



# **Northeast Fire Department Association**

Operations

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## ***Tactical Guidelines: May-Day Communications***

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***NEFDA President***

### **I.**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved at an incident where a "May-Day" has been transmitted.

### **II.**

#### **"May-Day" Radio Message**

The radio message "May-Day" will be used by firefighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and needing rescue. Any personnel may use "May-Day" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "May-Day" will receive priority radio traffic. The term "May-Day" will be reserved ONLY to report a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter(s). The term "Emergency Traffic" will be used to report all other emergencies.

Company officers and individual firefighters that suspect a firefighter is missing must notify the Incident Commander immediately. The Incident Commander MUST ALWAYS assume that the firefighter is lost in the building until they are located.

### **III.**

#### **Individual Responsibilities**

Firefighters who find themselves lost, trapped, or injured must immediately use "May-Day" to announce their situation while attempting to find their way out. Firefighters should not delay notification of distress. Notification should occur as soon as the firefighter THINKS they are in trouble.

Lost Firefighters should give Command information as to company identity, number of firefighters, what division they were assigned, location (as accurately as possible), description of building structures surrounding them, sounds of nearby activities, (i.e. ventilation saw noise), SCBA air supply, or any other information that might direct rescue crews (RIT) to their location.

As soon as a firefighter recognizes they are lost or trapped, the PASS device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. The device must remain on until rescued. The device may be turned off temporarily if radio communications are adversely affected.

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### **IV. Command Responsibilities**

Command will respond to the "May-Day" by implementing a rescue plan for the firefighter(s).

The incident commander must restructure their strategy and action plan to include a firefighter rescue effort. Accurate information must be quickly obtained and acted upon. Immediate deployment of the RIT must occur. These resources must be organized and controlled. The Command organization must expand. The strategy, plan, and objectives must be quickly communicated to command staff and Division officers. The plan and rescue activities must be continually monitored and revised.

At least one additional alarm with an ambulance should be immediately requested upon a report of a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter.

The Incident Commander should consider using an alternate radio channel for suppression activities.

Do not abandon fire-fighting positions, hold positions and prevent fire spread. If a missing firefighter(s) is to survive, the fire must be kept out of the rescue area. With a rapid intervention team in place, the incident commander can initiate an immediate rescue effort without withdrawing or relocating fire fighting companies. If anything, these positions need to be reinforced. Additional companies should be sent to priority positions to keep the fire out of the rescue area.

In situations such as a collapse or explosion it may be necessary to withdraw companies from the affected area, conduct a roll call and obtain reconnaissance information. Withdrawal may be the only way to quickly obtain accurate information of trapped firefighters location and incident conditions.

The absolute need for an accurate roll call and information on missing firefighters is a critical priority.