing Firefighter(s):

The incident commander **MUST ALWAYS** assume that the missing firefighter is lost or trapped in the building until the firefighter is accounted for. Rapid, concise, decisions and actions must be taken to increase survivability. The following is a list of actions to be taken by Command for a reported missing or trapped firefighter. These are guidelines and do not necessarily need to be accomplished in the order

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listed. The first five (5) must be accomplished very rapidly.

4. **Mayday Traffic:**
Immediately upon a report of a missing or trapped firefighter "Emergency Traffic" will be sounded to alert all personnel working on the fireground of the situation.

5. **Change of Strategy to a Rescue Mode:**
The incident commander must restructure the tactical plan to include a high priority firefighter rescue effort. The plan and objectives must be communicated to other command staff and sector officers for implementation. When in the Rescue mode, Incident Command must have absolute priority on the tactical channel. Close coordination of all search efforts is a must in order to eliminate duplicate searches that waste time.

6. **Immediately Request Additional Alarms:**
At least one additional alarm should be immediately requested including along with a EMS unit.

7. **Fireground Accountability:**
A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) must be immediately requested from all companies operating on the fireground. Command cannot develop an effective rescue plan until accurate information is available on the number of missing firefighters/crews, their identity, and their last reported work area. Command will attempt to contact by radio a lost or missing firefighter by name when unable to account for all personnel on or in the fireground/hazard area.

8. **Commit the Rapid Intervention Team**
Command will immediately send the rapid intervention team(s) (RIT) to the most appropriate location to initiate search and rescue efforts (typically the last reported work area). The RIT team will be designated as "rescue sector" and coordinate activities at that location. Due to the high risk nature of rescue operations, Command must establish another RIT to protect rescue crews. The RIT should stand-by at a location near the rescue operation. More than one RIT may be needed.

9. **Withdrawal of Companies from the Affected Area**
In some situations, such as collapse, crew members can get separated. The only practical method to obtain an accurate roll cal for a PAR may be to withdraw crews to the exterior. Withdrawal is a judgment call based on circumstances at the time, information available, and available resources. It may not be practical or possible to do in all situations. However, the absolute need for an accurate roll call (PAR) and information on missing firefighters remains a critical priority.

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10. Do Not Abandon Firefighting Positions, Provide Re-Enforcement

Abandoning firefighting positions during the rescue effort should be avoided. Command and crews should take aggressive measures to protect trapped or missing firefighters from the effects of the fire. Efforts should be concentrated on re-enforcing existing positions and keeping the fire out of the rescue area and providing appropriate ventilation and lighting. In some situations it may be appropriate to write off some areas of the building in order to relocate companies and crews to better protect the rescue effort.

11. Monitoring All Radio Channels

Command must ensure that all radio channels being utilized are monitored. Should a lost firefighter declare an emergency on a channel other than the fireground tactical channel, Command must immediately be directed to the lost firefighters channel for direct communication.

12. Establish Treatment (EMS) Sectors

The incident commander must have EMS personnel in a position to immediately treat any rescued firefighters.

13. Assign a Safety Officer

Rescue operations are high risk. A Safety Officer must be implemented. The rescue operation may be taking place in a post-collapse environment or a flashover may have occurred. A Safety Officer in the affected area will help control risk taking.

14. Special Call Chief Officers

Additional Chief officers may be needed to fill key sectors and command team positions. Command should special call additional support, and initiate a call back of off duty chief officers as needed.

15. Unlock All Doors, Open If Appropriate

All doors in the immediate area should be unlocked or forced open, and at least the immediate interior area quickly searched. In most cases the doors should be left open to provide an emergency escape route, unless doing so will have negative effects on the fire. In all cases, the doors must remain unlocked.

16. Ventilate / Maintain Tenability / Lighting

Reducing smoke conditions, through effective ventilation, improves the air quality for any victims, and will enhance search and rescue capabilities through increased visibility of the interior. Both vertical and positive pressure ventilation should be

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aggressively employed. Early lighting of operations (both interior and exterior) needs to be included.

17. Strong Supervision

Strong supervision and control will be required by all officers. Emotions will be very high. Firefighters in this situation will tend to want to freelance or take higher risks. Company officers must maintain accountability and control of all assigned personnel, and ensure companies in their assigned areas performing assigned functions.

18. Media Control

Command shall assign a public information officer, preferably a chief officer to deal directly with the media. The PIO shall request that they not identify the involved individual(s) until the family has been contacted.

19. Welfare Officer

A welfare officer will need to be established early to address the family or families of lost or missing firefighters. A chief officer, company or other unit can be used to make contact with family of involved individuals.

20. General Considerations

When searching for a lost member, rescue crews should consider the following:

20.1. Visible sightings or trapped firefighters such as arms or legs.

20.2. Knowledge of their last know location.

20.3. The sound of the PASS devices audible tones, SCBA alarm bell sounding.

20.4. Shouts for help, tapping noise, portable radio broadcast in the collapse area.

20.5. Tracing attack hoselines into the collapse area.

20.6. Open or unlock all doors.

20.7. Search large interior spaces in a detailed grid pattern, ensure all areas are searched.

20.8. Take one RIT - SCBA Kit for each lost firefighter in the search area.

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