



Cayuga County Fire Advisory Board



Best Practices for a Recommended Mayday Policy

ADDENDUM

Mayday Policy so all Firefighters in the County will remain safe by using the same policy

SCOPE: The Cayuga County Fire Advisory Board, in the advisory capacity, does not typically direct or dictate policy or procedures for Fire Department, District, or Municipal officials. However, in situations that present a grave safety concern, it is prudent and necessary to recommend, provide guidance, and suggest adoption of this and similar suggested Best Practices that will support, protect, and limit liability for all parties involved.

The scope of this suggested guideline is to include all Cayuga County Fire Departments regularly operating in Cayuga County.

PURPOSE: This procedure is established to assist in the event that a firefighter's life or safety is in jeopardy and she/he is unable to definitively remove him/herself from the threatening situation or IDLH environment during an operation of the _____ Fire Department. It is imperative that during any Incident, safety of emergency response personnel must be the first priority. The procedure applies to all personnel of the _____ Fire Department and any mutual aid companies during all operations.

POLICY: The rescue of a firefighter in distress is extremely time sensitive. It is extremely important that a firefighter NOT DELAY in calling a MAYDAY when the circumstances dictate that such action is appropriate. The sooner Command is notified and a RIT team activated, the greater the chances of the firefighter(s) being successfully rescued

Definitions

The following definitions are used in these procedures:

"MAYDAY" – The term and radio traffic to be used in ANY situation where a firefighter's life or safety is in jeopardy and she/he is unable to definitively remove him/herself from the threatening situation or IDLH environment.

"EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" – The term and radio traffic to be used when a priority communication is necessary to address potentially dangerous circumstances that exist.

"EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIGNAL" – The audible signal used on the fireground to alert all present of the need/order to evacuate the structure and regroup outside for safety and accountability purposes. The signal is **three (3) long air horn blasts**.



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“ALERT TONE” — An audible tone of consistent frequency and duration intended to draw attention to radio traffic. This tone is generated by the dispatcher and is often called **Alert Tone 7**.

Description of Use

“MAYDAY” -To be used in ANY situation where a firefighter’s life or safety is in jeopardy and she/he is unable to definitively remove him/herself from the threatening situation or IDLH environment.

A firefighter **MUST DECLARE A MAYDAY** when confronted by, but not limited to, the following situations:

- I. Immediately upon a firefighter believing she/he is disoriented or lost and unable to exit any existing IDLH environment;
- II. Immediately upon the sounding or detection of one’s low air alarms and a firefighter not being able to promptly exit any existing IDLH environment;
- III. Immediately upon a firefighter becoming trapped or entangled to the point of requiring assistance;
- IV. Immediately upon a firefighter sustaining ANY injury which impairs his/her ability to exit any existing IDLH environment;
- V. Immediately upon discovery of a vital PPE equipment problem which poses a substantial threat of harm and a firefighter unable to immediately exit the IDLH environment;
- VI. Immediately upon discovery of another firefighter experiencing any of the above situations.

“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” -To be used when a priority communication is necessary to address potentially dangerous circumstances that exist:

- a. Any imminent potential for or an actual structural failure;
- b. Rapidly changing fire conditions;
- c. Water supply interruption;
- d. Any circumstance that poses a material risk to firefighter safety;
- e. Immediate evacuation of the building is necessary for any of the above, or for any circumstance the Incident Commander deems necessary;
- f. Request for additional alarm(s).



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EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIGNAL: -The Incident Commander will activate the Emergency Evacuation Signal any time a fireground situation exists that warrants the regrouping of all fireground personnel to their apparatus or a staging area for purposes of safety and accountability. A PAR will be taken immediately following the emergency evacuation.

The EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIGNAL shall be:

- **Three (3) long air horn blasts**

MAYDAY PROCEDURE

The following procedure will be used to alert firefighters on the emergency scene of a MAYDAY.

1. There are two ways to declare a MAYDAY. The individual in distress can either key the mic stating "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY," or the EMERGENCY button can be activated.
 - a. If the MAYDAY is requested via the emergency button, the dispatcher will acknowledge the activation:
 - i. The dispatcher will listen for information broadcasted by responder during the ten second open mic period.
 - ii. The dispatcher will gather pertinent information from the individual requesting the MAYDAY, by requesting a status check.
 - iii. The dispatcher will immediately contact the Incident Commander by activating the 'MAYDAY' alert tones (**Alert Tone 7**) on the assigned incident tactical channel.

All operations involved in the incident will continue on the assigned TAC channel and the MAYDAY / EMERGENCY incident will stay on the Emergency channel

- b. To clear all radio traffic on the fireground talk group the firefighter requesting the MAYDAY shall precede the message by repeating the word "MAYDAY" three (3) times followed with information indicating the **nature of the MAYDAY such as firefighter down, location, company number of the firefighter(s) involved if possible and what, if any, plans they have to remove themselves from the situation.**



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***Example - "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, Firefighter Down, Second Floor,
Firefighter Doe from Engine 15.***

- c. Any fire company finding a firefighter down shall declare a MAYDAY and the MAYDAY information shall be repeated including the manner of removal from the structure.

***Example - "MAYDAY - MAYDAY - MAYDAY - Firefighter down Lieutenant
from Engine 15 - We will be coming out Side C door, first floor."***

1. **The Incident Commander, upon hearing the MAYDAY declaration, shall immediately request the dispatcher activate the Emergency Alert Tone on the fire ground TAC channel.**
 - A. The Incident Commander will direct the dispatcher to have all companies switch to a higher TAC channel to clear the channel on which the MAYDAY was declared.
 - B. **The routine fireground communications will continue on the new TAC channel.**
 - C. The original fireground TAC channel will only be used for the MAYDAY and RIT Team(s).
 - D. Incident Command will assure that the operating companies have switched to the designated TAC channel.
2. **When the MAYDAY is declared on the TAC channel and the dispatcher receives it first.**
 - A. The dispatcher will acknowledge the activation:
 - B. The dispatcher will gather pertinent information from the individual requesting the MAYDAY.
 - C. The dispatcher will immediately contact the Incident Commander by activating the 'MAYDAY' alert tones (Alert Tone 7) on the assigned incident tactical channel.



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- D. Dispatch will advise all operations involving the incident, and any other incident on that channel to move to a higher TAC channel to clear the channel in which the MAYDAY was called on.

Accountability will immediately take a PAR (Personnel Accountability Report) subsequent to units switching to the new channel/talk group. Emergency response procedures of the department will be implemented.

In case of a MAYDAY declaration the Incident Commander may request an extra alarm. The dispatcher will instruct the extra alarm companies to report to staging unless another assignment is given by the incident commander on the scene.

Upon termination or clearance of a MAYDAY, or emergency activation, the responder will only clear it upon approval from the Incident Commander and Dispatcher.

After the MAYDAY is cleared, the Incident Commander will decide how talk group reassignment will be handled.

Fireground EMERGENCY TRAFFIC Procedure

The following procedure will be used to clear radio traffic for priority communication when necessary to address potentially dangerous circumstances.

To clear all radio traffic on the fireground talk group, the firefighter requesting exclusive use of the talk group shall announce his/her unit ID and declare "**EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**". At this time no other radio traffic shall be transmitted until the **nature, location and type of emergency** is identified. The "**EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**" declaration shall be reserved for situations on the fireground presenting imminent danger to firefighters. (e.g. potential building collapse, energized electrical wires posing electrocution hazard, loss of water supply with firefighters inside the structure, etc.)



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All firefighters operating at the emergency scene shall refrain from transmitting any messages upon hearing the "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" transmission and remain alert for the emergent command from the Incident Commander until such time that the "all clear, resume radio traffic" directive is issued by Command for the continuation of normal radio traffic.

The Incident Commander, upon hearing the EMERGENCY TRAFFIC declaration, shall immediately request the dispatcher activate the Emergency Alert Tone on the fire ground talk group. The Incident Commander will then repeat the EMERGENCY TRAFFIC as well as the issuance of orders to rectify or retreat from the situation.

Example: Alert Tone -"Emergency, Emergency, Emergency -All companies operating at 123 Main St. retreat!

If the building is to be evacuated, Incident Command is to authorize activation of the Emergency Evacuation Signal and make an evacuation announcement on the fire ground talk group.

Subsequent to evacuation, a PAR is to be immediately taken and appropriate action taken based on the result.