

NORTH WHATCOM FIRE AND RESCUE

FIRE DISTRICT POLICY

Number: 0900.0307.00

Date: 10/21/10

Area: Emergency Readiness and Response

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Subject: Mayday Situations

Approved:

1.0 General

There may be an occasion when firefighters participating in emergency operations may find themselves in a situation of imminent danger to their life. Although all necessary precautions should be in place prior to implementing emergency operations, should a firefighter find him/her in a situation as described herein, they must be able to identify their situation and communicate their situation to command so that rescue operations can be initiated.

2.0 Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to identify the actions that should be taken in the event a firefighter is endangered beyond normal firefighter operations. This policy is based on the three principles that kill or injure firefighters; that being fire above, fire below, and uncontrolled fire growth on the occupied floor.

3.0 Scope:

This policy applies to all operations designated personnel to include command staff, company officers, and line firefighters.

4.0 Policy:

4.1 Definitions:

Imminent Danger – any conditions or practices which are such that a danger exists which could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm immediately or before the imminence of such danger can be eliminated.

Mayday – an emergency code word used internationally as a distress signal in voice procedure radio communications.

Mayday Situation – A Mayday situation is one in which a person is in grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance.

4.2 Policy Statement – Use of the term “Mayday”

4.2.1 The term “Mayday” will only be used when firefighting personnel are in immediate life-threatening situations that include but are not limited to:

- Entrapment with a low air alarm activating

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- Falling through a roof / Falling through floor
- Entrapment even if able to extricate within 60 sec.
- Caught in a flashover or immanent flashover
- Firefighter lost and/or disoriented
- Primary exit blocked by fire or collapse
- Low air alarm activating and unable to reach exit or radio command in 30 sec.
- Unable to locate exit in 60 sec.
- Entanglement in wires and unable to free using standard hand techniques
- Firefighter or partner become injured

- 4.2.2 A firefighter reporting “Mayday” using a radio shall have priority over all other radio traffic.
- 4.2.3 Once a “Mayday” has been transmitted all radio transmissions shall cease except for transmitting immediate critical information.
- 4.2.4 Command shall designate the frequency on which the mayday was transmitted as the primary frequency for conducting rescue operations.
- 4.2.5 The individual(s) transmitting the mayday shall not be requested to change frequencies nor shall they be moved from the frequency on which the mayday was transmitted unless communications on that frequency are impaired and the Incident Commander and the firefighter transmitting the mayday have positive concurrence on the assigned frequency.
- 4.2.6 Command shall advise the dispatch agency of the mayday emergency and will request all other radio transmissions be moved to a different fire ground radio channel to keep the firefighter transmitting the mayday radio channel clear. This will be accomplished in accordance with accepted dispatch protocols.
- 4.2.7 Only radio transmissions that are directly involved in rescue operations will be permitted on the designated operations/rescue frequency.
- 4.2.8 The firefighter reporting “Mayday” shall contact the Incident Commander using a portable radio and transmit the appropriate critical information necessary to implement a rescue. Critical information conveyed shall follow the L.U.N.E. mnemonic/acronym:
- **L** – Location – response crew access (i.e. 2nd floor D-side, follow hose line)

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- **U** – Unit – engine/truck company you were working from (i.e. engine/truck 63)
- **N** – Name – first or last name reporting rescue crew know you as (i.e. Fields)
- **E** – Emergency – what is your emergency/what special tools may be needed (i.e. entangled, low air not near exit, entrapment and/also pry-bar, spreaders or ladder needed C side 3rd floor bedroom)

- 4.2.9 During “Mayday” operations, command and on scene firefighters will follow guideline outlined in “Firefighter Rescue Emergency” Policies and Procedures. (TBA)
- 4.2.10 During “Mayday” operations, a rescue group will be utilized, and will be identified as RIT and all other firefighters and fire ground officers will continue with assignments as given by command.
- 4.2.11 Firefighters and Fire Officers will NOT redirect their activities towards implementing a rescue without the knowledge AND consent of the Incident Commander.

5.0 Control Mechanisms

5.1 Policy Statement – Responsibility of Fire Chief

- 5.1.1 The Fire Chief shall be responsible to review this policy annually to ensure it is updated as necessary.

5.2 Policy Statement – Responsibility of Division Chief /Training

- 5.2.1 The Division Chief of Training shall be responsible to ensure all fire ground personnel to include command staff, receive initial training and annual recurrent training regarding policy and procedures for Mayday situations.
- 5.2.2 The Division/Training shall ensure that all initial training and annual recurrent training is documented and entered into the appropriate training records for fire district personnel.

5.3 Policy Statement – Responsibility of Company Officers and Firefighters:

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5.3.1 Initial training for Mayday situations shall be “mandatory training” for all command staff officers, company officers and firefighters.

5.3.2 Annual recurrent training for Mayday situations shall be “mandatory training” for all command staff officers, company officers and firefighters.

6.0 References

Approved:

Board Chair, Board of Fire Commissioners
North Whatcom Fire and Rescue

Date:

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Revised:

Reviewed: