



# Northeast Fire Department Association

Operations

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## ***Tactical Guidelines: May-Day Communications***

**Approved by:** 

**NEFDA President**

### **I.**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved at an incident where a "May-Day" has been transmitted.

### **II.**

#### **"May-Day" Radio Message**

The radio message "May-Day, May-Day, May-Day" will be used by firefighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and needing rescue. Any personnel may use "May-Day" to report a lost firefighter. Any report of "May-Day" will receive priority radio traffic. The term "May-Day" will be reserved ONLY to report a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter(s). The term "Emergency Traffic" will be used to report all other emergencies.

Company officers and individual firefighters that suspect a firefighter is missing must call the May-Day immediately. The Incident Commander MUST assume that the firefighter is lost in the building until they are located.

### **III.**

#### **Calling the May-Day**

Firefighters who find themselves lost, trapped, or injured must immediately use "May-Day, May-Day, May-Day" to announce their situation while attempting to find their way out. Firefighters should not delay the distress notification. Notification should occur as soon as the firefighter THINKS they are in trouble.

The Incident Commander should immediately acknowledge the May-Day and request the firefighter to give a report.

Firefighters should use the acronym LUNAR to communicate their status.\*

**L**-Location, **U**-Unit, **N**-Name, **A**-Assignment and Air Supply, **R**-Resources Needed.

If the May-Day is not rapidly acknowledged by the Incident Commander on the fire-ground channel, the firefighter should depress the emergency button and call the May-Day. The Incident Commander should immediately acknowledge the May-Day and request the firefighter to give a report. Depressing the emergency button moves the firefighter to Channel 2 of the agency where the firefighter is operating. This channel is to be monitored by Dispatch, Command and RIT.

The PASS device should be manually activated to sound the audible tone **after** the May-Day and LUNAR report have been communicated to the Incident Commander (the PASS device could adversely affect those communications). If, the May-Day is not rapidly acknowledged via radio on either the fire ground channel, or after the emergency button has been activated, the PASS should be manually activated.

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### **IV. Command Responsibilities**

During normal operations, Incident Commanders should be building out the command functions to allow for the immediate response to any situation. Incident Commanders should consider having a RIT Group Leader who maintains a separate RIT command board to maintain situational awareness and accountability; being ready to affect a rescue effort with the RIT team(s) under their control. The Incident Commander or assigned person should maintain awareness of Channel 2 at all times during an incident.

Command will respond to the "May-Day" by implementing a rescue plan for the firefighter(s).

The Incident Commander must restructure the strategy and action plan to include a firefighter rescue effort. Accurate information must be quickly obtained and acted upon. Immediate deployment of the RIT must occur. These resources must be organized and controlled. The Command organization must expand. The strategy, plan, and objectives must be quickly communicated to command staff and Division officers. The plan and rescue activities must be continually monitored and revised.

At least one additional alarm with an ambulance should be immediately requested upon a report of a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter.

The Incident Commander should consider using an alternate radio channel for suppression activities.

Do not abandon fire-fighting positions, hold positions and prevent fire spread. If a missing firefighter(s) is to survive, the fire must be kept out of the rescue area. With a rapid intervention team in place, the Incident Commander can initiate an immediate rescue effort without withdrawing or relocating firefighting companies. If anything, these positions need to be reinforced. Additional companies should be sent to priority positions to keep the fire out of the rescue area.

In situations such as a collapse or explosion it may be necessary to withdraw companies from the affected area, conduct a roll call and obtain reconnaissance information. Withdrawal may be the only way to quickly obtain accurate information of trapped firefighters location and incident conditions.

The absolute need for an accurate roll call and information on missing firefighters is a critical priority.

### **V. Additional Information**

\*Additional information that a firefighter could relate to help in rescue efforts are as follows: the description of building structures surrounding them, sounds of nearby activities (i.e. ventilation saw noise) or any other information that might direct rescue crews to their location.