

## INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND TACTICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL

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SERIES 330

### OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE **FIRE GROUND SAFETY**

#### PURPOSE

To establish guidelines that will enhance safety on the fire ground. To minimize the risks faced by our personnel through the utilization of sound risk management and safety procedures.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Firefighter:** Personnel whose job description identifies suppression activities as a component of their assigned duties, i.e. Firefighter, Firefighter/Paramedic, Lieutenant, Battalion Chief, Training Officer, Operations Chief and Fire Chief.

**Back-up Team:** A team of two or more firefighters with full personal protective equipment (PPE) and a hose line assigned the task of protecting the interior egress/ingress path of the attack team(s).

**Interior Structural Firefighting:** The physical activity of fire suppression and/or rescue, inside of buildings or enclosed structures, which are involved in a fire situation beyond incipient stage.

**Incipient Stage:** The beginning stage of a fire where the oxygen content is not significantly reduced, and the fire is producing minute amounts of water vapor, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and other gases. Furthermore, the room temperature is normal, and the fire can safely be extinguished with a portable extinguisher or garden hose, (e.g., a pan on the stove fire)

**Initial Stage (initial action):** Shall encompass the control efforts taken by the resource *first to arrive* at an incident requiring immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss of life or serious injury to citizens and firefighters.

**Known Life Hazard:** A situation, in which someone can be seen, heard or a reliable report indicates that someone is still in the building and immediate actions are necessary to prevent loss of life or serious injury.

**Mayday:** A radio message reserved for the sole purpose of notifying on-scene personnel there is a missing, trapped, or disabled firefighter.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Bunker coat, bunker pants, boots, hood, helmet, goggles, gloves, portable radio and a self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

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**Positive Communications:** Contact maintained by visual, verbal, physical or electronic means.

**Rapid Intervention Team (RIT):** A dedicated team of two or more firefighters capable of performing immediate rescue operations. The RIT shall be developed from personnel on scene. Personnel assigned to RIT shall be equipped with full PPE and appropriate rescue equipment in order to provide firefighter rescue.

**Rescue Mode:** Immediate actions necessary during the initial stage of an incident to mitigate a KNOWN LIFE HAZARD, utilizing a minimum of one (1) standby firefighter.

**Risk Assessment:** To set or determine the possibility of suffering harm or loss, and to what extent.

**Risk Management:** The development of action plans, which takes present and potential risks into consideration.

**Standby Firefighter(s):** Firefighter(s) with full PPE outside the hazardous area, capable of providing assistance or rescue of the interior team during the initial stage of an incident.

**Standby Mode:** Firefighter(s) with full PPE outside the hazardous area, remaining aware of the status and safety of the interior team.

**Abandon:** To immediately exit the building or area due to safety concerns for emergency personnel, without regard to equipment or hose lines in place. Abandonment should not be confused with the following two terms:

**Withdraw:** To exit the building or area with equipment and hose lines, due to a change in strategy (i.e., offensive to defensive; interior to exterior).

**Evacuate:** To remove the occupants or residents of a building, mall or geographical area.

**Par:** Personnel Accountability Report

**Passport:** Means to provide accountability of individuals and unit members after entering the emergency incident perimeter.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **I. RISK MANAGEMENT**

1. Risk management is used by the incident commander to formulate the incident plan. The objective is to save lives and to save property in as safe a manner as possible, as dictated by the incident. The practical application of risk management shall be as follows:  
(Reference WAC 296-305-05001(5))

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- A. Activities that present a significant risk to safety of personnel shall be evaluated and limited to situations where there is a potential to save endangered lives. In other words, ***“FIREFIGHTERS MAY RISK THEIR LIVES IN A CALCULATED MANNER TO SAVE A LIFE THAT IS SAVABLE”***.
- B. Activities that are routinely employed to protect property shall be recognized as inherent risks to the safety of personnel and actions shall be taken to reduce or minimize these risks. In other words, ***“FIREFIGHTERS MAY PLACE THEMSELVES IN A SITUATION WITH MODERATE RISK TO SAVE PROPERTY THAT IS SAVABLE”***.
- C. The compromising of the safety of personnel is not acceptable when there is no possibility to save lives or property. ***FIREFIGHTERS WILL RISK NOTHING TO SAVE LIVES WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST OR PROPERTY WHICH ALREADY HAS BEEN DESTROYED”***.
  1. The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for the overall safety of personnel and activities occurring at the scene. Personnel are responsible to work within recognized safety guidelines and procedures at all times. Officers are responsible for the safety of assigned personnel. The IC shall conduct periodic risk assessments of the incident and provide an adequate number of personnel to conduct emergency scene operations. Operations shall be limited to those that can be performed by the personnel at the scene.
  2. It is recognized that every situation is unique and an all-encompassing definition for undue risk is impossible. For this reason, the ability of the IC to use discretion and judgment on a situational basis is a must. Once the IC has established the level of risk that is acceptable and the amount of gain that is to be realized, the IC shall initiate the appropriate action plan. Once the action plan is initiated, it becomes the IC’s responsibility to ensure that all personnel are operating within the strategy and risk level established.
  3. All personnel have a responsibility to reduce the risk to themselves and their fellow firefighters when operating at an emergency incident. Personnel shall adhere to the following requirements in order to reduce the potential for injury or death. (Reference WAC 296-305-05001(8))
    1. Fire fighters operating in hazardous areas at emergency incidents shall operate in teams of two or more.
    2. Team members operating in hazardous areas shall be in communication with each other through visual, audible, physical, and/or safety guide rope in order to coordinate their activities. Electronic means (i.e. portable radio) shall not be relied on as a means of positive communication.
    3. Team members shall be in close proximity to each other to provide assistance in case of emergency.
    4. Teams in hazardous areas shall have positive communication capabilities with the incident command structure.

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5. Radio communication capabilities within the incident command structure shall include monitoring of incident-assigned frequencies.
6. Personnel shall keep the Incident Commander informed as to changing conditions and potential hazards so that strategy changes may be made to reduce risks.
7. Personnel shall not operate outside the established action plan. **No Freelancing!**

## II. INITIAL STAGES

1. **Two In / Two Out Requirements** (as identified in WAC 296-305-05001(10)).
  - A. Before beginning interior structural fire fighting operations, the incident commander must evaluate the situation and risks to operating teams.
  - B. The initial size-up must take into account any atypical or unusual risks posed to personnel.
  - C. Except as provided in WAC 296-305-05001(11), fire fighters must not engage in interior structural fire fighting in the absence of at least two standby fire fighters.
  - D. Exceptions to the Two In/Two Out requirement beyond what is identified in WAC 296-305-05001 (11) are not permitted. Any attempts to circumvent the limited exemption in WAC 296-305-05001 (11) by assuming all or most structure fires may involve a rescue are equally unacceptable.
  - E. Standby fire fighters must be equipped with full PPE, with face piece in the standby mode.
  - F. Standby firefighters shall be responsible for remaining aware of the status and safety of the interior team.
  - G. Standby firefighters must remain in positive communication with the interior team(s).
  - H. Standby firefighters are permitted to perform other duties outside the hazardous area, provided constant communication is maintained with the interior team(s), and provided that those duties will not interfere with the standby firefighters' ability to participate in a rescue as appropriate.
  - I. The standby firefighters shall be located in close proximity to the incident.
  - J. Once additional resources have arrived on scene, the initial stage of the fire is terminated and the IC shall assign a dedicated Rapid Intervention Team.
  - K. Separate Rapid Intervention Teams are not required for each interior team.
  - L. Nothing in this section shall prevent activities that may reasonably be taken by firefighters first on the scene to determine the nature and extent of fire involvement.
2. **Two In / One Out Exception** (Rescue Mode, No RIT)
  - A. Prior to implementing a Two In / One Out operation, the incident commander must evaluate the situation and risks.

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- B. The initial size-up must take into account any atypical or unusual risks posed to personnel.
- C. Prior to implementing a Two In / One Out operation, the Company Officer/Incident Commander shall notify dispatch that they are in “**RESCUE MODE**”.
- D. When a “Rescue Mode” operation is initiated, incoming resources need to commit to a course of action that fulfills the Two In/Two Out requirements.
- E. The standby fire fighter must remain aware of the status and safety of the interior team.
- F. The standby fire fighter must be equipped with appropriate PPE, with face piece in the standby mode.
- G. The standby fire fighter must remain in positive communication with the interior team.
- H. The standby firefighter may perform other duties outside the hazardous area, provided constant communications is maintained with the team in the hazardous area, and provided that those duties will not interfere with the ability to initiate a rescue if appropriate.
- I. The standby firefighter shall be located in close proximity to the incident.
- J. In the event personnel are unavailable to fulfill the standby firefighter(s) position, personnel shall not engage in interior structural firefighting activities.
- K. Nothing in this section shall prevent activities that may reasonably be taken by firefighters first on the scene to determine the nature and extent of fire involvement.
- L. *Example: An engine company with three (3) personnel is first to arrive at a working fire in a single-family residence. The occupant advises that a family member is inside the residence. At this time, the company officer would advise dispatch that a “Rescue Mode” operation is in effect. The company officer and 3<sup>rd</sup> person could enter the structure for interior structural firefighting / rescue activities. The pump operator shall fulfill the role of the standby firefighter, (Two In/One Out). The pump operator shall don all protective clothing and equipment including SCBA in the standby position. It is imperative that the pump operator be properly prepared to perform a rescue or offer emergency assistance to the entry team without delay*

### **III. SUSTAINED OPERATIONS – Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)**

1. **A Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)** shall be established on all structure fires that have grown beyond the incipient stage, other incidents where personnel are subject to hazardous environments or when the Incident Commander (IC) deems necessary. (Reference Operational Guideline Series 354)

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#### **IV. MAYDAY OPERATIONS - Missing and/or trapped firefighters.**

1. All personnel operating on the emergency scene shall utilize the term May-Day to identify possible and/or immediate hazards to their person or their company. Any member may use it to report other companies missing as well. (Reference Operational Guideline Series 355)

#### **V. EMERGENCY ABANDONMENT SIGNAL**

1. It is improbable that one signal will guarantee effective alerting in every situation; therefore, it shall be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to accomplish it through both emergency traffic radio communication and audible signals. An order to abandon is broadcast to all companies at the incident, regardless of their assignment or position. (Reference Operational Guideline Series 358)

#### **VI. PASSPORT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM**

1. It shall be the policy of the Pierce Co. Fire Districts to account for the safety and location of all personnel within an incident perimeter. (Reference Operational Guideline Series 340)

#### **VII. PAR – PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

1. To identify a method to confirm that all personnel are accounted for within a geographic area, or “hot zone” of an incident. Use of this procedure will enhance personal safety, by providing the Incident Commander (IC) with an updated account of all personnel whenever there is significant change in the action plan or a catastrophic change in the incident. (Reference Operational Guideline Series 000)

#### **VIII. FIREGROUND/EMERGENCY SCENE**

1. For the purpose of department operations, the fire ground or emergency incident perimeter can be defined as the area inside an imaginary boundary that has been determined by safety considerations, according to the foreseeable hazards of the particular incident.
2. The fire ground or emergency incident perimeter established by Command shall be marked off, when practical, by lime, yellow, red or orange surveyor’s tape. Other methods may be used when necessary, such as natural barriers, walls, road barricades, etc. Control of the perimeter and the area within it are the responsibility of Command.
3. No unauthorized personnel shall be allowed within the perimeter. All non-fire personnel allowed to enter shall be required to wear protective clothing suitable for the situation and area to be entered.

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4. All personnel entering the emergency incident perimeter shall:
  - A. Wear protective clothing
  - B. Have company/crew intact
  - C. Be assigned (and passported up with helmet shield in place.)
  - D. ALL OTHERS, STAY OUTSIDE

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