

**JEFFERSON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #1
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

SOG 309

LOST OR TRAPPED FIREFIGHTER

I. PURPOSE

A. The nature of firefighting places the firefighter at risk of becoming lost or trapped. The toxic environment provides only a narrow window of survivability. Survival depends on a mix of predictable self-survival actions by the lost firefighter and the Incident Commander.

II. SCOPE

A. This guideline outlines the procedures to follow when a firefighter is lost or trapped in a building involved in a fire. These standards apply to all personnel of the District.

III. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

A. It will be the responsibility of the Chief and the Officers to insure that these guidelines are followed.

IV. STANDARDS

A. Basic Self-survival Responsibilities

1. The rescue of a trapped or lost firefighter in a burning building is especially time sensitive. There is a very narrow “window of survivability” for a firefighter who is out of 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 must always assume that the missing firefighter is lost in the building until they can be accounted for. Command must also restructure the strategy and action plan to include a priority rescue effort.
2. All crews entering the Hazard Zone must have a portable radio. Minimum crew size is two and crew members must remain intact.

B. Company Officers

1. Company Officers who are unable to locate a crew of firefighters assigned to them must immediately notify Command and use “MAY DAY” to notify all personnel operating on the fireground. When possible the Company Officer should include who’s missing, last known location and actions being taken. Firefighter positions must not be abandoned during the rescue effort and free-lancing must be controlled by the Company Officers. Command will initiate a rescue effort.

C. "MAY DAY" Radio Message

1. The radio message "May Day" will be used by a lost or trapped firefighter to report their status as being in trouble and needing rescue. Any member may use "May Day" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "May Day" will receive priority radio traffic.

D. Call for Help Immediately

1. Firefighters who find themselves lost or trapped must immediately use "May Day" to announce their situation while they continue to attempt to find their way out. Firefighters should not delay notification of distress. Notifications should occur as soon as the firefighter THINKS he or she is in trouble.
2. Delay compromises the window of survivability. Lost firefighters should give Command information as to who they are, how many firefighters, what division they were operating in, where they THINK they are, description of building structures surrounding them, sounds of nearby activities, (i.e., ventilation saw noise), or any other information that might direct rescue crews (RIT) to their location.

E. Activate Pass Device

1. As soon as a firefighter recognizes they are lost or trapped, the PASS device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. The device must remain on until rescued. If the device interferes with the lost firefighters communicating critical radio messages to Incident Commander or rescuers, the device may be turned off temporarily. Once messages are completed, the device must again be manually activated.

F. Crews Stay Together

1. Members that separate from each other make it difficult for rescuers to find all firefighters. Crew members that stay intact as a crew enhance their chances for ALL being rescued and allows easier, more efficient extrication.

G. Follow the Hose or Lifeline out

1. Crew members should stay with the hoseline (or lifeline) and follow it out whenever possible. All firefighters must remember that the male side of the coupling lead toward the nozzle (the fire), female side of the couplings toward the pump (outside). Where lifeline ropes are in use, follow the lifeline to the exterior.

H. Searching for an Exit

1. A lost firefighter should always attempt to get out of the building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows, or other egress is not available, firefighters would next attempt to reach an exterior wall. Once at the wall they will be able to search for doorways, windows and hallways that generally lead to the outside. Rescuers will first search hallways, around walls and around windows and doors before sweeping large interior areas. For this reason, firefighters must avoid collapsing in the middle of open spaces. Getting to one of these areas increases the chances of being rescued early. These actions also provide predictable activities that will aid rescuers.

- I. Retreat to a Safe Refuge
 - 1. If the firefighter cannot find a way out, but there is a safe refuge in a protective room or floor away from the fire, the firefighter should take advantage of this location to retreat to. Command should be advised of the location by whatever means possible.
- J. Stay Calm and Conserve Air
 - 1. A conscious effort must be made by the lost firefighter to control breathing. Unnecessary talking or physical activity must be ceased unless absolutely needed in order to extend their SCBA air supply.
- K. Scba Facepiece Filter
 - 1. If the SCBA air supply is depleted, the firefighter may use the protective hood as a filter of toxic atmospheres. The filter may be placed over the facepiece's open inhalation valve attachment area.
- L. Horizontal Position
 - 1. If a firefighter cannot get out, he should assume a horizontal position on the floor that maximizes the audible affects of the PASS device. The firefighter should attempt to take this position at an exterior wall, doorway or hallway that maximizes quick discovery by rescue crews.
- M. Flashlights/Tapping Noise
 - 1. Firefighters should attempt to position his flashlight toward the ceiling when assuming a position to await rescuers. This will enhance the rescuer's ability to see the light and locate the downed firefighter. If able, the firefighter should attempt tapping noises to assist rescuers in locating him.

APPROVED:

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