



## **MAYDAY (1.1)**

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### **TASK SKILL DESCRIPTION AND DETAIL**

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All maydays are not created equal nor are the conditions in which they occur. Each mayday will have its own set of critical factors. Prevention of a mayday is best achieved by following LFRA operational guidelines (OG) and maintaining situational awareness. However, if firefighters become lost or trapped, survival is possible and even more probable when procedures are followed. Case studies show that the best chance for survival is early notification, strong command and control and firefighters who have practiced proper survival techniques.

#### **Mayday Description**

All members shall use the term mayday to initiate radio traffic that communicates a firefighter cannot safely exit the hazard zone.

A mayday is defined as anytime a firefighter cannot safely exit an IDLH hazard zone.

A mayday is communicated in the following situations that may include, but is not limited to:

- Injured firefighter unable to exit IDLH environment
- Trapped, lost or missing firefighter/crew
- Low/out of air situations

#### **Calling a mayday**

The universal radio message mayday shall be used by a crew and/or firefighter to report their status and need for assistance. Any firefighter can use the mayday call to report a life-threatening situation they are involved in.

- The crew/firefighter declaring the mayday shall activate the orange button on their portable radio as the first step in declaring a mayday.
- This will automatically move the firefighter to the emergency talk group designated for emergencies – ‘MAYDAY S.’
- Call for a mayday three times to ensure priority radio traffic. DO NOT un-key the microphone.
- Utilize the LUNAR acronym to complete the mayday radio traffic. See Lunar below under Task/Company/Firefighter Level (Survival Techniques).



The following is an example of the standard method of transmitting a “Mayday”

*Activate Emergency button...“Mayday, Mayday, Mayday...Crew 5 (last name of crew members) has been caught in a floor collapse and fallen into the basement. Air supply is at 2000 psi and need assistance getting out.”*

### **Task/Company/Firefighter level (Survival Techniques)**

Firefighters must not delay reporting to command if they find themselves in a mayday situation. The rescue of lost, trapped, low/out of air or seriously injured firefighters from the emergency scene is critically time sensitive. Firefighters who find themselves lost, trapped or low/out of air should follow the ESCAPE and LUNAR acronym procedures.

### **ESCAPE**

- **Emergency Reverse-** The firefighter will try to find their way out by retracing their steps or search patterns, or following the hoseline to the exterior. Remember that male coupling (lugs on shank) lead towards the nozzle and female couplings (smooth shank) to the exterior of the structure.
- **Secondary Egress-** Conduct a proper size-up before entering and maintain situational awareness for a secondary means of escape. Exit-ways and means of egress must be maintained for interior (Hazard Zone) crews.
- **Contact Command-** Call for help immediately. The firefighter must press the emergency button on their portable radio and call a mayday (see LUNAR below). Notification to Command is made as soon as the firefighter believes they are in trouble. Do **not** delay in making this call.
- **Activate Pass Device-** After the mayday call and contact with Command. The firefighter must activate their Pass Device of the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Lie on the floor if possible in the position that maximizes the audible effects of the PASS device and is the safest



from productions of combustion. This improves the chance of being found quickly by crews in the area or RIC.

- **Perform Breach-** The firefighter may perform a breach, if possible, to make access to the exterior of the structure or area of safe refuge.
- **Easy Breath-** Once in a safe refuge area, when escape is not an option, advise command of location and status and work to control breathing. Find a location on an exterior wall, doorway or hall that increases chance of quick discovery. Realize that you are going to go into a stress and fear response, known as fight or flight. This initial reflex cannot be suppressed, it is critical to anticipate it, recognize it and mobilize your thoughts.

Here are examples of negative thought-control options: Yell to yourself the words “no” or “stop it” or imagine a stop sign or flashing “stop it” sign.

Give yourself a task-focused cue or instruction such as Focus or Control, or if on a hose line remember the phrase “Smooth bump, bump to the pump”.

#### **LUNAR**

- **Location** or last known location, landmarks, sights and sounds.
- **Unit** (crew/FF designation.)
- **Name** (last name of firefighter experiencing the mayday. If multiple firefighters are involved then all members must be identified.)
- **Air** supply status.
- **Resources** needed, if known, for rescue.