

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

SOG 605

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

I. PURPOSE

A. To provide for a standardized operating practice to communicate in clear and concise text, procedures for action due imminent threats and hazards to personnel operating at emergency incidents.

II. SCOPE

A. This procedure shall apply to all emergency operations and training exercises.

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. Common Terminology:

1. **Abandon:** The term “abandon” shall be used to direct companies or crews operating in the hazard zone to immediately exit to a safety zone. For example, at a structure fire the order to “Abandon the building” directs all companies and crews in the hazard zone to immediately exit to a safety zone. Companies operating in the hazard zone will take only the tools, equipment, and hose lines necessary to permit in their emergency escape.
2. **Safety Zone:** An area of safe refuge outside the hazard zone.
3. **Withdraw:** The term “withdraw” shall be used to order a tactical movement from current operating positions to a safer location. For example, offensive operations at a structure fire could be shifted to defensive operations by ordering the companies and crews to “withdraw from the building”. Companies or crews withdrawing from an operating position will remove all tools, equipment, and hose lines.
4. **Evacuate:** The term “evacuate” shall be used to order the removal of civilians who are exposed, or potentially exposed to hazards presented by the incident. For example, at a structure fire the order to “evacuate the building” will direct designated crews or companies to provide for the removal of all civilians in the designated building.
5. **Emergency Traffic:** The phrase “emergency traffic” shall be the code phrase used in radio communications to indicate a critical, life-safety related message. **Emergency traffic radio communications has priority over all other radio**

communication with the exception of a mayday.

6. **Mayday:** The term “mayday” is the signal word used in radio communications to indicate a missing, trapped or injured firefighter in need of immediate assistance. **Mayday messages shall be considered emergency life-safety related radio traffic, and shall have absolute priority over all other radio communications.**

B. Emergency Channels

1. Channel 16 in all zones (A, B, C) shall be designated as the mayday channel (155.220). The Incident Commander, the Accountability Officer and the Safety Officer shall monitor the mayday channel at all times.
2. All personnel with emergency traffic or mayday messages shall attempt to transmit that message to the IC on the operations channel. If they are unable to contact the IC on the assigned operations channel, they will immediately retransmit the message on the mayday channel.
3. **Only personnel on scene that have immediate need to transmit emergency traffic shall use the mayday channel.**
4. If the IC receives an emergency traffic or mayday message over the dispatch channel or the mayday channel, they must immediately re-transmit that message over the assigned operations channel.

C. Emergency Traffic

1. The phrase “emergency traffic” is used to request priority access for radio communications critical to life-safety. Situations in which emergency traffic communications are, but are not limited to:
 - a. Abandoning the hazard zone
 - b. Changing strategy from offense to defense
 - c. Reporting extreme safety hazards such as structure collapse
 - d. Initiating measures to locate a missing firefighter
 - e. Requesting additional resources in a critical situation
2. Emergency traffic has priority over all other radio communications with the exception of a mayday message. All other non-emergent radio traffic must cease and personnel must monitor the emergency traffic message.

D. Abandoning the Hazard Zone

1. Rapidly developing hazardous conditions may require Command to order all companies and crews operating within the hazard zone to abandon that area of operation and **immediately exit to a safe area.** In structure fire incidents, safe areas are pre-defined as the exterior corners of the structure and outside the collapse zone. The IC may proclaim specific safe areas at any time during the incident.
2. Communicating the order to abandon the hazard zone is accomplished through both radio communication and audible signals. An order to abandon the hazard zone is directed at all personnel operating at an incident, regardless of the

- location of the personnel.
3. Upon receiving the order to abandon the hazard zone, all apparatus operators in the immediate area shall sound their air horn with one long continuous blast for a duration of approximately 10 seconds. This audible signal provides a back up to radio communications.
 4. Following the order to withdraw or abandon the hazard zone, Command shall account for all personnel that were operating within the hazard zone by initiating a personnel accountability roll-call (PAR). When a PAR is called by Command, the Accountability Officer will report back to Command with the results of the PAR. For any personnel not accounted for Command will initiate measures to immediately determine their location, which may include activation of a RIT crew.
- E. Missing or Injured Firefighter
1. The signal word “mayday” is used to clearly communicate that a firefighter is missing, trapped, or injured and in immediate need of assistance. This word is used to differentiate this type of emergency from others that may be communicated with the “emergency traffic” signal phrase.
 2. Company Officers and/or other personnel who suspect a firefighter is missing shall notify Command immediately. Command shall always assume that the firefighter is lost until the member is located.
 3. When transmitting a mayday message, the last known location of the person(s) requiring assistance should be identified if possible. The mayday message provides an alert for the RIT crew, to be ready for immediate assignment by the IC.

APPROVED:

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