



MASON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4

TITLE: MAYDAY COMMUNICATIONS

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Introduction

The nature of firefighting places the firefighter at risk of becoming lost or trapped. The toxic environment provides only a narrow window of survivability, and the rescue of a lost or trapped firefighter is especially time sensitive. The Mayday Communication will be used by firefighters to report their status as being in trouble and needing rescue.

"May-Day" Radio Message

Any member on the emergency scene may use Mayday to report a lost firefighter. Any report of Mayday will receive priority radio traffic.

The term Mayday will be reserved ONLY to report missing, trapped or firefighters in distress.

The term "Emergency Traffic" will continue to be used to report all other emergencies (i.e. downed power-lines, fireground hazards, etc.).

Command Responsibilities

Command must maintain an awareness of the location of firefighters working on the fireground.

If a firefighter cannot be located either through a personal accountability system or any other time a Firefighter is missing, a Mayday must be announced.

The Incident Commander must ALWAYS assume that the missing Firefighter is lost in the building until the member is accounted for.

Command shall respond to a Mayday by implementing a rescue plan for the firefighter(s). The plan should include:

Upon receipt of a Mayday, command shall initiate "**Emergency Mayday Traffic**" and advise all personnel that radio traffic must cease.

Only radio traffic pertinent to the Mayday shall be permitted on the tactical channel (TAC). Depending on the complexity of the operation, command should strongly consider switching the firefighting operation to another TAC.



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Immediately conduct a PAR for all interior crews (utilizing sector officers when possible).

Commit the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to the most appropriate location to initiate a rescue. Call for and establish a second or third RIT crew to support the initial RIT crew.

Do not abandon Firefighting positions; provide reinforcement. Efforts should be made to keep the fire out of the rescue area and provide appropriate ventilation and lighting.

Immediately request additional resources (there should be no hesitation).

Expand the command structure rapidly. Special call for a Command Strike Team through Macecom.

Establish a rescue sector and assign a chief officer as soon as possible.

Establish a safety sector officer.

Establish a treatment/medical sector.

Call for additional resources as need, i.e. Technical Rescue Team.

Consider family support measures: CISM, Chaplin, etc.

Missing Firefighter

When a Firefighter identifies that he or a member of his team is lost, trapped, disoriented, or injured and in need of assistance, he shall transmit a verbal message on the tactical channel to Command and state, **“Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.”** Firefighters should not delay this announcement of their emergency.

Notification should occur as soon as the firefighter THINKS he is in trouble. The Firefighter in distress should:

Declare the emergency on the tactical channel, **“Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.”**

Provide the following information:

L: Location

U: Unit number

N: Name

A: Assignment (i.e. E-41 attack team)

R: Resources needed



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Activate your PASS device, silencing the PASS temporarily to allow for radio communications, then re-activating the PASS.

Stay calm and conserve air. Attempt to locate exterior doors or windows.

Lost or trapped Firefighters shall remain together.

If possible, follow hoseline or lifeline out.

Position flashlight towards the ceiling.

Attempt to make tapping noises with tools.

Assume a horizontal position on the floor to maximize the sound effects of PASS.

Communicate your location and surroundings to assist in rescue efforts.

Lost or trapped fire fighter(s) should always attempt to get out of a building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows or other egress are not available, fire fighters should attempt to reach an exterior wall. Once at the wall, a search for doorways, windows and hallways will generally lead to the outside. Rescuers will first search hallways, around walls, and around windows and doors before sweeping large interior areas.

Where the fire fighter(s) cannot find a way out, but there is safe refuge (protective room or floor) away from the fire to which the fire fighter(s) can retreat, he/she should take advantage of this location. Command and rescuers should then be advised of the location by whatever means possible.

In the event one firefighter becomes trapped or otherwise incapacitated, crew member(s) must consider leaving the trapped or incapacitated member in an attempt to secure help. Every practical effort should be made by all firefighters to save themselves and their partners.

Individual Responsibilities

Due to the nature of the emergency, involving a downed Firefighter, the stress level will be higher than normal. It is imperative that all personnel operating on the emergency scene remain calm and maintain their professionalism throughout the crisis. Personnel shall:

Follow the directions of their superiors.

Continue with assignments unless otherwise directed.

Listen carefully to radio transmissions.



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Communication's Responsibilities

Upon receipt of a Mayday communication on an emergency scene, Communications shall:

Advise Command of the Mayday call (if not already aware) and the channel the Firefighter calling the Mayday is using. **DO NOT HAVE A DISTRESSED FIREFIGHTER CHANGE FREQUENCIES.**

Sound the distinctive emergency tone and announce "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, Emergency Traffic Only" (repeat x 1).

Monitor all tactical radio channels for the possibility of a downed Firefighter coming up on another TAC.

Attempt to notify all other agencies operating in the area of the situation and request that they be alert in case the Firefighter comes up on their frequency.

If the missing Firefighter comes up on a channel other than the fireground TAC, the dispatcher will maintain communications with him/her on that channel and relay it to Command. It is essential that once communication has been established, it not be lost.

At the conclusion of the emergency traffic situation, the Incident Commander shall transmit an "**ALL CLEAR-RESUME RADIO TRAFFIC**" and Communications will sound the emergency tone and repeat "**MAY-DAY ALL CLEAR-RESUME RADIO TRAFFIC.**"