

SUBJECT: MAYDAY AND EMERGENCY TRAFFIC DECLARATION PROCEDURES AT EMERGENCY INCIDENTS	SECTION: 306.07
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to identify the roles and responsibilities of all the parties involved at an incident where a “MAYDAY” or “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” has been transmitted.

REFERENCE

Hamilton County Fire Chiefs’ Association, Model “MAYDAY” and “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” Declaration Procedure; Revised: February 20, 2008.

DEFINITIONS

Alert Tone – An audible tone of consistent frequency and duration intended to draw attention to radio traffic. This tone is generated by the dispatch center and is often referred to as “Alert Tone 3”.

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) sequential sets of three (3) long air horn blasts.**

Emergency Traffic – The term and radio traffic to be used when a priority communication is necessary to address potential dangerous circumstances that exist.

MAYDAY – The term and radio traffic to be used in **ANY** situation where a firefighter’s life or safety is in jeopardy and he/she may require assistance to remove themselves from the threatening situation or IDLH environment.

DESCRIPTION OF USE: “MAYDAY”

The radio message "MAYDAY" will be used by fire fighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and needing assistance to exit the threatening situation or IDLH environment. A firefighter must declare a MAYDAY when confronted by, but not limited to the following situations:

- A. Immediately upon a firefighter believing he/she is disoriented or lost and unable to exit any existing IDLH environment;
- B. 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;
- C. Immediately upon a firefighter becoming trapped or entangled to the point of requiring assistance;
- D. Immediately upon a firefighter sustaining ANY injury which impairs his/her ability to exit any existing IDLH environment;
- E. 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;
- F. Immediately upon discovery of another firefighter experiencing any of the above situations.
- G. Any time a firefighter feels it is necessary.

"MAYDAY" PROCEDURE

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

- A. To clear all radio traffic on the fire ground frequency, the firefighter requesting the mayday shall use the term "**MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY**" followed by the nature of mayday, location, identification and company number of the firefighter(s) involved if possible and what, if any plans they have to remove themselves from the situation.

(Example – "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, firefighter down, second floor, Firefighter Jones from Engine 83).

- B. 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 from Engine 83, we will be coming out Side C door, ground floor).

- C. Missing, injured, or trapped personnel should press the *Emergency Button* on their portable radios as a last resort (when unable to transmit a MAYDAY as described above), sending an emergency alert tone and visual emergency readout to all units monitoring the Fire Department East talkgroup.
- D. PASS devices shall be activated to alarm, providing rescuers with an audible signal for locating missing or trapped personnel.

DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. When the Dispatcher receives an emergency activation from a portable radio, the Dispatcher will first identify the company which activated the alert. Dispatch will then go to that company's current radio talkgroup for direct contact with the affected company to determine if an emergency exists. When the activation occurs during an incident where command has been established, Dispatch will contact Command directly. Command will contact the affected companies to determine if an emergency exists.
- B. When a firefighter is declared lost, trapped or injured, the Dispatcher will confirm the Incident Commander is aware of the "MAYDAY" declaration.
 - a. Transmit "*Alert Tone 3*" on the fireground talkgroup the MAYDAY originated, upon the request of the Incident Commander;
 - b. Clear all non-emergency traffic – keep radio traffic to a minimum;
 - c. Dispatch any extra resources requested by the Incident Commander;
 - d. Make any notifications as directed by the Incident Commander;
 - e. Assist in monitoring any traffic on the fireground talkgroup where the MAYDAY originated;
 - f. When the Incident Commander clears the MAYDAY situation, announce "MAYDAY cleared per Incident Command, resume normal traffic" on the primary fire and fireground talkgroup(s).

COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. When notified of missing or trapped personnel, the Incident Commander and all other personnel on the scene will focus their efforts in a coordinated effort to protect and rescue those missing or trapped. The following actions should be taken:
 - 1. **The Incident Commander, upon hearing the MAYDAY declaration, can immediately request the dispatcher activate the *Emergency Alert Tone* on the fireground talk group.** The Incident Commander will direct all companies to switch to the designated alternate **fireground MAYDAY talk group (MAYDAY 1 or MAYDAY 2) for continuation of routine fireground communications.** The original fireground talk group will be reserved for the distressed firefighter(s) and the assigned Rapid Assistance Team(s).
 - 2. The Incident Commander should assign a deputy/aide to monitor the talkgroup on which the MAYDAY originated and the Primary Dispatch talkgroup in the event the missing firefighter broadcasts on either talkgroup. The Incident Commander can also seek assistance in monitoring from the Hamilton County Communications Center, when resources are available.

3. The Incident Commander shall call for a PAR of all personnel.
 4. Additional resources, including additional RAT teams, should be requested by the Incident Commander to reinforce the efforts of those already performing rescue, in addition to the personnel needs due to serious potential for fire or hazard extension (one additional alarm recommended).
 5. The RAT Team(s) under the supervision of a RAT Group Officer will immediately be assigned to the rescue operation.
 6. Shall continue to direct the firefighting efforts to extinguishing the body of fire threat, to the extent safely possible, thus making the structure more tenable for rescue operations. (The IC must focus attention on controlling the fire and allow the RAT Group Officer to manage the rescue effort – the attack on the fire must continue).
 7. Shall designate a staging officer and staging area for all incoming resources.
- B. At the conclusion of an incident involving missing or trapped personnel, the Incident Commander should notify all units operating on the scene to return to normal operations, decide how talkgroups are reassigned and the elimination of emergency radio restrictions.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. To follow directions from superiors.
- B. **DO NOT ABANDON FIRE FIGHTING POSITIONS--HOLD POSITIONS AND PREVENT FIRE SPREAD**
- C. In the event of a situation where personnel not at the incident hear a “**MAYDAY**” transmission and realize that those on the incident scene have not heard it, it shall be the responsibility of personnel who hear such a message to immediately alert the Incident Commander and/or Dispatcher that a “**MAYDAY**” has been transmitted and provide any essential information.

DESCRIPTION OF USE: “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC”

To be used when a priority communication is necessary to address potentially dangerous circumstances that exists:

- A. Any imminent potential for or an actual structural failure;
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- 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).

“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” PROCEDURE

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

- A. 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. (i.e. potential building collapse, energized electrical wires posing electrocution hazard, loss of water supply with firefighters inside the structure, etc.)
- B. 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.
- C. **The Incident Commander, upon hearing the EMERGENCY TRAFFIC declaration, shall immediately request the dispatcher activate the Emergency Alert Tone on the fireground 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!"

- D. If the building is to be evacuated, Incident Command is to authorize activation of the **Emergency Evacuation Signal** (*three sequential sets of three long air horn blasts*) and make an evacuation announcement on the fire ground talk group.
- E. Subsequent to evacuation, a PAR is to be immediately taken and appropriate action taken based on the result.