

Chautauqua County Fire Service  
Evacuation/Mayday/Emergency Procedures  
Operating Guideline

Purpose:

- To provide a means for communicating an evacuation order and a response to a firefighter down, trapped, disoriented or otherwise incapacitated on the fire ground. This guideline will apply to all firefighters and officers operating on the fire ground.

Terminology:

- Mayday- Shall be the standard verbal radio transmission used by any firefighter who becomes disoriented, lost, injured, trapped, out of air, or any other instance where he/she needs immediate assistance.
- Evacuation Order- the immediate termination of interior firefighting operations accompanied by the immediate removal of all firefighters from the structure. It shall be the discretion of the Incident Commander to issue an evacuation order.
- “Emergency”- A message of paramount importance involving an emergency as defined in Sect 5.2 of the Chautauqua County Communications Policy & Procedure Manual.
- PAR- Personnel Accountability Roll Call.
- FAST- Firefighter Assist & Search Team.

Evacuation Procedure:

- In the event of any conditions that pose a threat to the firefighters operating inside or around the fire ground, an evacuation order may be issued by the Incident Commander.
- Any firefighter or officer who observes conditions on the fire ground which may pose an immediate threat to the safety of firefighters shall have this information immediately relayed to the Incident Commander.
- Examples that warrant immediate Incident Commander notification include but are not limited to:
  - An increased fire spread even with interior firefighting operations taking place.
  - Impending or actual full or partial building collapse.
  - Structural hazards such as truss roofs or large heaters and air conditioners positioned on tops of roofs, chimneys.
  - Any potential hazards that may possess a threat to firefighters.
- Upon receiving this information the incident commander will make the decision if an evacuation order is warranted.

#### Initiating the Evacuation Order:

- The Incident Commander will immediately broadcast an emergency message for all interior firefighters to stop what they are doing and immediately evacuate the structure.
- The Incident Commander will then communicate with the nearest apparatus operator ordering (3) five second blasts with the apparatus air horn. These initial blasts will be followed by (3) five second blasts from other apparatus air horns that are on the fire ground. These blasts are initiated in addition to radio communications in relaying the evacuation order. These blasts may be re-initiated at any time during this procedure at the discretion of the Incident Commander.
- IC will then notify dispatch and have them re-broadcast the evacuation order.
- All members operating on the fire ground will return to their assigned unit or officer for a Personnel Accountability Roll-Call. (PAR)
- It shall be the responsibility of the officer/firefighter in charge of the crew to ensure compliance with the evacuation order and to check in at the command post once they have safely evacuated.
- The Incident Commander may request an incident wide personnel accountability report when it is questionable that all officers/firefighters are safely evacuated. In the event this is requested, all non-emergency radio communications will cease and officers/firefighters in charge will take a count of members to the Incident Commander.

#### Mayday Procedure:

- In the event a firefighter is down, trapped, disoriented or otherwise incapacitated, the firefighter or their partner will immediately, without hesitation, issue a “MAYDAY” over the operating channel. This will serve to notify the Incident Commander, F.A.S.T. Command, and all other companies operating at the incident that a firefighter is in need of immediate emergency assistance.
- Upon hearing the MAYDAY, all radio transmissions on the scene will switch to an alternate channel, with the exception of the firefighter initiating the MAYDAY and the Incident Commander, or any other Officer and/or unit designated by the Incident Commander.
- All officers/firefighters in charge of crews should take an immediate PAR and report their status to the Incident Commander.

#### Reasons a Mayday Message Should be Transmitted:

- Imminent Collapse Feared.
- Structural Collapse has Occurred.
- A firefighter is unconscious or is suffering a life threatening injury.
- An Officer realizes a member is lost / A firefighter realizes an Officer is lost.
- You become lost or trapped.
- Insufficient air supply.

#### Radio Procedure for Issuing a Mayday:

- The firefighter calling the MAYDAY will start the radio transmission with the following: “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY”.
- The MAYDAY firefighter should then relay as much pertinent information as possible after the Incident Commander acknowledges the transmission. Examples of the type of information are:
  - The location where assigned.
  - Where you are now.
  - What your assignment was.
  - Who you were assigned with.
  - What the situation is. Ex: lost, trapped, injured, running out of air, etc.

#### L-U-N-A-R

- (L) Last Known Location.
- (U) Unit
- (N) Name
- (A) Assignment
- (R) Radio Equipped

#### If Possible the MAYDAY firefighter should do the following:

- Activate your PASS alarm.
- Make noise to draw attention to your location, such as banging a tool on the wall or floor.
- Remain calm and conserve air. (Do not yell or scream).

#### Responsibilities of all other Firefighters:

- All firefighters operating at the incident shall remain in their previously assigned positions and continue to do their jobs. It shall be the responsibility of the FAST Team and any other additional units assigned to locate and rescue a firefighter who has issued a MAYDAY.

#### Emergency Procedure:

- An emergency message will be transmitted by any firefighter operating on the fire ground to communicate information to the Incident Commander and firefighters.
- The firefighter will announce their unit and position and advise the Incident Commander of an “Emergency” message.
- After the Incident Commander acknowledges the “Emergency”, the firefighter will transmit the emergency message.

Reasons to Transmit an “Emergency” Message:

- A rapid change in fire conditions.
- Loss of water or ineffectiveness of hose stream.
- Problems with getting hand-line into operation.
- Unique building condition.
- Inability to protect firefighters on the floor above. (Crews backing out.)
- Swimming Pool in the yard.
- Other safety information that warrants the attention of the Incident Commander and firefighters operating on the fire ground.