
	STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE				
	OPERATIONS				
	EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS				
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1.0 Objective

- 1.1 The purpose of this guideline is to define the use of emergency communications during an incident.

2.0 Responsibility

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all Department personnel to understand the procedures documented in this Standard Operating Guideline.

3.0 Implementation



- 3.1 All personnel have the authority to transmit an “Emergency Traffic” call or a “Mayday” distress call.

4.0 Emergency Traffic Call



- 4.1 At times, it may be necessary to broadcast emergency traffic (urgent message) over the radio. Radio traffic with urgent information should be differentiated from regular scene radio dialogue by declaring “Emergency Traffic” prior to the message
- 4.2 Emergency traffic can be used for a wide variety of events to advise fire companies of an important message. Any imminent hazards and emergency instructions should be announced in a manner that captures the attention of everyone and ensures that the message is clearly understood.
 - 4.2.1 Emergency Traffic would precede an announcement that a lost, trapped, or injured member has been found and removed to a safe area. Other examples could be; the need for additional resources at the scene of an emergency, dangerous building conditions (collapse potential), loss of water, rapidly changing fire conditions, or non-life threatening injuries.
- 4.3 When the need occurs to transmit emergency traffic, the person transmitting the message should make the urgency clear to the Incident Commander (IC). For example:
 - 4.3.1 “Command from S-33X, *Emergency Traffic!*” At that point, the Highland Park Incident Commander will advise all other units to stand-by, and then advise the caller to proceed with the emergency message. If required, the IC will repeat the caller’s radio transmission, update the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and take steps to mitigate the hazard/s (e.g. call for resources, go defensive, move an ambulance up or notify the Chiefs)
- 4.4 Upon acknowledgment of “*Emergency Traffic*” by the IC, the IC shall:
 - 4.4.1 Announce to all units that “*Emergency Traffic*” has been requested
- 4.5 All non-urgent radio traffic shall cease and the radio airway shall be yielded to the company requesting “*Emergency Traffic*”
- 4.6 Once the “*Emergency Traffic*” issue has been resolved the IC shall announce to all companies to resume “Normal Radio Traffic”

5.0 Mayday Call

- 5.1 A “Mayday” must be transmitted on the radio to the Incident Commander by the Company requesting help. In the event that a disabled Company cannot transmit a “*Mayday*”, a Company witnessing the event or problem may transmit the “*Mayday*” for them.
- 5.2 The term “*Mayday*” will be used by members on the incident scene who become aware of or involved in a life-threatening situation requiring immediate assistance. Examples of proper usage include:
 - 5.3 A member or company becomes lost, trapped, or injured that member/officer would announce “*Mayday*” then provide details
 - 5.4 A member sees another become trapped or injured that member would announce “*Mayday*” then provide details

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- 5.5 The Incident Commander should acknowledge the receipt of the Mayday by announcing such to all members operating on the scene, e.g. *“Emergency Traffic, Emergency Traffic, Command to all units we have received a Mayday, “Emergency Traffic Only.”*
- 5.6 Should the Mayday be made on a frequency assigned to a sub-section of IC, that officer will forward the message to the IC.
- 5.7 In the event one or more members become trapped, lost, or injured in need of help and are capable of communicating, they will transmit a *“Mayday”*
- 5.8 The *“Mayday”* should contain any pertinent information that may assist in the emergency. If a *“Mayday”* is requested, the Incident Commander will utilize the acronym LUNAR to ascertain the information from the Company requesting the *“Mayday.”* LUNAR stands for:
- 5.8.1 L - Location in the building or on scene.
 - 5.8.2 U - Unit (T-33, E-34, A-32, etc.)
 - 5.8.3 N - Name of person requesting the *“Mayday.”*
 - 5.8.4 A - Assignment (Roof, Second Floor, Basement, etc.)
 - 5.8.5 R – Resources required (Saws, Air, Handline, etc.)
- 5.9 If a member(s) cannot be accounted for during a roll call, they will be presumed missing until accounted for.
- 5.10 An *“Emergency Traffic”* message will be transmitted by the officer indicating the member is unaccounted for.
- 5.11 The officer will announce the company and radio identifier of the missing member and last known location.
- 5.12 IC will announce *“Emergency Traffic”*. At which time locating the member becomes a priority.
- 5.13 After ascertaining as much information as possible, the Incident Commander should re-transmit the *“Mayday”* on an apparatus radio (on both the fireground frequency and dispatch channel) with all available information after a *“Mayday”* has been broadcasted, the RIC and a RIC Chief will stay on Fireground during rescue efforts. All communications on that fireground channel (frequency on which the Mayday was broadcasted) will be directed to the RIC Chief Officer. This will be identified as the RIC Group...
- 5.14 All non-affected companies will be ordered by the IC to switch to another designated fireground frequency and will continue to operate under the IC to support the RIC Group as well as continue fire suppression operations.
- 5.15 All necessary fireground activities (fire suppression, ventilation, rescue, etc.) that are in progress should continue until the Incident Commander determines changes are needed.
- 5.16 IC will immediately request an additional two (2) alarms of response to the incident along with the appropriate level of EMS.
- 5.17 The IC will perform a PAR on the new fireground channel.
- 5.18 The IC will continue to coordinate fire suppression operations and any additional resources needed by the RIC Group will be facilitated through the IC.
- 5.19 Once the *“Mayday”* has been mitigated, the IC will then clear the *“Mayday”* on the reassigned radio frequency. The IC will continue to operate on the reassigned radio frequency unless there is a need to switch all companies back to Fireground Red.



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6.0 Emergency Evacuation – In the event that conditions warrant the immediate evacuation of a structure, environment or other work area, the following procedure will be used:

- 6.1 In the event that conditions warrant the immediate evacuation of a structure, environment or other work area, the following procedure will be used:
- 6.2 An emergency traffic message will be broadcast over the main incident radio channel
- 6.3 (Fireground Red in most cases) announcing the nature of the emergency.
- 6.4 If an evacuation is necessary, the IC shall give the order to all Divisions, Sections, Groups, Units and Members operating to evacuate the incident area or structure and conduct an immediate PAR. This may mean abandoning equipment, hose lines and other resources as long as by doing so, it doesn't affect the firefighter's safety during the retreat.
- 6.5 Apparatus operating near the incident will activate their air horns in a repeating cycle of rhythmical 5 blasts with 3 seconds of pauses for one minute or until all members are out of the hazard area. The air-horn must be distinguishable from responding apparatus air-horns.
- 6.6 The communications vehicle or MABAS will activate the Alert Tone using a high/low tone repeating the evacuation order over Fireground Red, IFERN and over the main frequency of the Department who initiated the Box Alarm. This process may be repeated at the request of the IC.
- 6.7 Incident Command should conduct a roll call after the evacuation is executed.

7.0 PAR – Roll Call of Fire Personnel

- 7.1 A roll-call should be conducted
 - 7.1.1 When changing from an offensive to a defensive fire attack mode.
 - 7.1.2 After an evacuation.
 - 7.1.3 After a report that a member is missing.
 - 7.1.4 After the fire has been declared under control.
 - 7.1.5 Periodically throughout the incident.
 - 7.1.6 Any time at the discretion of Command.
- 7.2 A localized report may also be conducted by a sub-section of IC.
 - 7.2.1 Generally, when a Division is assigned a separate radio frequency on which to operate.
 - 7.2.2 When the IC issues a roll call order:
 - 7.2.2.1 Company Officers, Team Leaders, and Ambulance portable radio A, will confirm that their members are accounted for and will notify their Division Officer if assigned, or report directly to Command, if not assigned to a sub-section of IC.
 - 7.2.3 Any sub-section of IC shall notify Command when all members under their authority are accounted for.

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7.2.4 The roll-call has been complete when everyone has been positively accounted for.

7.2.4.1 This includes Division Officers, and staff positions assigned by Command.

7.2.5 Incident Command will record the time of the roll-call.

7.2.6 Unless directed otherwise by Command, the operations will continue while the report is being taken.

8.0 Exceptions

8.1 None

9.0 Definitions

9.1 *Emergency Traffic*: A radio transmission by any member operating on an emergency scene to identify any condition, event, circumstance or operational condition that all members operating at the incident must be made aware of. *This could include an injury to a firefighter that does not require RIT, an indication of collapse, change in strategy, loss of water supply to hose lines, change in fire conditions, power lines down or other significant event.*

9.2 *Evacuation Signal*: In the event that the Incident Command, the Incident Safety Officer, any sub-section of Incident Command or any individual company deems it necessary for an immediate withdrawal from a hazardous area, an *Emergency Traffic* message will be broadcast and apparatus located within the proximity of the incident will activate their air horns in patterns of 5 successive blasts for a period of approximately 1 minute. An immediate PAR will take place after the signal is issued.

9.3 *I/C*: Incident Commander

9.4 *“Mayday”*,: A radio transmission reserved exclusively for a member or company who is in immediate need of life saving assistance. This transmission receives top priority over all other radio communications and all other traffic will cease until the *“Mayday”*, is under control. Upon direction from I/C, all other companies operating on the channel that *“Mayday”*, was called shall switch to Fireground White with the exception of the *“Mayday”*, caller, and those assigned to the Rescue Group.


9.5 *Normal Radio Traffic*: General operational radio transmissions regarding operational issues and orders being given between units. When possible the sender should use the To/From model: Call the receiver first, transmit the message and the receiver will repeat a brief confirmation of the message back to the sender to ensure clarity. *Example: Engine 1 from Interior, charge the attack line; Engine 1 message received, charging attack line*

9.6 *PAR*: Personnel Accountability Report

10.0 Reference

10.1 Highland Park Fire Department

6.2 MABAS Division III Operating Guidelines – Mayday

Approved:  Fire Chief