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|  | <b>MAYDAY OPERATIONAL GUIDE</b>           |                                      |
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## Procedure:

All members shall use the term “mayday” to initiate radio traffic that communicates a fire ground emergency. This transmission is an indication that a life-threatening situation has developed.

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

IDLH: Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health

Mayday is communicated in situations where immediate communication is necessary to protect life or prevent injury. This may include but is not limited to:

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

## Description of Event

Firefighters must not delay reporting to Command if they find themselves in a mayday situation. The rescue of lost, trapped or seriously injured firefighters from the emergency scene is critically time sensitive. The universal radio message “mayday” shall be used to report their status and need for assistance. Any firefighter can use the mayday call to report a life-threatening situation. Once a member or unit realizes they cannot safely exit the hazard zone, declare a mayday over the incident’s assigned tactical channel by announcing mayday three (3) times and give a CAN (conditions, actions and needs) report to the IC to help him/her formulate the best IAP that addresses the firefighters current condition(s). Do not unclick the microphone between announcing the mayday and giving the CAN report.

- “Mayday, mayday, mayday” followed by a CAN report to include:
  - Who – the identity of who is having the mayday
  - What – caused the condition(s) of the mayday
  - Where – identify the firefighters’ current location/surroundings or firefighters’ last known location
  - Provide the needs that will help resolve the mayday (critical)
- If the crew/firefighter declaring the mayday cannot get out on the incident’s assigned tactical channel, he/she shall activate the orange button on their portable radio. This should be used only as a contingency if they find themselves unable to air their mayday on the assigned tactical channel due to heavy radio traffic. This will automatically move the firefighter to the emergency talk group channel “MAYDAY South.” The firefighter shall declare a mayday following the above procedures.

The following is an example of the standard method of transmitting a mayday:

“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.”

(See LFRA Training Manual – Mayday)

### Command Responsibilities

The Incident Commander shall accomplish the following list of actions upon receipt of a mayday:

- Acknowledge the mayday
- Activate emergency traffic tone
- Modify Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- Upgrade the alarm assignment and order additional EMS
- Maintain fire suppression operations
- Maintain accountability
- Control communications

- Monitor structural stability
- Notify Chief Officers

### Acknowledge the Mayday

The Incident Commander is the only person on the tactical channel who will acknowledge the mayday declaration and respond back with the following to the mayday firefighter(s):

- Communicate to the mayday firefighter(s) that you have received their mayday and will be deploying resources for the rescue.
- Verbally state to the mayday firefighter(s); "Remain calm, control your breathing, and maintain situational awareness (SA)."
- Maintain radio contact to get a sufficient amount of information in order to implement an adequate rescue IAP.
- Have them activate their PASS devices, if necessary, and attempt self-rescue.
- Continue to communicate with the mayday firefighter(s) the actions being taken.
- Make necessary unit deployments to start addressing the mayday.
- Call for Emergency Traffic as soon as possible once a mayday has been declared.

### Activate Emergency Traffic Tone

The Incident Commander shall transmit an emergency traffic tone for four (4) seconds. This may be completed from the command post or by using the dispatch center and shall be transmitted on the tactical fire ground channel. Following the tone, the mayday is announced with the location or area given, if known. An example may include:

"All units, emergency radio traffic, mayday on the fire ground. Crew 5 has been caught in a floor collapse and fallen into the basement. We will remain offensive strategy, life risk, completing rescue. All units maintain radio silence."

Dispatch will repeat the Emergency Traffic report verbatim.

### Modify Incident Action Plan (IAP)

The IAP should be modified to a high priority rescue effort. The IC may need to evaluate the situation in an effort to determine:

- "What do I have?" (What is the current situation?)
- "What do I need?" (What resources and equipment are needed?)



- “What am I doing?” (What actions are being conducted?)

The command organizational model may need to be expanded. LFRA’s standard organizational model utilizes the “two-box” system which includes Attack Group and Support Group. The IC may choose to place the appropriate Group Supervisor in charge of the rescue effort and support their needs with the required resources. If Divisions are being used, the IC may choose to delegate the rescue effort to that Supervisor who is responsible for the area in which the mayday is occurring and support with the needed resources.

The additional battalion chiefs who arrive on scene should be utilized in the most efficient manner. Chief Officers should be placed into tactical-level supervision positions to support the fire ground emergency and help maintain situational awareness.

The “Help Order” should be considered when developing a rescue plan during a mayday.

1. Communicating to mayday firefighter self-rescue techniques to assist with the rescue.
2. Using a mayday firefighter(s) own company to assist with the rescue.
3. Using a company already located inside the hazard zone to assist with the rescue.
4. Using an on-deck company located outside of the hazard zone as a rapid intervention crew.

### Resource Needs

The next greater alarm, as a minimum, should be ordered by the IC. Additional alarms may be needed depending on the severity of the incident. The IC should maintain enough resources to manage the rescue operation as well as the suppression operations that need to continue. The IC shall maintain a tactical reserve three deep, including resources in hot zone, on-deck, and staged. The IC should also evaluate what EMS resources are needed and order the appropriate EMS response.

### Maintain Fire Suppression Operations

Controlling and extinguishing the fire gives the entire team the time needed to resolve the mayday. The IC and Division/Group Supervisors, if established, shall continue fire suppression

efforts if any active fire exists during a mayday. Interior crews that are actively addressing fire control when a mayday occurs should continue with their fire control efforts.

Company officers already assigned into the hazard zone may be in the best position to perform a rescue of a mayday firefighter. This officer may need to complete an assessment of what is occurring and take appropriate action to minimize injury/death.

Task level operations should continue to be completed when a mayday has occurred to give interior crews the best chance of completing a rescue. Hose lines may need to be stretched to support the rescue. An evaluation of flow path or ventilation assessment, lighting and/or hardening of exits may be necessary to support the rescue operation.

#### Maintain Accountability

Some types of maydays may require the IC to perform a Personal Accountability Report (PAR) to determine the scope of the problem and what units were affected by the conditions. These PARs must be driven by the IC for personnel operating within the emergency scene perimeter.

The IC shall maintain fire ground accountability throughout the rescue operation. If not already established, the IC should get tactical level supervision in place. Strong entry control is needed where the mayday is occurring to prevent unassigned entries into the area of rescue. On-deck crews must properly equip themselves, have a rescue plan and be ordered into the hazard zone by the IC and/or Division/Group Supervisors prior to making entry.

#### Control Communication

The IC must start with controlled communication and continue to maintain control of communication throughout the rescue event. All operating units will maintain radio silence once a mayday has been transmitted. All operating units will only transmit:

- Mayday announcements (you or your crew is having a mayday).
- Priority traffic – something very bad is about to happen and it will require a change to the current Rescue IAP (Example, the Charlie side of the house is starting to collapse).

- CAN or CANT (conditions, actions, needs, temperature) reports during a mayday that are driven by the IC or the Division/Group supervisor or critical tactical benchmarks that directly affect the mayday IAP.
  - I.E. – Firefighter located, rescue complete and fire under control are examples of critical benchmarks during the mayday operations.

The IC will conduct mayday operations on the designated tactical channel and any assigned resources to the rescue effort or fire ground effort shall maintain radio silence unless one of the above criteria is met.

#### Monitor Structural Stability

The IC should designate a member on the fire ground to monitor and watch for structural stability during extended mayday operations.

#### Notify Chief Officers

The IC shall notify LFRA Command Staff in the event of a mayday.

#### Clearing Mayday Operations

Once all affected firefighters have been removed from the hazard zone and the treatment/transport is underway, the IC will use the current critical fire ground factors to formulate a new strategy and IAP.

The IC should evaluate the suitability of personnel to continue to work in IDLH atmospheres, which may be directly impacted by the severity of the mayday.

The IC should contact Dispatch and clear the mayday radio traffic. This announcement should include:

- Brief mayday conclusion report
- Strategy and IAP for next operational period in the incident
- Resource determination

## Benchmarks

The following benchmarks are utilized with mayday operations:

### Rescue Initiated

The IC shall communicate this benchmark with Dispatch and fire ground companies indicating that a high priority rescue has begun. It also acknowledges a mayday has occurred and indicates a Rescue IAP is being developed. All units should hold radio traffic for the Rescue IAP.

### Firefighter Located

Once the member, crew or group supervisor has located the mayday firefighter(s), they must communicate this benchmark to the IC. This is the first step in completing the firefighter rescue.

### Rescue Complete

The IC shall communicate this benchmark once the mayday has been controlled and there is adequate treatment under way. All units should stand by for the clearing of the mayday by the IC.

## Revision History:

## References:

Playbook F/F Emergency Operating Guide (2011, December) Loveland Fire Rescue, p. 1

Operational Directives 3.1.8 Lost or Trapped Firefighter (2005, June) Poudre Fire Authority, p. 1-4.

Operations Directive 1.5.3 Fire ground Emergencies (2004, August) South Metro Fire Rescue, p. 1-7.

Command SOP's Mayday SOP Draft (2013, February) Blue Card, p. 1-9.

Mayday Operations (2016, June) Blue Card, p. 1-40.