
Ames Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

Book: 3 – Emergency Operations
Section: II – Fire Company Operations
Chapter: 7 – **Mayday Procedures**

Date Approved: 05-12-2016 Revision No.: 2 (08-02-11) Approved by: 

Review Date: 2019

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to serve as a model for declaring mayday and conducting mayday operations. Survival depends on a mix of predictable and standardized actions by a firefighter, company officer, and an incident commander. To maximize the very narrow window of survivability for a lost or downed firefighter, individual firefighters and company officers must not delay reporting a need for immediate rescue.

POLICY:

The intent of this policy is to provide a systematic approach for declaring mayday and conducting mayday operations in response to a firefighter in need of immediate rescue (e.g., becomes lost, experiences a significant fall, becomes trapped, has an equipment failure, runs out of air, suffers an injury or medical issue while operating inside an IDLH atmosphere, etc.).

PROCEDURES:

Incident Command Responsibilities:

An incident commander may issue a mayday if there is no response from the individual(s) being contacted on the radio after more than one radio contact attempts have been made, if the individual(s) in question are not in sight, or immediately if there is a radio emergency notification alarm with no response after acknowledgment. Any report of “mayday” or “radio emergency notification alarm,” will receive **emergency radio traffic**. Incident command will acknowledge the mayday, and/or alarm, and inform dispatch. All on-scene personnel will allow the incident commander to talk to the firefighter(s) in jeopardy and/or make assignments for rescue.

Upon receiving a mayday, or a radio emergency notification alarm with no response, incident command should:

- Move all personnel not directly involved in rescue operations to a different fireground radio channel to keep the victim(s) channel clear.
- Obtain a LUNAR report from the individual(s) calling the mayday
 - Location (Even if it is only where you think you are)
 - Unit
 - Name
 - Air Supply (Remaining)
 - Resources (Needed)
- Restructure the strategy and incident action plan to include a priority rescue effort by the rapid intervention team (RIT), while maintaining necessary fire control to aid in rescue effort.

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- Assign mayday and RIT operations to a member of the command staff
- Request an ALS ambulance through dispatch
- Request additional shift callback to staff and report to the scene with a minimum of an additional engine company.
- Conduct a personal accountability report (PAR).
- Assemble a second RIT.

Company Officer Responsibilities:

Despite the potential negative stigma of requesting aid, it is critical that a company officer facing a possible life-threatening emergency immediately take action to avoid the situation and/or call for assistance early, *before* becoming incapacitated.

The company officer should also issue a mayday if there is no response from individual(s) being addressed on the radio after more than one radio contact attempts have been made, if the individual(s) in question are not in sight. If unable to locate an assigned firefighter or upon obtaining an incomplete PAR, company officers should issue a mayday, including;

- Who is missing;
- Last known location;
- Actions being taken.

Firefighter Responsibilities:

Firefighters are responsible for having a clear understanding of the mayday parameters and for being able to transmit a mayday over the radio with 100% accuracy 100% of the time. Each on-duty firefighter is issued an AFD radio, and is expected to actively monitor it at all times while on the fireground.

Despite the potential negative stigma of requesting aid, it is critical that a firefighter facing a possible life-threatening emergency immediately take action to avoid the situation and/or call for assistance early, *before* becoming incapacitated. In the event that a firefighter does require immediate rescue (e.g., becomes lost, experiences a significant fall, becomes trapped, has an equipment failure, runs out of air, or suffers an injury or medical issue while operating inside an IDLH atmosphere, etc.), s/he should:

- Issue a mayday over the radio.
 - Repeat the word “mayday” three times in a row (e.g., mayday--mayday--mayday). Note: If the firefighter is unable to speak or push the PTT button, they should immediately activate their emergency notification alarm on the radio by pressing the orange button on top of the radio or lapel mic.

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- Be able to provide LUNAR information after incident command acknowledges the mayday, or activation of the emergency notification alarm.
- Activate PASS device.
- Begin self rescue.
 - Attempt to get out of the building by whatever means possible.
 - If unable to exit the structure, find a protective room or floor away from the fire and position near an exterior wall, door, or window, to increase chances of being rescued.
 - Make presence known by pounding on the wall, or floor, and shining flashlight around.
 - Conserve air supply.

Canceling a Mayday:

At any point and time a mayday may be cancelled, once incident command has received notification that:

- Conditions have changed;
 - Further assistance is not needed;
 - Successful rescue has occurred; or that
 - Conditions have deteriorated to a point that a rescue is unavailable.
- Incident command will notify on scene crews and dispatch that the mayday has been cancelled, along with a short explanation as to why.

DEFINITIONS:

Emergency radio traffic: Urgent radio traffic; a request for other unit(s) to clear the radio waves for an urgent message.

IDLH: Immediately dangerous to life and health.

Mayday: International distress signal.

Personnel accountability report (PAR): A PAR roll call announcement made by command to verify accountability for each unit over the radio (i.e., Incident command: *E-1 PAR?*, Engine 1: *E-1 has PAR*, Engine 2: *E-2 PAR*, etc.).

REFERENCES:


B.A. Clark (2006). Several articles retrieved from <http://www.firehouse.com> in 2011.

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