

	BEDFORD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & RESCUE Standard Operating Guideline	
	Discipline: Operations	DATE: June 1, 2022
	Reference Number: F/R-12	
	APPROVED BY: Chief Janet Blankenship	
	SUBJECT: Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Operations	

Purpose:

To establish command procedures with organizational lateral tactics of rapid intervention that will assist fire and rescue personnel with the rapid and safe extraction of any downed or trapped firefighter when operating in an Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) environment. The need to have a dedicated Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) assigned to any working structure fire is necessitated by not only Bedford County Fire & Rescue, but also multiple state and federal codes, guidelines and rules, including NFPA 1500, 1561, 1710, 1720, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 and OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134. The standardization of operations outlined in this document will lead to a safer and more efficient fire ground operation during fire fighter down misfortunes. All involved parties, including dispatch personnel, fire officers, and emergency responders should adhere to this guideline, at all times, as it is insightful of research and current local training to achieve successful RIT operations on the fire ground.

Definitions:

Incident Commander (IC): individual having complete control over the entire scene’s operation and tactics utilized to mitigate the incident and responsibility of scene safety.

The Incident Commander is the person responsible for all aspects of an emergency response; including quickly developing incident objectives, managing all incident operations, application of resources as well as responsibility for all persons involved. The incident commander sets priorities and defines the organization of the response. The role of incident commander *may* be assumed by senior or higher qualified officers upon their arrival or as the situation dictates. Even if subordinate positions are not assigned, the incident commander position will always be designated or assumed. The incident commander may, at their own discretion, assign individuals, who may be from the same agency or from assisting agencies, to subordinate or specific positions for the duration of the emergency.

Heavy Rescue: a fire and rescue apparatus that is staffed and equipped to perform structural collapse rescue at the NFPA 1670 Operations Level. The apparatus should have a complement of equipment capable of cutting, breaching and lifting light-frame or reinforced masonry building components and/or building such as furniture or appliances.

LUNAR: acronym used to provide the rapid intervention team with pertinent details regarding the Mayday declaration so that a streamlined deployment is possible to provide as much detail to minimize the time and tooling needed for an efficient and safe extraction:

- L - Location
- U - Unit member
- N - Name of individual calling Mayday
- A - Assignment at time of Mayday
- R - Resources needed

Mayday-Mayday-Mayday!: the distress signal transmitted over a firefighter's portable radio that has become entrapped, entangled, or is in imminent danger within an IDLH environment.

Operational Section Chief (OSC): The Operations Section Chief will develop and manage the Operations Section to accomplish the incident objectives set by the Incident Commander. The Operations Section Chief is normally the person with the greatest technical and tactical expertise in dealing with the problem at hand. The OSC can be an additional Chief Officer from a neighboring department or senior company officer with knowledge of an experience with the incident.

PAR: abbreviation for personal accountability report.

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): this team, consisting of four or more personnel trained in Mayday Operations for firefighter rescue, outfitted with the proper equipment and supplies needed to provide rescue of firefighters who become injured, entrapped or have other needs for assistance while operating in/at structure fires or areas defined as immediate danger to life or health (IDLH).

Two-In-Two-Out: when a single crew is operating in a hazardous area in the initial stages of the incident, it is permissible to have 2-in-2-out group established with an additional crew standing by. Once a second crew is assigned or operating in the hazardous area, the incident is no longer considered to be in the initial stage and a rapid intervention team must not only be established, but ready for immediate deployment in accordance with NFPA 1800 8.8.2 requirements. A structure fire is deemed a "working structure fire" when the first handle line is deployed and operational.

RIT Designation

Prior to being accredited as a RIT company, the company must be able to assure Bedford County Department of Fire & Rescue that the company will be able to respond with a complement of a least four members trained in Mayday Operations. The company must have certified at least eighty (80) percent of active members in Mayday Operations through a recognized Virginia Department of Fire Programs training program. Prior to designation, each potential RIT company shall be fully equipped with personal protective equipment, SCBA, and specialized rescue equipment as indicated. Personnel assigned to RIT shall have **no other assignment** at the emergency incident other than RIT, as any other assignment may jeopardize the safety and health of any member operating at the incident.

The minimum equipment shall include:

- Appropriately equipped apparatus
- Radios for response members
- Stokes Basket
- RIT pack with SCBA, including a RIT universal air connection (UAC) and fully charged breathing air cylinder with a NIOSH-certified rated service time of sixty (60) minutes of compatible pressure and capacity with the SCBAs being used at the incident,

equipped with a RIT UAC filling hose assembly and equipped with a RIT UAC female fitting. The RIT UAC female fitting shall mate with the RIT UAC male fitting to form a RIT UAC coupling. This complete pack assembly shall be supplied by Bedford County Department of Fire & Rescue.

- One (1) set of married Irons
- One (1) 8-foot NY hook
- Forcible entry saw and reciprocating saw
- 200 feet of ½-inch rope for raising or lowering equipment
- Two (2) sets of search rope
- Four (4) packs of 2-inch webbing
- Four (4) boxes of elbow flashlights
- One (1) thermal imaging camera (TIC). If you exceed the minimum staffing (4), consider adding a second thermal imaging camera (TIC).

RIT companies must mark enroute within ten (10) minutes or less ninety (90) percent of the time from the initial dispatch, with a complement made up solely of apparatus, equipment, and staffing from their respective agency. At no point shall the RIT apparatus respond without the appropriate staffing levels as indicated in the Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) for Bedford County Fire & Rescue (FR) SOG FR#-09 document. If the RIT company is unable to fulfill the response obligations as set forth in this policy, the emergency officer will be responsible to notify dispatch and request another RIT company to respond during the dispatching phase.

Training

Training for RIT companies will be conducted every 6 months. Members of the designated RIT companies must attend a minimum of one RIT training session per year. RIT companies will be evaluated during training evolutions, which will consist of single company scenarios with a final scenario involving combined companies. The design of the evolutions shall be critiqued by the RIT companies and the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to ensure that each RIT company is complying with the established procedures herein. Such trainings will be held at the Bedford County Fire & Rescue training grounds. The idea of bi-annual training event is to solidify that ***Everyone Goes Home***, every time on every incident.

Notification and Turnout Expectations

A designated RIT company will be dispatched to calls for reported structure fires based on the pre-established RIT service boundaries. The designated RIT company shall be responsible for ensuring a minimum of four (4) personnel trained in Mayday Operations are available to respond within ten (10) minutes of dispatch to 90% of all RIT calls dispatched. Personnel shall mark enroute on the designated fire-rescue apparatus, indicating the number of trained response personnel on board. If the RIT company is unable to respond within the established timeframe with the appropriate staffing levels, the RIT company shall immediately notify dispatch and request the next due RIT Company be dispatched. There shall be **no more than two turnovers**

within one calendar year for any agency designated as RIT due to staffing issues. If this were to occur, the RIT company status will be evaluated by the AHJ and Fire Commission.

Dispatch Procedures

Upon notification of possible or confirmed working structure fire, Bedford Communication's dispatchers, over the assigned operations channel, shall notify first and second due companies as assigned by CAD and the designated RIT company as assigned on the RIT service boundary map. In the event that the RIT company is unable to fulfill the assignment according to this policy and SOG FR#-09 for minimum staffing, the ranking officer of that company shall notify dispatch to turn over the RIT assignment to next available RIT designated company.

RIT companies that are dispatched as second due and RIT must make the RIT response assignment their priority in response as well as meet the minimum staffing requirements in SOG FR#-09. If the responding RIT company recognizes that they cannot staff both the RIT response and second due coverage to minimum staffing standards, then the ranking officer should immediately notify dispatch to tone out the third due fire company to respond and continue to fill the RIT assignment.

Heavy Rescue trucks are required for RIT response since any and all efforts of the RIT activation are focused solely on the immediate removal of the downed firefighter(s) from IDLH situations which will provide more lifesaving equipment, if needed. However, if the RIT company's responding apparatus is a ladder truck, then a second ladder truck is to be added to the incident. The designated RIT apparatus from each of the three (3) RIT companies shall be properly catalogued in the CAD system for the dispatcher to know if a second ladder truck is required at the time of initial dispatch. The RIT truck, if a ladder, should be staged in a manner not to impede the placement of the incoming truck company to efficiently operate on-scene. Furthermore, truck companies shall be used for on-scene truck operations and not dedicated to RIT operations, unless the Mayday activation calls for aerial equipment and RIT ladder cannot be placed.

Assignment & Operational Procedures

Upon determining that a working fire or IDLH atmosphere exist, the incident commander shall evaluate the situation and risks to the operational teams and quickly, in the first stages of the incident, appoint a two-in-two-out team with one or more rapid intervention teams. The RIT team shall again, be composed of a minimum of four (4) trained members, each trained at a **Mayday Operations level** and capable of performing firefighter rescue. The number of designated RIT members needed will be dependent upon the needs of the incident. For example, if the building is large enough to have multiple fire attack groups with multiple entry points, then an additional RIT may be established to further ensure firefighter's safety.

The Incident Commander and operations personnel must understand that any personnel assigned to RIT shall not abandon the critical task to perform other duties. The RIT is assigned only for the rapid rescue of firefighters and must be ready to perform these duties at all times. If additional resources are needed to complete other task not related to RIT, then the Incident Commander shall request additional manpower to respond to aid in such task(s).

The RIT shall be assigned to a staging area with appropriate equipment in tow; all RIT members should be fully dressed in appropriate PPE and prepared to make entry to retrieve downed firefighters if the call is made. RIT should be staged in the best location for quick deployment into the structure or IDLH if activated. RIT equipment deployed will vary depending on the type of structure and extent of interior operations being performed; however, the minimum equipment RIT

members should bring to the staging area include the tools listed above; under the RIT designation heading.

The RIT team leader shall announce over the assigned operations channel, the assembled establishment and location of RIT, provide a PAR for RIT members and turn in the team passport to the Incident Commander. The RIT leader shall perform a 360-degree scene size-up safety walk-around and become the designated incident safety officer until additional resources can relieve such duties.

The RIT team shall closely monitor radio traffic and take a proactive approach to the RIT assignment and the prevention of Mayday calls. RIT personnel will set up RIT tools and equipment, assigning them to personnel on the team so that rapid deployment and assignment can take place if a Mayday were to be called. If ladders need to be placed to prepare the fire ground for possible rescue efforts, the team may do so under the RIT officer's authorization.

If the RIT is activated, it is imperative that the Incident Commander maintain command of the scene and that interior operations continue for the safety of all. Upon activation of the Mayday call, RIT team(s) will deploy to access and/or disentangle the downed or trapped firefighter(s). All other radio traffic will stop and the Incident Commander and/or RIT Officer should be the only member(s) communicating by radio with the lost or trapped member(s) and attempt to determine the details of the Mayday call.

Activation

The RIT team deployment into a structure is usually triggered by a firefighter calling "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday!", which is the distress signal transmitted over a firefighter's portable radio that has become entrapped, entangled, disorientated or is in imminent danger. Once the Mayday has been broadcasted as an emergency over the operations channel, the RIT team shall be activated. Bedford Communication Center dispatcher is expected to carefully monitor the tactical operations channels during the operation phases of a working fire.

Once the Mayday has been declared by the downed firefighter(s), both the Incident Commander and Bedford Communication Center shall independently acknowledge over the assigned operations channel that the Mayday has been received and the dispatcher shall benchmark the emergency in the CAD system. After the distress signal is announced, the firefighter should identify their last known location, provide his/her unit number, name, current assignment and describe what efforts/resources are needed to ensure a steadfast rescue, utilizing the LUNAR system if possible. He/she should activate his/her Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device. The assigned dispatcher shall then administer the emergency tone, telling all on-scene radio traffic to move to the newly assigned operation channel, assigned by the dispatcher. All Mayday operations will remain on the originally assigned channel. There may be only one chance to communicate with the downed firefighter(s); therefore, all other radio traffic should immediately move to the newly assigned operations channel as requested.

Communications with other operations personnel will be taken over by the Operations Section Chief, appointed by the Incident Commander, in accordance with the Incident Commander SOG #FR-10. An accountability roll call or PAR by the Operations Section Chief will need to be completed as quickly as possible to aid the IC in determining the details of the Mayday. Information received by the Operations Section Chief shall be reported to the IC once all information is compiled. *The dispatcher will then initiate a revolving twenty-minute countdown*

time, for which a PAR will be requested to the IC for all groups in operation until the Mayday is deactivated by the Incident Commander – there will be no exceptions to this mandate.

The IC shall ensure that an additional exterior RIT group, made up of at least two additional trained personnel will remain at the point of entry as a backup to the deployed team. If both interior and exterior RIT groups become committed to the rescue, the IC shall place two additional firefighters in the backup position until the situation is resolved.

Once the RIT team is activated for the interior distress or Mayday call and the dispatcher has both benchmarked the Mayday, Bedford Communication will promptly dispatch the following additional resources:

- Two additional EMS ambulances; one-unit ALS preferred
- The next due fire company per CAD
- An additional RIT Company
- Special Operations Command
- Bedford County Sheriff's Office (crowd control)
- Bedford County Department of Fire & Rescue senior staff members

This is to occur independent of direction from the incident scene and without interrupting on-scene communications.

Deactivation

Once the Incident Commander and RIT Officer have a face-to-face, agree that scene stabilization has been restored and the groups are no longer in fire attack mode, RIT can be returned to service. Upon being released from the RIT assignment by the Incident Commander, over the fire ground operations channel, an audible message shall be communicated with dispatch to benchmark the release event. At this time, the operational channel used for the RIT assignment can be terminated and stand ready for the next emergency. Lastly, it is imperative that team then reassemble equipment, prepare for future deployments and return to service.

After Action Review

In accordance with SOG #FR-06: After Action Review, a critique of incidents involving the Mayday firefighter down or activation of the RIT team will be reviewed.

Compliance Checklist

- ___ Eighty (80) percent of active members are certified to Rapid Intervention Team curriculum through a recognized source
- ___ Stokes basket
- ___ Protective clothing for each member
- ___ SCBA for each member
- ___ Radios for each member
- ___ RIT pack with an SCBA with a RIT universal air connection (UAC)
- ___ Air cylinder with a NIOSH-certified rated service time of sixty (60) minutes of compatible pressure and capacity
- ___ High pressure air line of sufficient length to reach the location of an entrapped or downed firefighter

- ___ RIT UAC female-fitting
- ___ RIT UAC filling hose assembly equipped with a RIT UAC female fitting
- ___ Set of married Irons
- ___ 8-foot NY Hook
- ___ Forcible entry saw
- ___ Reciprocating saw
- ___ 200 feet of ½ inch rope for raising or lowering equipment
- ___ Two (2) sets of search rope
- ___ Four (4) packs of two-inch webbing
- ___ Four (4) flashlights, box or elbow
- ___ One (1) thermal imaging camera (TIC). If you exceed the minimum staffing (4) consider adding a second thermal imaging camera (TIC)
- ___ Any other equipment deemed necessary can be listed below
- ___ There are no more than two companies within battalion designated as a RIT response company

References

BCoFR Standard Operating Guidelines FR#-06 – After Action Review

BCoFR Standard Operating Guidelines FR#-09 – Minimum Staffing & Response Requirement

BCoFR Standard Operating Guidelines FR#-10 – Incident Command & Initial Operations