

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND TACTICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL

SERIES 354

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE **RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT)**

PURPOSE

Fire departments are often engaged in emergency activities that present a varying degree of risk, depending on the incident. This guideline outlines a procedure that ensures the risks faced by our personnel are minimized through sound risk management practices and safety procedures.

The objective is to have a fully equipped rescue team on scene and in a ready state to deploy for rescuing injured and trapped firefighters. This procedure shall be considered for all incidents where personnel are subject to hazards that would be potentially dangerous to life and/or health or subject to danger from equipment failure or sudden change of conditions. A Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) shall be established on all structure fires that have grown beyond the incipient stage, other incidents where personnel are subject to hazardous environments or when Incident Commander (IC) deems it necessary. “BEYOND THE INCIPIENT STAGE” IS ANY TIME THAT FIREFIGHTERS ARE ON AIR INSIDE THE STRUCTURE OR HAZARD ZONE.

The single objective of the RIT is to standby in a state of readiness, until launched on a rescue mission. The RIT function will continue until the Incident Commander determines that the RIT is no longer needed on the incident.

DEFINITIONS

AWARE: An acronym utilized by RIT to remember what items need to be available for a rescue

Air: Separate air supply for the victim.

Water: Hoes line to create a defensible position.

A Radio: Separate radio for the victim, pre-set to the assigned emergency.

Extrication: Tools necessary to extricate the victim.

Incipient Stage: The beginning of a fire where oxygen content has not been significantly reduced and the fire is producing minute amounts of water vapor, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and other gases. The room has a normal temperature and the fire can be controlled with a portable fire extinguisher, i.e. pan on the stove, damper closed on fireplace, etc.

Initial Stage: Shall encompass the control efforts taken by resources which are first to arrive at an incident requiring immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss of life or serious injury to citizens and firefighters.

Known Life Hazard: A situation, in which someone can be seen, heard or a reliable report indicates that someone is still in the structure and immediate actions are necessary to prevent loss of life or serious injury.

Mayday: A radio message reserved for the sole purpose of notifying on-scene personnel that there is a missing, trapped, or disabled firefighter.

Positive Communications: Contact must be maintained by visual, verbal, physical, or electronic means.

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A designated crew that will serve as a stand-by rescue team for personnel and be available for the immediate search and rescue of any missing, trapped, injured or unaccounted for fire fighter(s). This team shall be fully equipped with the appropriate personal protective clothing, protective equipment, SCBA and specialized rescue equipment needed as based on the specifics of the operation that is underway. This includes the emergency Breathing Support System (quick-fill hose device).

Standby Fire Fighter: One (1) fire fighter in standby mode fully equipped with the appropriate protective clothing and equipment in order to provide rescue assistance of other firefighters.

Standby Mode: Full personal protective clothing including a SCBA donned with the face piece in standby mode.

Suppression Personnel: Personnel approved by the Fire District to make interior attacks at structure fires.

Risk Management: The development of action plans, which take present and potential risks into consideration.

PROCEDURE

I. RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Risk management (risk vs. value analysis) shall be utilized by the Incident Commander when formulating the incident action plan. The objective is to save lives and to save property in as safe a manner as possible, as dictated by the incident. The practical application of risk management shall be as follows:
 - A. RISK BENEFIT VALUE STATEMENT
 - (1) Within a structured plan, we may risk our lives to protect savable lives.
 - (2) Within a structured plan, we may risk our lives a LITTLE to protect savable property
 - (3) WE will NOT risk our lives at all to save lives or property that are already lost.
2. The acceptable level of risk is directly related to the potential to save lives or property. Where there is no potential to save lives, the risk to FD members must be evaluated in proportion to the ability to save property of value. When there is no ability to save lives or property, there is no justification to expose FD members to any avoidable risk, and defensive suppression operations or other non-aggressive action is the appropriate strategy.

II. INITIAL OPERATIONS – TWO IN/TWO OUT

1. Two In / Two Out

- A. Prior to interior structure fire fighting operations or deployment into IDLH atmospheres, the Incident Commander must evaluate the situation and risks to operation crews and confirm that there are an adequate number of personnel available to safely conduct emergency operations.
- B. Personnel in hazardous areas shall function in teams of two or more and shall maintain contact with each other by means of voice, visual, or other direct contact.
- C. Except as provided in section II.2., fire fighters must not engage in interior structural fire fighting in the absence of at least two standby fire fighters.
- D. Exceptions to the Two In/Two Out requirement beyond what is identified are not permitted. Any attempts to circumvent the limited exemption by assuming all or most structure fires may involve a rescue are equally unacceptable.
- E. The firefighters on standby must be equipped with full PPE, with face piece in the standby mode.
- F. At least one of the firefighters shall be solely dedicated to monitoring the status and safety of the interior team, including location, function & entry time.
- G. The firefighters on standby must remain in positive communication with the interior team(s) and the IC.
- H. The firefighters on standby may be permitted to perform other duties provided that they are in close proximity to the incident and those duties will not interfere with their ability to participate in an immediate rescue, if necessary.
- I. The firefighters on standby shall be located in close proximity to the incident.
- J. Nothing in this section shall prevent activities that may reasonably be taken by firefighters first on the scene to determine the nature and extent of fire involvement.
- K. A separate RIT is not required for each interior team; however, additional RITs may be established due to extensive distances between crews.

2. Two In / One Out Exception (Rescue Mode, No RIT)

- A. Prior to implementing a Two In / One Out operation, the Incident Commander must evaluate the situation to determine the value for the risk based on Risk/Value Statement.
- B. During this risk analysis, life threat must be obvious through initial observations (see or hear victims, family or neighbors verify occupants are still in structure)
- C. Prior to implementing a Two In / One Out operation, the Company Officer / Incident Commander shall notify Dispatch that they are in “RESCUE MODE with no RIT”. Dispatch shall repeat this transmission for all responding units.

- D. Whenever “Rescue Mode with no RIT” is chosen as the option, the a Standby Firefighter must be in place prior to the rescue/attack crew entering the structure or hazardous area.
- E. This Standby Firefighter’s foremost responsibility shall be the constant monitoring of the interior team’s status and safety, including location, function & entry time
- F. The Standby Firefighter must be wearing the appropriate PPE, with SCBA face piece in the standby mode
- G. When a “Rescue Mode with no RIT” operation is initiated, incoming resources need to commit to a course of action that fulfills the Two In/Two Out requirements
- H. The Standby Firefighter may perform other duties outside of the hazardous area when communication can be maintained with the team in the hazardous area, and provided that those duties will not interfere with the responsibility to monitor the status & safety of the interior team.
- I. The Standby Firefighter shall be located in close proximity to the incident.
- J. In the event that personnel are unavailable to fulfill the Standby Firefighter(s) position, personnel shall not engage in interior structural firefighting activities, and an alternative strategy will need to be utilized.
- K. Nothing in this section shall prevent activities that may be reasonably taken by firefighters who are first on the scene to determine the nature and extent of fire involvement.

EXAMPLE: An engine company with three(3) personnel is first to arrive at a working fire in a single-family residence. The occupant advises that a family member is inside the residence. At this time, the company officer would advise Dispatch that a “Rescue Mode” operation is in effect. The company officer and 3rd person could enter the structure for interior structural firefighting /rescue activities. The pump operator shall fulfill the role of standby firefighter (Two In/One Out). The pump operator shall don all protective clothing and equipment including SCBA in the standby position. It is imperative that the pump operator be properly prepared to perform a rescue or offer emergency assistance to the entry team without delay.

III. SUSTAINED OPERATIONS - RIT

1. Once additional resources have arrived, the Incident Commander shall upgrade the initial 1-out component to a dedicated Rapid Intervention Team to include back up teams and/or additional RIT teams, depending on the magnitude, configuration of the structure, or geographical layout of the incident. Separate Rapid Intervention Teams are not required for each interior team.
2. RIT is designated, announced via radio and assigned to a location by the Incident Commander. When assigned, the RIT Officer will obtain a briefing from the Incident Commander and conduct a specific size up that focuses on:

- A. Fire location
 - B. Interior team(s) entry point and location
 - C. Critical fire ground factors (scene conditions & hazards)
 - D. Type of construction and condition
 - E. Air management (elapsed time)
 - F. Firefighter fatigue
 - G. Radio communications
 - H. Potential firefighter rescue operations
3. During size up, every RIT member will be assigned a primary function, if deployed and equipped for such function. Refer to the AWARE acronym in definitions; Air, Water, A Radio and Extrication.
 4. If a hydrant supply has not been established the RIT should pull a separate charged hose line off of another Engine Company if available.
 5. Necessary and appropriate rescue tools and equipment that the RIT may need shall be brought to the area where the RIT is assigned.
 6. RIT shall be immediately ready for assignment wearing full protective clothing and SCBA in standby with a minimum of one portable radio for the team and preferable one radio for each member. The RIT Officer must closely monitor the tactical radio channel at all times to maintain awareness of the activities and status of working companies.

IV. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

1. RIT will be assigned the radio designation "RIT". When multiple RITs are assigned, designators must correspond with the assigned division or group, such as "Division A RIT".
2. The assigned RIT Company will report directly to the Incident Commander, unless assigned to a division, group or branch.
3. The "emergency traffic tone" will be activated whenever a RIT is launched on a rescue mission unless already transmitted with the Mayday.
4. When RIT is launched on a rescue, a new RIT will be assigned to take their place and will assume the "RIT" call sign. The 1st RIT will then take the call sign of their assigned apparatus, such as "Engine 614".

V. TERMINATING RIT TEAMS

1. After the Incident Commander and the Incident Scene Safety Officer have thoroughly evaluated the situation and the Incident Commander has decided the operation no longer presents hazardous risks to personnel necessitating the RIT, the Incident Commander may suspend the operations of the RIT(s). The Incident Commander shall advise over the radio that the RIT is being terminated, so that all personnel on the fire ground are aware of this.

2. The Incident Commander should consider keeping the RIT available after active firefighting and suppression operations have ceased; yet operations such as salvage and overhaul are still active. Conditions such as opening in floors, weakened structural members or other potentially hazardous circumstances may warrant the use of a RIT.