

DAYVILLE FIRE COMPANY
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Section: Incidents

Date Issued: 4-25-11

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SOG: D-16

SUBJECT: MAYDAY PROCEDURES

PURPOSE: The purpose of this guideline is: 1] to establish a region-wide standard procedure that would indicate a life-threatening situation on the fire ground; 2] to identify the needs and the responsibilities of the downed firefighter(s) calling a MAYDAY; 3] to establish communications and tactical operations where the Firefighters are in a hazardous environment and are in need of immediate rescue.

This guideline is for use by all member departments of the Quinebaug Valley Chiefs Association operating at the scene of an emergency. The Incident Commander or senior-ranking officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with this S.O.G.

Definitions:

Emergency Traffic: A radio transmission of utmost importance regarding an emergency or impending emergency on the fireground. The clearing of a channel of all but essential traffic.

F.A.S.T. (Rapid Intervention) Team: A crew of no less than 2 personnel (ideally four or more) to provide a Firefighter Assist and Search Team.

Fire Ground Roll Call: A method of identifying missing personnel (Accountability or PAR – Personnel Accountability Report)

Hazardous Environment: Defined by NFPA and OSHA standards, which include burning, or collapsed structures, trenches, confined spaces, hazardous material incidents and/or any other hazardous incident.

MAYDAY Message: An Emergency radio message indicating a life-threatening situation.

Urgent Message: A priority message that may include but not limited to; reporting life hazards, imminent safety hazards

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Guideline:

- **When to Call a MAYDAY**
 - The “MAYDAY” Message shall be used under the following situations.
 - Whenever an officer or firefighter is in a situation that he or she believes to be life threatening, they shall transmit a “MAYDAY” message to the dispatch center or command.
 - Whenever an officer or firefighter sees another firefighter or firefighters in a life-threatening situation he/she shall transmit a “MAYDAY” message to the dispatch center or command.
 - Firefighters will call a “MAYDAY”, for themselves or a crew member(s) under the following conditions while operating in, on or near a hazardous environment:
 - Lost
 - Disoriented
 - Trapped
 - Caught in a flashover
 - Caught in a back draft
 - Entangled
 - Crew member unaccounted for after 3 attempts of calling their name
 - Injured
 - Significant fall
 - Needs medical attention
 - Critical Equipment failure (SCBA, PPE, etc...)
 - Structural collapse
 - Low air alarm with one of the above
 - Out of air
 - Or any other situation when a firefighter feels their life or their team’s life is in serious danger that may cause serious harm or death of that firefighter or their team member(s).

Remember it is better to call a MAYDAY and correct the situation than not to get an opportunity to call a MAYDAY by waiting until it is too late.

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- **How to Call a MAYDAY**

- The individual calling the “MAYDAY” shall repeat the word “MAYDAY” three times. Whenever possible, the officer or fire fighter transmitting the “MAYDAY” message shall give command or the dispatch center LUNAR information. If calling a “MAYDAY” for someone other than himself or herself, give the dispatch center the location of the firefighter in distress.

L.U.N.A.R. (Location, Unit, Name, Air supply, Resources needed)

- Once the dispatch center or Command hears a “MAYDAY” message they shall immediately establish “Emergency Traffic” (the dispatch center can/will sound the alert tone), and call the company that transmitted the “MAYDAY” seeking the company’s (or fire fighter’s) *location and problem*.

Example:

Interior to Command – MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY!”

Command: “All units Stand-By” (Emergency Traffic)

Command: “Unit reporting the Mayday – Go ahead with your message”

Interior: “Command, this is the hose team from Eng 1, we are trapped on the second floor of the fire building by a partial collapse. We are in the A/B corner”

Command: Roger, you’re reporting that you are trapped on the second floor A/B corner by a partial collapse. What is the status of your team’s air supply?

Activate your PASS devices and we will be starting the FAST team to your location.”

Command to QV: “We have received a MAYDAY Message from a unit on the fireground – Requesting PRIORITY use of this frequency. (If the channel is being used by more than one dispatch center [i.e. low-band])

QV: (Alert Tone) – All Units/Stations – A MAYDAY has been sounded on this Frequency All units not operating on the fireground in >>> >> Stand-By.

Command: All units on the fire ground conduct PAR and report results to Command

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Note: ONE THING THAT MUST BE PREVENTED IS MEMBERS RUSHING FRANTICALLY ALL ABOUT A BUILDING SEARCHING FOR A MISSING MEMBER, NOT KNOWING WHO IS MISSING, HOW MANY ARE MISSING OR WHERE THEY MAY BE.

WAIT FOR THE INCIDENT OR SECTOR COMMANDER TO COORDINATE THE SEARCH.

CREWS MUST REMEMBER THAT ABANDONING THEIR ASSIGNMENTS SUCH AS FIRE ATTACK, VENTILATION, ETC. TO SEARCH FOR MISSING MEMBERS MAY PLACE THEMSELVES AND OTHERS AT RISK.

Radio Procedure:

- When operating on the fire ground with the UHF system, the IC or a designee will be monitoring the individual frequencies in use. ALL frequencies in use should be cleared until the frequency on which the MAYDAY was broadcast is determined.
- When QV transmits an "ALERT TONE" or Command announces a MAYDAY Broadcast - all radio traffic other than emergency traffic shall cease. QV or Command will advise all apparatus and personnel that until an "ALL CLEAR" message has been received from the I.C. regarding the "MAYDAY", all non-emergency communications will shift to unused radio frequencies. This will allow an open channel between the I.C. and the members in distress and FAST Team operations (Note: At this juncture QV cannot monitor ALL UHF frequencies.).

Accountability [PAR]:

- Whenever a "MAYDAY", is transmitted, a roll call of companies operating at the scene (PAR) shall be conducted as soon as feasible. However, the roll call shall not be conducted in such a way as to interfere with the operation to rescue the trapped or missing firefighters.

Urgent Messages:

- "MAYDAY" messages are not to be confused with the term "Urgent. " An urgent message is any message made necessary by an emergency situation. A "MAYDAY" message is a message that has priority over all other urgent messages.

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Important to Remember:

- Whenever a member becomes trapped or lost he/she shall transmit a “MAYDAY” and if physically able shall place his P.A.S.S. in the Emergency Alarm position.
- Members should not wait until the last moment to call a “MAYDAY”, if their low air alarm is sounding and they are confused to where they are they should call a “MAYDAY” immediately.
- Whenever a fire fighter or company is reported trapped or missing, the I.C. should immediately consider deployment of the F.A.S.T. Company. In addition the I.C. should consider appointing a rescue sector officer to coordinate the search & rescue effort utilizing the FAST team or appropriate resources, if the FAST team has not arrived.
- At the point in the incident that the rescue operation is complete or the I.C. feels the situation has been stabilized, the I.C. shall transmit an “ALL CLEAR” to units operating on the fire ground and to the dispatch center to bring the “MAYDAY” operation to a close.

This S.O.G. was last reviewed and/or updated on April 25, 2011.