

# Fresno Operational Area Firefighter Emergency Standard Operating Guideline

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2.0 **Purpose:** To establish a guideline for a Firefighter Emergency

2.01 **Scope:** All Fire Department Personnel

2.02 **Definitions**

**Appropriately Equipped:**

In addition to the required personal protective clothing, appropriately equipped includes positive pressure self-contained breathing apparatus and appropriate rescue equipment for removing the employee(s) who enter the hazardous atmospheres, or equivalent means of rescue where retrieval equipment is not required.

**Emergency Traffic:**

The term used to clear designated channels used at an incident to make way for important radio traffic for a firefighter emergency situation or an immediate change in tactical operations (offensive to defensive).

**FACTS:**

Acronym for **F**all, **A**ir, **C**ollapse, **T**rapped, or **S**eparated

**IDLH Atmosphere:**

**Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health.** An atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. Any structure fire beyond the incipient stage is considered to have an IDLH atmosphere. **Examples of identified Emergency Incidents**, that could require a RIC, but are not limited to, would include:

- Structure fires
- Hazardous Materials Incidents (IDLH, potential IDLH, or unknown atmosphere)
- Complex Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue (IDLH, potential IDLH, or unknown atmosphere)

**Incipient Stage Fire:**

A fire which is in the initial or beginning stage and which can be controlled or extinguished by portable fire extinguishers, Class II standpipe, or reel line, without the need for breathing apparatus.

**Interior Structure Fire Fighting:**

The physical activity of fire suppression, rescue, or both, inside buildings or enclosed structures that are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage.

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## NULCAN:

Acronym for **N**ame, **U**nit, **L**ocation, **C**ondition, **A**ction, and **N**eed

## Mayday:

The term used to clear designated channels used at an incident to make way for important radio traffic for a firefighter in distress, in need of immediate assistance/rescue.

## Personal Accountability Report (PAR):

**P**ersonnel **A**ccountability **R**eport is a survey of fire ground resources to account for all personnel by assignment or unit.

## Rapid Intervention:

Rapid Intervention is a group formed by combining Two-Out personnel with the company assigned to Rapid Intervention.

## Rapid Intervention Group:

Consists of a minimum of four (4) firefighters. This group will include the Two-Out and one (1) Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor, plus any addition personnel assigned to this group.

## Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor:

The officer designated by the Incident Commander as the Group Leader of Rapid Intervention. Unless otherwise directed, this is the officer of the company assigned to Rapid Intervention. A Chief Officer may also be assigned this position as the incident dictates.

## Two-Out:

Two appropriately equipped firefighters established outside the IDLH prior to firefighters working in an IDLH atmosphere, with the exception of rescue mode.

### 2.03 **Declaring the Mayday**

A MAYDAY is specific to firefighters in distress and in need of immediate assistance. In the event a firefighter cannot be located through a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR), or any time a firefighter is missing, a fellow crew member shall declare a MAYDAY. A firefighter MAYDAY is declared as follows:

1. Personnel SHALL declare a MAYDAY when they are in one of the following situations, commonly referred to as FACTS:
  - a. **F**all – Fall from roof, ladder, stairs, etc.
  - b. **A**ir – Air emergency or low air level
  - c. **C**ollapse – Collapse of the roof, ceiling, floor, wall, etc.
  - d. **T**rapped – Trapped by debris, entanglement, exit cut off, etc.
  - e. **S**eparated – Separated from crew, disoriented, etc.

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2. It is imperative that all units, upon hearing a MAYDAY or hearing the emergency alert tone, cease all radio transmission.
3. When a firefighter identifies they, or a member of their crew, is lost, trapped, injured, or in need of immediate assistance, they shall (if possible) transmit a verbal message on the fire ground channel stating "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY." Command will answer immediately, "Go ahead with your MAYDAY."
4. The person transmitting the MAYDAY shall give a brief situational status report using the acronym NULCAN or Who/What/Where/Air:

**Name:** State your name  
**Unit:** State your company and/or assignment  
**Location:** State your current or last known location  
**Conditions:** Identify surroundings affecting you, including air, ½ tank, ¼ tank, etc.  
**Actions:** Identify actions you are taking, including self-rescue  
**Needs:** Identify your special needs or equipment required

- NULCAN Example: *"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday... This is Captain Gomes on Engine 42. I am on the second floor near the Bravo/Charlie corner. I am separated from my crew with a quarter tank of air, attempting to locate a window. I need Two-Out deployed."*
  - Who/What/Where/Air Example: *"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday... This is Firefighter Holt on Engine 85. I am trapped by debris on the third floor with one half tank of air."*
5. After the radio transmission has been successful, the firefighter in distress shall activate their PASS alarm, turn on their flashlight, and continue to self-extricate.
  6. After declaring the MAYDAY, should the firefighter self-rescue, they may cancel the MAYDAY.
  7. Upon hearing a MAYDAY, personnel on-scene shall maintain fire ground discipline in their current assignment. This is intended to provide for incident coordination during Two-Out or Rapid Intervention deployment.

## 2.04 Command Response to Mayday

Command shall respond to a MAYDAY by implementing a rescue plan for the distressed firefighter. Command will maintain an awareness of the location of firefighters on the fire ground primarily through assignments and the accountability system. In the event a firefighter cannot be located through a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR), or any time a firefighter is missing, Command shall declare a MAYDAY.

1. **After the receipt of a MAYDAY and NULCAN or Who/What/Where/Air report, Deploy the Two-out / Rapid Intervention**

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2. Transfer pertinent information to the Rapid Intervention Worksheet.
3. Command shall notify the Communication Center to activate the emergency alert tone. (Reference Operational Area Emergency Alert Tone Standard Operating Guideline.)
4. Command shall then announce the MAYDAY situation over the fire ground channel, **Deploy Two-Out or Rapid Intervention**, and secure the MAYDAY firefighter's radio channel by reassigning all operational radio traffic to an alternate channel.
  - a. Example: (Emergency Alert Tone) *"All units from Command, we have a MAYDAY in progress; one firefighter lost on the second floor, running low on air, requesting immediate assistance. Rapid Intervention deploy, all other units switch to channel - \_\_\_\_\_."*
5. Command must restructure the strategy of the incident to include a rescue effort.
  - a. Consider a Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor to oversee the rescue operation if not in place. Place Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor on the frequency where the MAYDAY was declared.
  - b. Ensure the Two-Out or Rapid Intervention Crew has been deployed.
  - c. Develop an additional Two-Out or Rapid Intervention Crew.
  - d. Assign resources to the Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor as requested.
  - e. Request additional resources from Communications:
    - Escalate to an additional alarm with staging location
    - Additional EMS units
    - US&R Team
6. A PAR must be conducted of all units on the fire ground on all channels.
7. Take into consideration methods to keep any hazards from reaching the personnel in distress. In some cases it may be appropriate to write-off some area of the building/hazard area in order to relocate resources to better protect the rescue effort.
8. If the Communications Center receives a MAYDAY on any other channel that is not the fire ground channel, Communications shall notify Command and Command will conduct the rescue operations on the channel which the MAYDAY was declared, moving other resources to another channel.

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## Command Checklist for Mayday

- ➡ A printable version for the Command vehicle or apparatus. See page 6 of this document

## References

National Incident Management System Consortium Book 1 – First Edition  
National Fire Protection Association, 1500  
National Fire Protection Association, 1710  
National Fire Protection Association, 1407  
Fire Scope ICS-910  
Fire Scope ICS-420-1  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910 and 1926  
California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5144  
Operational Area Rapid Intervention Standard Operating Guideline  
Operational Area Emergency Alert Tone Standard Operating Guideline

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## COMMAND CHECKLIST FOR MAYDAY

- ➔ Acknowledge the MAYDAY with a situational status (NULCAN - Who/What/Where/Air)
  
- ➔ Deploy Two-Out / Rapid Intervention
  
- ➔ Notify Communication Center to activate emergency alert tone on specific channel
  
- ➔ Announce the MAYDAY situation over the fire ground channel
  - a. (Emergency Alert Tone) *“All units from Command, we have a MAYDAY in progress; one firefighter lost on the second floor, running low on air, requesting immediate assistance. Rapid Intervention deploy, all other units Standby for assignments.”*
  
- ➔ Change the plan from a fire attack to a high priority rescue
  - Consider establishing a Rapid Intervention Group Supervisor
  
- ➔ Move all fire ground frequencies to another channel
  
- ➔ Obtain PAR
  
- ➔ Request additional resources
  - Additional alarm with staging location
  - Additional EMS units
  - US&R Team
  
- ➔ Establish an additional Two-Out / Rapid Intervention Crew when resources allow