

Clinton County Fire Chief's Association

MAYDAY Procedures

Adopted: January 2009

Firefighter Responsibilities:

- Each team of two firefighters should carry at least one portable radio with them into the hazard zone and make sure that they are on the correct tactical channel prior to entry into the hazard zone.
- Firefighters must not hesitate to declare a MAYDAY if they think they have become lost, trapped, disoriented or are in need of assistance.
- Upon recognition that a MAYDAY condition exists, the firefighter should activate their PASS device manually to sound an audible alarm. The device should remain active until the member is found or until he or she is able to reach safety. It may be deactivated temporarily if it interferes with radio communications. **Lost or trapped crews will remain together.**
- Lost or trapped firefighters should always attempt to get out of a building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows or other egress points are not available, fire fighters should attempt to reach an exterior wall. Once at an exterior wall, search for doorways, windows or hallways that generally lead outside. Rescue crews will first search hallways, around walls and around windows and doors before sweeping large interior areas. Where a firefighter cannot find a way out, but there is a safe refuge (protected room or floor) away from the fire to which the fire fighter can retreat, he or she should take advantage of this location. Command and rescuers should be advised of the location by whatever means possible.
- Firefighters trapped or lost must make a conscious effort to control breathing and remain calm. Do not undertake unnecessary physical activity unless absolutely necessary. This will increase the likelihood of extending the air supply until rescuers can find you.

An absent member of any crew will automatically be assumed lost or trapped in the hazard zone until otherwise determined safe and a PAR check will immediately be initiated by Command.

Mayday Procedure:

- The rescue of lost, trapped or missing firefighters in a burning or collapsed structure is especially time sensitive. There is a very narrow window of survivability for a firefighter who is in trouble. Therefore, rapid, concise decisions and actions must be taken to increase survivability. The **MAYDAY** program is designed to prepare all personnel for any sudden life threatening occurrence that may injure, trap, disorient or distress an emergency responder during an emergency incident.
- **MAYDAY** will be the radio signal used for any distressed firefighter needing assistance for any reason. No other term shall be substituted.
- When an emergency responder identifies that they, or a member of their team, is lost, trapped, missing, disoriented or injured and in need of assistance, they shall (if possible) transmit a verbal message on the tactical channel to Command and state: "**MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY**".
- The person transmitting the **MAYDAY** shall, if possible, advise the following:
 - **WHO THEY ARE:** i.e. (interior sector) and number of members in distress
 - **LOCATION:** division, room, side of building, etc.
 - **PROBLEM:** trapped, lost, disoriented, out of air, etc.
 - **NEEDS:** hose line, ladder, shovel, air cylinder, rescue tools, etc.
- If a firefighter is unable to communicate verbally, they should activate their PASS device and broadcast it over the radio.
- Company Officers or Crew Leaders must **immediately** report any absent members to Sector Officers, who in turn will notify Command.
- The pump operator of the primary attack engine, upon hearing that a MAYDAY has been declared shall sound their air horn three short blasts, pause, then three more short blasts (lasting at least 15 seconds). This shall be an indication to everyone on scene that a firefighter is in trouble and to the firefighter in trouble that the mayday has been received by Command and help is on the way. **This is not to be confused with the single extended long blasting of air horns, which is used to signal immediate evacuation of a building.**

Command's Responsibility to MAYDAY:

Upon receipt/recognition of a MAYDAY;

- Command shall notify Communications via the fire channel that a MAYDAY has been received.

- Clinton County Communications will sound a four second warble tone, then announce "Clinton County to all units working structure fire, emergency Traffic, a MAYDAY has been declared by _____ Command, emergency traffic only". **The Communications Center will announce this information on the primary dispatch channel and also announce the information on the assigned tactical channel.**
- Only traffic pertinent to the MAYDAY shall be permitted. The I.C., personnel calling the Mayday, and the RIT team shall all stay on the channel in which the Mayday was transmitted. All other fire ground operations will switch to the channel assigned to the RIT team by the Communications Center upon their arrival on scene.
- The RIT Channel shall be pre-designated as TAC 6. In the event that any other emergencies requiring the utilization of a RIT Team should arise during a working incident, the Communications Center will assign the RIT channel for that second operation.
- If Command cannot determine the unit or firefighter calling the Mayday, Command must initiate an immediate roll call (PAR) of all companies assigned to duty in the hazard zone.
- For any reports of missing firefighters, Command must request the next greater assignment or alarm (i.e., first alarm goes to a second alarm or second alarm goes to a third alarm).
- Command must send the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to the last reported working area of the lost firefighter to begin a search.
- Simultaneously with these actions, Command must adjust on-scene strategies to a priority search and rescue effort.
- Once the emergency has been mitigated or the missing firefighter has been located and all units have PAR, Command will issue an all clear. At this time, units may resume the tasks assigned to them prior to the initiation of the Mayday. Clinton County Communications can then notify all units to resume regular radio traffic and all units will revert to tactical channels assigned prior to the initiation of Mayday. **The Communications Center will announce this information on the primary dispatch channel and also announce the information on the assigned tactical channel.**