

## SANTA CLARA COUNTY LOCAL FIRE SERVICE AND RESCUE MUTUAL AID PLAN

### APPENDIX 14B – RAPID INTERVENTION OPERATIONS

Reviewed Date: January 2024  
Next Revision Date: January 2026

#### **Introduction**

Due to the potential need for mutual aid throughout Santa Clara County, it is recognized that a standardized policy is necessary to provide a minimum level of consistency for the rescue of firefighters operating at mutual aid incidents.

The rapid extrication of lost, trapped, or injured firefighters operating at emergency incidents is a complex operation. This policy is intended to establish minimum requirements applicable to all agencies in Santa Clara County, address the need to provide for the rescue of firefighters and to increase the overall level of firefighter safety.

*This policy is not intended to address an individual agency's requirement to provide at least two personnel located outside when entry is made into an IDLH atmosphere as mandated by 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4)(i), and the United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("Two In/Two Out").*

#### **Definition**

RAPID INTERVENTION CREW (RIC) - A specifically designated, fully equipped, and trained rescue team(s) ready to immediately respond, and initiate rescue operations for injured or trapped, or lost firefighters.

Rapid Intervention personnel have two very important duties. These are:

- Monitor designated radio channel(s) while standing-by and during rescue operations.
- Be fully prepared to participate in the rescue of a downed firefighter as assigned by the Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief.

#### **Policy**

- The Incident Commander shall establish a RIC when an incident escalates beyond an initial full alarm assignment or when significant risk is present to firefighters due to the magnitude of the incident.
- A RIC shall be established subsequent to the initial Two Out as soon as sufficient personnel are available.
- A RIC shall consist of a minimum of three personnel.
- A RIC shall be equipped with the Minimum Rescue Equipment as specified by this Policy.

#### **Procedures**

- RIC's shall be identified as RIC and their location or their apparatus identifier.  
Examples: RIC- Division A or RIC-Truck 51
  - If two or more RIC's are established due to the size of the building, they shall be identified as RIC and their location(Example, RIC-Division B, RIC-Division D, RIC-Division 4 or RIC- Division 9).
- The Incident Commander shall provide, and make available advanced life support (ALS) capability anytime a RIC is established.

### **Notification of a RIC Situation**

"Mayday" shall be the designator to indicate when Firefighters or incident personnel are faced with life threatening situations. They should call for help early before a last minute rescue is required using the term "Mayday".

On a trunked radio system, using the emergency alert button (EAB) will allow the users radio to receive priority over all other radios on the same talk group, meaning other radios that may be broadcasting will be "kicked off" the system. Note: priority will not occur on a VHF radio system.

Incident Commanders shall acknowledge the person in trouble and use the term "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" to clear radio traffic. Clear text shall be used to identify the type of emergency "FIREFIGHTER DOWN," "FIREFIGHTER MISSING," or "FIREFIGHTER TRAPPED," to all incident personnel.

"MAYDAY" should be declared in the following situations:

- SCBA Malfunctions
- Low Air Supply Emergency
- Lost
- Trapped
- Injured
- Collapse
- Entanglement

The downed, trapped or missing Firefighter should do the following:

1. Activate the EAB on the radio, if operating on a trunked radio system, so that the radio receives priority over other radios.
2. Broadcast "Mayday" and indicate their particular problem. This transmission should include the following:
  - a. Location
  - b. Unit
  - c. Name
  - d. Air supply level
  - e. Resources needed
3. Activate the PASS Alarm

4. Conserve Air
5. Make noise with a tool to help the RIC Group during rescue operations
6. Continue to attempt self-rescue and locating a building exit until help arrives.

When the term “Mayday” is used:

The IC shall:

1. Acknowledge the “Mayday”. Use the term “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” to clear radio traffic.
2. Use clear text to identify the specific emergency.
3. Notify the affected Division Supervisor of the firefighter(s) emergency, there may be other firefighters working close by that can assist.
4. Deploy the RIC to assist the firefighter(s).
5. Assign an additional RIC as a backup for the deployed RIC.
6. Assign a Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) Group Supervisor early.
7. At the conclusion of the “mayday” or the “emergency traffic” situation, the IC should transmit an “All clear, resume radio traffic.” on all assigned radio channels.

## **Rescue Guidelines**

Upon activation of the RIC the following guidelines should be considered:

- Request an additional alarm.
- Confirm utilities are secured.
- Assign a separate RIC Group Supervisor to the rescue operation if required.
- Request standby EMS with transport capabilities
- Provide that a trained person remains at the RIC's entry point, to initiate air management procedures, and **timekeeping**.
- When Possible: The RIC operation shall remain on the radio channel in use by the injured, trapped, or lost firefighters, and all other incident operations shall be moved to an alternate radio channel.

## **Minimum Rescue Equipment**

Each RIC shall acquire and stage a tool cache specifically for use during a rescue operation. The tool cache shall be staged at a location appropriate to hazard, and contain the following equipment as a minimum.

- Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC)
- One RIC PACK
- Rescue line (Lifeline/Search rope/drop bag)
- Portable Radios for each RIC member.
- Portable lights
- EMS equipment (optional)
- Personnel carrying device (Backboard/Oregon Spine Board/Ready Bed/Webbing)
- Forcible entry tools appropriate for the building construction/situation.

Notes:

1. The RIC Group Supervisor shall notify the Incident Commander when RIC equipment and personnel are assembled and ready for deployment.
2. Rather than have the RIC responsible for gathering EMS equipment, it is preferred to establish a Medical Group or have a separate ALS unit standing by.

## **Summary**

The scene of a firefighter search and rescue is a potentially stressful and taxing. Supervisors shall maintain strict command and control of their personnel. Essential firefighting operations

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shall continue so as to further limit the spread of fire and decrease the threat to the lost, trapped, or injured firefighters. Controlled rescue efforts should be rapidly initiated to afford the greatest potential for a successful rescue. The IC shall constantly re-evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the operation and adjust accordingly. Adequate resources should be requested and staged until needed.

**Reference**

**ICS 910 – Firefighter Incident Safety and Accountability Guidelines (FIRESCOPE)**

**ICS 420-1 – Field Operation Guide (FOG Manual)**