

Rowan County Fire And Rescue Association	STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES	
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SECTION: INCIDENT OPERATIONS	SECTION TITLE: CODE RED & MAY-DAY OPERATIONS	

EMERGENCY EVACUATION (CODE RED) AND “MAYDAY” PROCEDURES

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to designate a standardized system “CODE RED” of alerting fireground personnel to imminent dangers which require immediate withdrawal from a building or area and to alert personnel of a “May-Day” message to report lost, trapped, missing, low air supply or injured firefighters.

INTRODUCTION:

During structural fire fighting and other emergency scene activities, immediate evacuation of fire fighting forces may be required of personnel due to extremely dangerous or rapidly deteriorating conditions. Such conditions would be recognized as imminent building collapse, possible cave-ins, explosions, hazardous vapor plumes, or other hostile conditions such as riots.

The possibilities also exist for firefighters to become lost, trapped, low on air or missing during combat situations. These situations can occur when firefighters become separated from their crews, building conditions change rapidly cutting off egress or firefighters become disoriented.

“CODE RED” PROCEDURE:

Upon sighting or noticing any condition warranting emergency evacuation of fire department personnel, the officer will announce via the portable radio on the operating channel “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC, CODE RED, CODE RED, ALL UNITS EVACUATE THE AREA”

DISCUSSION: “CODE RED”

Any officer on the scene, to include COMMAND, Division Officers, Safety Officer, or Company Officers may initiate the “Code Red” emergency evacuation procedure.

The initiating officer must then notify command of the condition and location.

Command will notify all other units that may be operating on other radio channels, of the Code Red Condition. Rowan will also be notified of the condition by Command.

Upon hearing the **Code Red** signal, on-the-scene engineers should sound initiate a continuous blast of the apparatus air horns. This blast should be maintained for 15 seconds. A blast longer than this time will impede necessary radio emergency communications and roll-call (PAR) procedures.

All personnel, upon hearing the emergency evacuation signal, either via radio or air horn, will notify personnel assigned to their unit, and without delay will evacuate the area and return to their apparatus for roll-call (PAR). The company officers will conduct roll call and prepare to report status to Command. All Command Staff officers will report to the Command Post, Personnel not able to report to their respective apparatus will report to the closest working engine or to the Command Post for roll-call. Use of the radio will be reserved for transmissions of company status reports and roll-calls only.

Prior to initiating company roll call via the radio, Command will conduct an open inquiry for any company who has emergency traffic. For example: "Command to any company who has Emergency Traffic".....If Engine 9 has two personnel unaccounted for, then Engine 9 will report "Engine 9 to Command, Emergency Traffic, Firefighter_____, and Firefighter_____ are missing, last operating in the Division B"

After Command addresses the emergency messages, he/she will then conduct company roll-calls (PAR).

For example: "Command to Engine 1, **Code Red** status?" Engine 1 replies: "Engine 1 PAR" and give current location.

Only Command can terminate **Code Red** procedures upon its activation.

SUMMARY: The "Code Red" is conducted as a three (3) step process:

Step 1) **SIGNAL:** Initiate the "**CODE RED, CODE RED**", ALL PERSONNEL EVACUATE THE AREA", Advise COMMAND of the conditions and Location; Engineers activate the air horns.

Step 2) **EVACUATE:** All personnel evacuate without delay and assemble at their respective apparatus.

Step 3) **ROLL-CALL:** Command determines status of all companies.

"MAY-DAY" PROCEDURE:

Lost, trapped, injured or missing firefighters should use the radio message “**MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY**”, to notify command of lost, trapped, injured, low air supply or missing firefighters. The information listed below should follow the “**MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY**” call.

- 1) Member lost, injured or trapped should identify themselves by name
 - 2) Identify last known location and floor level
 - 3) Identify your surroundings
 - 4) State known injuries and air status
- Command should confirm your “May-Day” transmission
 - If no confirmation is received, then repeat 4 steps above
 - If no confirmation, activate your orange Emergency button on your portable radio and repeat 4 steps above.
- 5) Make sure pass device is activated and continue looking for points of egress
 - 6) Conserve air supply

DISCUSSION: “MAY-DAY”

Any member operating on the fire ground may initiate a report of “**MAY-DAY**”. All “**MAY-DAY**” messages will receive priority radio traffic. The term “**MAY-DAY**” will be reserved **ONLY** to report lost, trapped, injured, low air supply or missing firefighters.

Command Response to “MAY-DAY” reports

The incident commander must always assume that the firefighter is lost, trapped, injured or missing until the firefighter is accounted for. The incident commander must make rapid and concise decisions to increase the survivability of those who may be lost, trapped, injured, low air supply or missing. “**MAY-DAY**” reports may only be terminated by the incident commander.

- 1) Rapid Intervention Crews must be deployed immediately (3 man teams minimum).
- 2) Reassign all working companies to another FG channel if “May-Day” is transmitted on current fire ground channel.
 - Note: Emergency Button Activation will not be heard on dispatch or fire ground channels. Emergency button activation will be received on a priority channel back at Rowan County Communications. (This approach reduces risk of overriding radio traffic from the fire ground and competing dispatches)
 - Emergency button activation should be used only after attempting to contact command on the currently assigned fire ground channel.
 - Rowan Communications will receive any activation on a priority channel and notify command of the distress call and assign a new operations patch channel to be used for the rescue.
- 3) Additional EMS crews requested if not already on the scene.
- 4) An additional alarm should be requested and all units should report to Level II staging.
- 5) Assign a Chief Officer to the RIC team to act as the Group Leader.
- 6) Withdraw companies operating in reported danger areas when deemed necessary.
- 7) Do not abandon Firefighting positions if possible, these positions are critical and must be held to keep the fire from making forward progress.

- 8) Open and unlock All Doors, if appropriate and forward fire progress does not hamper RIC efforts.
- 9) Ventilate to relieve heat and gases where needed to increase survivability.
- 10) Request PAR of all companies
 - PAR = Number of firefighters and location / pump operators not included (i.e. Quint 1 Par 2 1st floor “A” side, 1 at the pump)

RIC Crews should consider be aware of the following information when searching for members initiating a “*MAY-DAY*”

- Visible sightings of firefighters (Arms, Legs, etc.)
- Know last known location
- Listen for PASS devices
- Listen for shouts for help
- Listen for Tapping noises
- Listen for SCBA bells or vibra-alerts
- Trace attack hose and lines
- Look for Flashlight beams
- Look for the location of equipment being used by lost, missing, trapped firefighters
- Search immediate doorways first
- Open and unlock all doors
- Search hallways before interior rooms
- Search exterior walls inside before searching open spaces
- Search utilizing search ropes