

HIGH RISK/LOW FREQUENCY

BARABOO FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE



SUBJECT: MAYDAY

POLICY NO.: 300.17

EFFECTIVE DATE: 04/19/2010

SUPERSEDES: 01/23/2006

REVIEWED/UPDATED: 03/18/2010

RESOLUTION NO.: NA

APPROVAL: 
Kevin G. Stieve, Fire Chief

PURPOSE

The **MAYDAY** Guideline is designed to prepare all personnel for any sudden life-threatening occurrence that may injure, trap, disorient or distress any emergency response personnel during an emergency incident.

RESPONSIBILITY

1. All Chief and Company Officers have the responsibility to comply with and ensure that the personnel under their command are adequately trained, fully understand, and comply with this guideline.
2. All firefighters have the responsibility to learn and follow this guideline.

GUIDELINE

- A. Radio Signal
 1. **MAYDAY** will be the radio signal used for any distressed firefighter needing assistance for any reason. No other term shall be substituted.
 2. The radio channel used shall be the designated fire ground frequency, i.e. High Fire.
- B. Declaring a MAYDAY
 1. When an emergency responder identifies that he/she, or a member of his/her team, is lost, trapped, caught, fall, collapse, missing, activated (low air alarm) or in need of assistance, he/she shall (if possible) transmit a verbal message on the fire ground operations channel to Command and state,

"MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY".
 2. The person transmitting the **MAYDAY** shall, if possible, advise the following:
 - a. **MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY**
 - b. **NAME** WHO?
 - c. **DEPARTMENT NAME**
 - d. **WHAT IS THE PROBLEM:** Disoriented, trapped, out of air, etc. WHAT & WHERE?
 - e. **WHERE ARE YOU AT?** Fell in the basement, second floor, etc.
 3. After MAYDAY transmission activate PASS.
- C. Command's Response to MAYDAY
 1. Command should not delay in controlling the fire department radio channels once a **MAYDAY** has been called.

MAYDAY

Guideline #300.17

2. Command shall notify all fire ground personnel only traffic pertinent to the **MAYDAY** shall be permitted on the fire ground channel.
3. Command shall also do the following upon receipt of a **MAYDAY**:
 - a. Deploy the **Rapid Intervention Team** to the **MAYDAY** location, when verified.
 - b. Conduct a **Personnel Accountability Report** of all assigned units on scene.
 - c. Request additional resources (mutual aid) if it is not already enroute to the scene.
 - d. Designate a RIT Group Leader responsible for supervising the RIT if not already done.
 - e. Assign additional RITs.
 - f. Continue the ongoing fire ground operations to the extent of controlling the incident.
 - g. Moving the fire ground operations to protect the location of the **MAYDAY**.
 1. Relocate these fire ground operations to a separate radio frequency, i.e. FG Red

D. Firefighter's Responsibilities

1. Firefighters must not hesitate to declare a **MAYDAY** if they;
 - a. Become lost,
 - b. Trapped,
 - c. Disoriented and/or;
 - d. Are in need of assistance.
 - e. This should occur as soon as the individual thinks that he/she may be in trouble.
2. Upon recognition that a **MAYDAY** situation exists, the firefighter should activate his/her PASS device manually to sound an audible alarm.
3. The PASS should remain active until members of the RIT reach the member(s) or the member(s) are able to reach safety.
4. If the device interferes with radio communications, it may be turned off temporarily, but must be re-activated to sound the audible alarm.
5. **Lost or trapped crew(s) should remain together.**
6. Lost or trapped firefighter(s) should always attempt to get out of a building by whatever means possible.
7. Where doors, windows or other egress are not available, firefighters should attempt to reach an exterior wall.
8. Once at the wall, a search for doorways, windows and hallways will generally lead to the outside.
9. Rescuers will first search hallways, around walls, and around windows and doors before sweeping large interior areas.
10. Where the firefighter(s) cannot find a way out, but there is safe refuge (protective room or floor) away from the fire to which the firefighter(s) can retreat, he/she should take advantage of this location.

MAYDAY

Guideline #300.17

11. Command and rescuers should then be advised of the location by whatever means possible. In the event one firefighter becomes trapped or otherwise incapacitated, crew member(s) must consider leaving the trapped or incapacitated member in an attempt to secure help.
12. Every practical effort should be made by all firefighters to save themselves and their partners.
13. A conscious effort must be made by the trapped firefighter(s) to control breathing and remain calm.
14. Unnecessary talking or physical activity must cease unless absolutely necessary. This will increase the likelihood of extending the supply of air until rescuers can find the trapped team member(s).
15. If the firefighter(s) cannot get out, he/she should assume a horizontal position on the floor such that the audible effect of the PASS device is maximized.
16. The firefighter(s) should attempt to take this position at an exterior wall, doorway or hallway to maximize quick discovery by rescue crew.
17. In assuming a position to await rescuers, the firefighter(s) should attempt to position his/her flashlight(s) toward the floor. This will enhance the rescuer's ability to see the light and locate the downed firefighter(s).

References – *Fire Department Training Network*, Risk and frequency classification information - <http://firefighterclosecalls.com/sopsog.php>