



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

24-01

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**Incident Response Policy Appendix I
Rapid Intervention and Maydays**

07/01/2017

Issued by: Fire Chief Scott E. Goldstein

Policy Number: 24-01

Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-3 (b)

Supersedes: FCGO 11-03 *Rapid Intervention Company 02/01/11*
FCGO 11-04 *All Hazards MAYDAY Procedure 02/01/11*

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

SECTION 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this appendix is to provide guidance on the structure, deployment, and actions of rapid intervention teams and to provide guidance on the use of the term Mayday.

SECTION 2. Applicability:

All MCFRS personnel while participating in MCFRS activities and personnel from other organizations while operating in Montgomery County.

SECTION 3. Background:

For any incident where personnel are operating in an environment immediately dangerous to life and/or health (IDLH), a designated and structured rescue capability (rapid intervention) is required. The policies, procedures and practices contained in the Incident Response Policy are designed to ensure mission effectiveness and part of this effectiveness lies in preventing emergency situations from occurring.

However, despite on-going risk assessments emergency incidents are inherently risky and personnel may find themselves in need of assistance. When these emergencies occur, it is critical that those in trouble declare their emergency properly, that they declare it quickly and that all other personnel respond appropriately.

POSITION STATEMENT

History suggests that rapid intervention operations are not rapid. Once the emergency is recognized, the team has to prepare to act, make entry to the scene, search for and locate the downed firefighter, secure their air supply, and extract them from the situation. All of these actions take time.

Because of the inherent time lag involved with rapid intervention and the need for the Incident Commander to rapidly adjust to the "incident within the incident" it is necessary for those who find themselves in an emergency situation to quickly recognize, react to, and report the emergency situation. Time lost in delayed notification cannot be made up.



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Because rapid intervention scenarios happen in the context of another emergency; there is a fire, a confined space rescue or some other situation that demands the attention of personnel and the Incident Commander, the firefighter emergency always places a severe strain on incident resources.

Rapid intervention teams are the last line of defense in a system of layered protections for operating personnel.

As the complexity or risks associated with an incident increase the number of personnel assigned to, and the capability of, the rapid intervention teams should be proportional. However, there is a point where the need to increase the size or capability of the rapid intervention teams is indicative of a need to investigate alternate objectives, strategies, or tactics.

A Mayday will be a shock to the incident. It will be a drain on the mental, emotional, and physical incident resources. These additional strains will impact the ability of personnel to plan and execute the rescue effort.

MCFRS history shows that firefighter emergencies are most quickly resolved by the individual having the emergency with the assistance of nearby crews. This fact highlights the need for all personnel to remain in close contact with their respective crews and to maintain a high level of awareness about what is happening around them.

Pause, Listen, Look, Light is a framework for thinking through the initial moments of the Mayday. When the Mayday is sounded personnel must first pause. This pause is a short pause in work that accomplishes two things:

- a. It reduces ambient noise, allowing nearby crews to listen and look for indications of the downed firefighter's location.
- b. It allows crews a few moments to gather their thoughts, formulate plans and situate themselves within the emergency.

The light part of the framework speaks to the need to provide visual cues to the downed firefighter with regards to the location of exit points. By placing lights, even small handlights, into window, door, and other openings, personnel increase the chance that the downed firefighter can orient to an exit point.

There are many tools that could be brought to each event but the most important tool is a prepared firefighter able to execute a tough mission in a calm and efficient manner utilizing available resources, being cognizant of the environment, and of the elapsed time.

When choosing the tools to stage for rapid intervention operations the personnel must assess the scene and choose equipment that will be useful for the event they are operating in. For example, a 12' hook is not of much use in a cape cod style house fire but may be very useful in new construction with tall ceilings. Likewise, a stokes basket is of limited utility in a confined space.



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MCFRS uses a four-tiered approach to providing rapid intervention. This is consistent with the principles of balance and scalability. There must be balance between mission effectiveness and rapid intervention capability.

The first tier of intervention is the 2-Out. The second tier is the Rapid Intervention Company (RIC). The RIC typically has the same capability as the 2-Out, their presence simply allows the 2-Out to return to their normally assigned duties. The Rapid Intervention Dispatch (RID) brings additional resources to the scene to complete the third tier of rapid intervention teams, the Rapid Intervention Group (RIG).

For the purposes of this policy “rapid intervention team” refers to each of the tiers. The specific capability of a rapid intervention team is based on the tier.

a. Tier 1: 2-Out

1. The 2-Out is two personnel staged at the point of entry who are prepared to assist the initial entry team should they face an emergency situation.
2. The 2-Out must be on the scene and prepared to act before the first unit makes entry into the hazard area, except when there is a known immediate life hazard.
3. One member of the 2-Out must maintain contact with the initial entry team visually, verbally, or by radio. Maintaining the connection with the initial entry team must be their only focus.
4. The second member must not be assigned to functions that would endanger the initial entry team if they were abandoned. For this reason, engine drivers and Incident Commanders may not be used to meet the 2-Out requirement.
5. The second member of the 2-Out must wear all their structural PPE and have their SCBA immediately available.
6. The second member of the 2-Out may assist with firefighting operations only as listed below:
 - A. Assisting with the movement of the primary attack line outside the structure.
 - B. Placing ladders as secondary egress for the initial attack crew.

b. Tier 2: Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)

1. The RIC is a crew of at least two firefighters who relieve the 2-Out and form the initial component of the RIG.
2. The RIC must be on the scene and prepared to act before the 2-Out is relieved.
3. The primary purpose of the RIC is to begin the rapid intervention size up.
4. The RIC must not engage in tasks, such as additional laddering, removing egress hazards, securing utilities, etc., except as necessary to immediately save a life or prevent an emergency from occurring.



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5. The RIC officer must ensure that all of their personnel are immediately available for rapid intervention duties.
- c. Tier 3: Rapid Intervention Group (RIG)
 1. When a working structure fire or special operations incident is identified, the RIC is augmented by additional units, forming the RIG.
 2. For structure fires the RIG is completed by the addition of the units assigned to the RID.
 3. The RID consists of one rescue squad, one aerial, one additional advanced life support provider, and a second EMS transport unit if the advanced life support provider is in a chase car.
 4. For incidents other than structure fires the configuration of the RIG will be determined by relevant special operations guidelines and/or the Incident Commander.
- d. Tier 4: Special Teams

Tier four rapid intervention teams are special configurations of personnel and units that are determined by the Incident Commander on a case by case basis. They will most often be used in the special operation context but may also be used in addition to the RIG on structure fires.

SECTION 4. Definitions:

See Appendix Q.

SECTION 5. Policy:

- a. General
 1. Any operation that requires personnel to enter an environment where it is possible or likely that an IDLH is present requires the presence of a rapid intervention team.
 2. All members of rapid intervention teams at all tiers must be qualified interior firefighters as per the IECS. Tier 2 and higher teams must be led by a FFIII at a minimum but preferably by an officer.
 3. Once all components of the RIG are in place the RIG Supervisor may engage units in proactive tasks as long as those tasks do not impede the ability of the RIG to provide rapid support for personnel declaring a Mayday.
 4. The EMS resource(s) dispatched on the RID must remain available to render immediate care to sick and/or injured persons.
 5. All officers assigned to rapid intervention teams must bring their thermal imagers.
 6. All units dispatched to an event after the initial alarm who are equipped with a RIT bag must bring that bag to the incident command post, and leave it there, when they report for an assignment.



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b. Mayday

1. When any of the following conditions are present personnel **MUST** call a Mayday:
 - A. A firefighter has become entangled, trapped, or pinned.
 - B. Personnel have fallen through a roof or floor.
 - C. Personnel are caught in a flashover.
 - D. Personnel are off a hoseline or tag line in an open area with zero visibility.
 - E. An SCBA low air alarm activates, and personnel cannot immediately find an exit.
 - F. A Mayday **MUST** be initiated whenever an individual(s):
 - i. Finds themselves in a situation that meets the Mayday criteria.
 - ii. Witnesses someone else in a situation that meets the Mayday criteria
 - iii. Any personnel fail to respond to multiple radio calls during a personnel accountability report (PAR).

SECTION 6. Responsibility:

All personnel.

SECTION 7. Procedure:

a. Initial Entry Team

1. An initial entry team must be formed before entering an area where an IDLH atmosphere exists.
2. The initial entry team must consist of at least two people qualified for interior firefighting operations at least one of which is a Primary Unit Officer as per the IECS Policy.
3. Personnel must not enter an IDLH before a 2-Out is assembled and announced on the radio unless a known life hazard exists.
4. If the first arriving Primary Unit Officer determines that initial operations must begin in an IDLH atmosphere before establishing the 2-Out, he/she must make a radio announcement identifying the units involved, their mission, and their location.
5. Once the known life hazard has been resolved, personnel must withdraw until a 2-Out has been assembled.
6. Whenever interior operations begin without a 2-Out or when interior firefighting operations are significantly delayed because of an inability to meet the 2-Out requirement the circumstances must be fully documented on the incident report.
7. Before a 2-Out is in place, the initial entry team may operate outside the IDLH. Some exemplar tasks include:



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- A. Exposure protection.
- B. Exterior attack.
- C. Stretching attack lines to the boundary of the IDLH.

b. 2-Out Procedures

- 1. Options for meeting the 2-Out requirement are provided below and listed in order of preference:
 - A. Qualified personnel on the first arriving unit who exceed minimum staffing e.g., a unit staffed with five or more personnel.
 - B. Qualified personnel from other units.
 - C. Any other combination of certified personnel who are qualified.
 - D. As a last resort, qualified personnel from an EMS unit may be used.
 - E. 2-Out duties must not be assigned to EMS units when there are people known to require medical care or evaluation.
- 2. If the initial entry team requires assistance/rescue the 2-Out must make a radio transmission advising of the problem and their need to take action before they take action.
- 3. Any unit assigned as the 2-Out must be prepared to carry out its preassigned job task in accordance with other procedures once it has been relieved by the RIC.
- 4. The 2-Out may not be relieved of their duties until the RIC is established. The preferred relief is face-to-face.

c. RIC and RIG Procedures

- 1. For structure fires the RID will be dispatched when a working incident is identified by ECC or by a unit on the scene.
- 2. For non-structure fire events the Incident Commander will determine the appropriate tier of rapid intervention and cause the appropriate units to be dispatched.
- 3. The fifth due engine will function as the RIC on structure fires.
- 4. The RIC should stage at or near the primary entry point and may not engage in any tasks that would reasonably diminish their ability to perform rapid intervention.
- 5. The RIC must be prepared to intervene, including having a handline available for immediate deployment.
- 6. The RIC Officer must conduct a scene assessment.
- 7. Units from the RID will combine with the RIC to form the RIG.
- 8. The OIC of the RIC engine will be the RIG Supervisor unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander.



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9. The RIG must be located where it can best meet its mission as determined by the RIG Supervisor and must report their location to the Incident Commander.
 10. When stationed on the exterior of a structure, the RIG must be outside the collapse zone, and must maintain a view of the structure sufficient to observe its collapse potential or the potential for other catastrophic events.
 11. The RIG Supervisor must:
 - A. Develop a plan for each operation and relay that plan to all members of the RIG.
 - B. Ensure all critical operational radio talk groups in use at the incident, including the Fire Department Talk Around (FDTA-7-Oscar) channel, are monitored.
 - C. Communicate to the Incident Commander the need for additional units and/or special equipment to support the rapid intervention mission.
 - D. Ensure that at least one team is available for immediate intervention at all times.
 - E. Ensure that RIG personnel proactively engage to improve egress and/or remove obvious impediments to egress without creating new flowpaths.
 - F. Ensure the RIG does not get involved in any tasks that would reasonably diminish their ability to perform rapid intervention.
 12. The RIG has four primary planning considerations:
 - A. Search: The RIG must have a plan for searching for firefighters in distress and ensuring that the path to the Mayday firefighter is clearly marked for subsequent crews.
 - B. Protection: The RIG must develop a plan for protecting firefighter(s) in distress. For structure fires this will likely require a hoseline but it may require protection from falling debris, flooding compartments or other hazards.
 - C. Building Preparation: Building preparation may include providing for additional egress, enlarging openings, and other activities as necessary to facilitate extraction of firefighters.
 - D. Extraction: The extraction plan is usually developed after contact has been made with the firefighter(s) in distress and an assessment of their situation has been completed.
 13. When a Mayday is called, the RIG must not engage until ordered to by the Incident Commander.
 14. The EMS unit assigned to the RIG has the primary responsibility to provide patient care to either trapped occupants or injured firefighters and must always be immediately prepared to do so.
- d. Procedures for Personnel to Declare a Mayday
1. When a firefighter recognizes that they are in a Mayday situation they must:



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- A. If possible, inform someone near them of the emergency.
 - B. Declare a Mayday by depressing the push to talk button and transmitting "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday".
 - C. Explain the situation using the LUNAR acronym:
 1. L = Location and situation of Mayday personnel
 2. U = Unit number and the personnel position indicator (e.g., E799-Right)
 3. N = Name of firefighter
 4. A = Air supply situation
 5. R = Resources needed
 - D. Take immediate action to self-rescue.
 - E. Attempt to depress the EB button.
 - F. Activate the PASS alarm.
2. Self Help
- A. Personnel in a Mayday situation must:
 1. Remain calm.
 2. Not delay self-rescue while attempting to activate the EB.
 3. Not delay efforts at self-extrication while waiting on intervention teams to be sent.
 4. Control air consumption.
 5. Control breathing rate and depth.
 6. Remain oriented to exits and their location.
 7. Activate the PASS alarm.



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EXAMPLE: Firefighter presses the EB on the portable radio and transmits: *"E799 to Command, Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, E799-Officer and E799-Right are trapped on the second floor, Quadrant B. This is Captain X and Firefighter Y we are low on air and trapped under a collapsed roof."*

EXAMPLE: The firefighter cannot access the EB. The firefighter immediately pushes the PTT (push to talk) and transmits: *"E799 to Command, Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, E799-Officer and E799-Right have fallen through the floor into the basement, Quadrant A, fire in the basement, Captain X and Firefighter Y. We have air, but are injured and can't move. We need a hose line right away to protect us."* When the trapped firefighters can orient their radio to activate the EB, they should attempt to do so.

e. Procedure for EB Activation with no voice transmission

1. When an EB is activated with no follow-up voice transmission ECC will notify command of the activation. Command will make one attempt to contact the firefighter verbally.
2. If the firefighter does not acknowledge this attempt and is known or suspected of operating in a hazard area the firefighter will be considered a Mayday.

f. Procedures for non-Mayday Personnel

3. When a Mayday occurs, non-Mayday personnel must:

A. PAUSE, LISTEN, LOOK, LIGHT

- i. The first action after a Mayday is declared must be to pause all work as reasonable but personnel must not risk complicating the emergency e.g., allowing the fire to grow in size, or violating crew accountability. This pause is designed to reduce ambient noise.
- ii. During the pause, personnel must listen. While noise is reduced, personnel should listen to all radio traffic, especially the LUNAR report of the downed firefighter if one is provided.
- iii. They should also listen for the sounds of tapping, yelling, or of a PASS device.
- iv. All personnel must look, scanning their assigned operational area for signs of the personnel calling the Mayday.
- v. Especially at night, personnel must make an effort to get to openings, without violating operational discipline, and shine lights into those openings while they listen and look. The lights can provide a means of orientation for trapped firefighters.



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4. Personnel may take immediate action to resolve the Mayday if they are in a position to do so. By definition, any action that requires personnel to leave their assigned operational area is not immediate action.
5. Personnel who take immediate action to resolve a Mayday must communicate any action taken as soon as possible.
6. Personnel with any direct knowledge of the Mayday must report it to their immediate supervisor.
7. In the event of a Mayday all personnel must continue to perform their assigned work with due consideration for the nature and location of the Mayday.
8. The Incident Commander should give strong consideration for deploying nearby resources to provide initial rapid intervention assistance.
9. Small Recon Teams
 - A. At the direction of the Incident Commander, the RIG will search for the downed firefighters.
 - B. The initial search team should be a small team of three or four personnel whose objectives are to:
 - i. Locate: To the extent possible this search must be focused and directed, meaning crews should seek to identify the last known location of the Mayday personnel, and make some assumptions based on the incident of where they are most likely to be.
 - ii. Mark: Once the Mayday personnel are located subsequent crews should not have to search for them again. The recon team must mark their location in an obvious way.
 - iii. Provide Air: The recon team must carry a RIT Pack and be prepared to provide air to downed personnel. The situation will dictate the best method for completing this task.
 - iv. Prepare: The recon team should prepare the Mayday personnel for extraction. This may include securing the SCBA waist strap in between the legs, attaching webbing, rope or other tools to facilitate lifting and moving, and securing the RIT Pack to the downed firefighter if appropriate.
 - v. Plan: The recon team should develop an initial plan for protection and extraction, including the required resources to conduct the extraction and report those back to their immediate supervisor.

g. Command Procedures

1. When a Mayday is declared the, Incident Commander should:
 - A. Declare radio silence.



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- B. Try to determine the location of the Mayday personnel if their location is not immediately available.
 - C. Order crews to PAUSE, LISTEN, LOOK, LIGHT.
 - D. Poll units working in the direct vicinity of the Mayday personnel to see if they are able to mitigate the Mayday.
 - E. Develop and communicate a plan for action.
 - F. Assign the RIG as appropriate.
 - G. Help reassure the person declaring the Mayday and help them identify their location.
2. If the Incident Commander does not acknowledge a Mayday, any unit hearing the call must alert the Incident Commander of the Mayday.
 3. When the Mayday is transmitted on FDTA, the Incident Commander or their designee, and the RIG may switch to FDTA if appropriate.
 4. When a Mayday is declared ECC will start a 15 minute timer; at the end of 15 minutes ECC will declare "Command, you are 15 minutes into your Mayday." The expectation is that at 15 minutes, Command should be beginning to rotate rapid intervention personnel.
 5. A firefighter who is not accounted for in a PAR and who is known or suspected of operating in a hazard area will be considered a Mayday.
 6. Divisions/Groups that do not report after multiple attempts have been made to contact them will be considered a Mayday.
 7. The Incident Commander will announce via radio when the Mayday has been resolved.
 8. Once the Mayday has been resolved the Incident Commander will conduct a PAR beginning with the Divisions/Groups/Units operating in the most hazardous locations.

SECTION 8. Cancellation:

This cancels and supersedes: FCGO 11-03 *Rapid Intervention Company* 02/01/11, FCGO 11-04 *All Hazards MAYDAY Procedure* 02/01/11.

SECTION 9. Attachments:

None.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Goldstein".

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

April 14, 2017