

Essex County Fire
Standard Operating Guideline

Category: Emergency Operations	SOG #	602.00
Issued by: Training Division	Issued on:	12.10.2008
Revised by:	Revised on:	
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Accountability		

PURPOSE:

- To establish a coordinated system of monitoring and tracking personnel and units for both single and multi-company operations.
- To enable the Incident Commander to identify, locate and account or the functions of all fire/rescue personnel operating on the scene of an emergency incident.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members of the Fire Department to understand and follow the procedures outlined in this guideline.

COMPANY ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS:

Each fire company shall have a clip attached on the passenger side dash that will hold the 2-1/4” Collector Ring to which will be attached the individual firefighter identification tags.

Company Collector rings shall be color coded as follows:

- Green: Ladders (includes quints and non-transporting rescues)
- Red: Engines (includes tankers and brush vehicles)
- Blue: Command vehicles
- Yellow: Safety and fire investigation vehicles
- Orange: Ambulances and transporting rescues
- Black: Crew

PROCEDURE:

Each member shall be issue one (1) accountability tag (white) on which his department, name, and rank will be engraved. When not assigned to an apparatus, vehicle, or crew, the accountability tag shall be attached to the back ring of the helmet or in other prominent location.

Permanent departments: At the start of a duty shift, personnel assigned to apparatus or other vehicle shall place their accountability tag on the Collector Ring for the assigned apparatus. Should the member leave the company for any reason, he/she shall remove the accountability tag from the vehicle. At the change of shifts, relieving members shall “tag aboard” and relieved members shall “tag off” the apparatus.

Call/volunteer departments: Members shall “tag aboard” their assigned apparatus upon arriving at the firehouse or scene (as applicable) in accordance with their assigned duties. Upon reassignment or relief from duty, each member shall “tag off” the apparatus.

The Collector Ring should, at all times, reflect the exact number and identity of members in the crew for that vehicle.

Unassigned members: Members arriving at an incident in personal vehicles shall report to the Incident Commander for assignment. The IC shall have the option to:

- Assign the member to a crew already at the scene, in which case, his/her accountability tag shall be added to the Collector ring of that crew, or:
- Assemble another crew, with an assigned officer in charge, in which case the Black CREW tag will be used as a Collector ring for that special crew.

COLLECTION OF RINGS/TAGS AT INCIDENT:

It is impossible to have a system of collecting tags which is foolproof and which will work efficiently in every case. However, the following general guidelines shall apply:

- Collector rings shall be left aboard apparatus, in the custody of the chauffeur, upon arrival at an incident scene, unless the Incident Commander directs that they be delivered to the Command Post at once. (If a Company is assigned a task before arrival, the Company shall proceed immediately to handle that task prior to delivery of tags to the Command Post).
- When the Incident Commander declares a “Working Fire”, it shall be assumed that the Accountability System is in effect and the Collector Rings shall be assembled at the Command Post. (This may be accomplished by delivery by company chauffeurs, the Safety Officer, or other designated person assigned to collect all company rings).
- Once the Command Post has been established, the Safety Officer and/or the Incident Commander shall be responsible for maintenance of the Accountability System control of company tags. No Collector Rings or Accountability tags shall be removed from the Command Post without the express knowledge and permission of the Incident Commander and/or Safety Officer.
- Upon declaration of a “Working Fire” and implementation of the Accountability System, the Dispatch shall commence *ELAPSED TIME CHECKS* and implement “Working Fire” or extra alarm procedures in accordance with the Running Cards.

TEMPORARY IDENTIFICATION TAGS:

In general, civilians shall NOT be allowed to enter the hot zone at an incident without a uniformed escort from the Fire Department. Under special circumstances, certain officials, such as Fire Investigators, representatives of Inspectional Services, etc, may be authorized to have access to the fireground after major suppression efforts are completed. These personnel should be issued Temporary ID tags and should be accounted for in the same manner as fire department personnel.

PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (PAR) and ELAPSED TIME REPORTS:

- Incident time shall commence at the time of dispatch of apparatus to the incident.
- When the Incident Commander declares a “Working Fire”, Dispatch shall commence *ELAPSED TIME REPORTS* at twenty (20) minute intervals from the original time of dispatch.

(Note: The 20 minute interval is recommended in light of current recommendations with respect to air management with SCBA and the need to plan an exit strategy when the air tank reaches 50% capacity, AND recommendations for decisions regarding Offensive/Defensive suppression strategy in occupancies have light-weight truss construction. The IC may determine his/her actions at each twenty minute mark based upon the conditions present at the specific incident.)

- At the twenty (20) minute mark, Dispatch shall notify the Incident Commander (IC) or his/her designee of the time checks and remind the IC that a Safety Officer is to be assigned. The IC will confirm to Dispatch that a Safety Officer has been assigned.

(Note: In general, the first arriving Officer or senior firefighter arriving at an extra alarm fire, who is not already assigned to a Company, may be assigned the duty of Safety Officer. In departments where a Safety Officer is pre-designated, he/she shall assume those duties upon arrival at the scene. If a Safety Officer is not available, the IC shall maintain the Accountability System pending his/her arrival).

- At the forty (40) minute mark, Dispatch shall notify the IC of the time check and suggest that Personnel Accountability be verified. The Safety Officer may conduct a PAR as appropriate at that time, or at any time that accountability is in question. PAR checks may be taken by polling company officers by radio, visualizing individual companies, face-to-face reports, or other methods deemed appropriate to the situation.
- Dispatch shall continue the every twenty minute elapsed time reports until the IC advises to terminate them.

(Note: Wherever possible, all companies working should be on a common fireground frequency communications channel. However, this may not be feasible in all situations. The Safety Officer shall ensure that all companies are capable of being notified of PAR requirements and communicate with “SAFETY” to verify company status or to report an emergency.

- The Accountability Status Board at the Command Post will be the checklist for a PAR. If a company or sector fails to give a prompt response to a PAR, the IC shall immediately deploy the Rapid Intervention Team to locate the missing individual or crew, and shall take all other measures required and as described in the Rapid Intervention Team SOG.
- The Safety Officer shall determine the requirement of Personnel Accountability Reports and will cause them to be conducted. “SAFETY” shall notify Dispatch and the IC when a PAR has been conducted and that shall be noted in the official log of the incident. In the event of a “MAYDAY” or otherwise determination by the Incident Commander, a PAR shall be conducted (as soon as reasonable, see note below) and noted in the official log of the incident.

Note: In the event of a “MAYDAY”, it shall be the responsibility of each company officer to conduct a visual PAR of his/her unit to verify full accountability. In the event of determination of a missing or unaccounted for firefighter, this shall be reported IMMEDIATELY to the IC or “SAFETY”. If all unit members are accounted for, the PAR is to be reported when polled.

- Companies shall remain intact and all personnel shall operate in the same area. If a company must be divided to perform required functions, the sector officer must maintain control of all members assigned to him/her. When members are relieved for rest and rehab or because of injury, the entire company shall be relieved at the same time. Company officers must know the location and well-being status of all personnel in their company at all times.
- All personnel leaving the hot zone or emergency scene shall depart via the Command Post for verification and to pick up Accountability Tags. Personnel leaving the scene shall be cleared by the IC or “SAFETY” before departing.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION:

During operations, it may become necessary to withdraw or evacuate members from the structure or incident area. An evacuation may be initiated by anyone at the incident who observes a critical emergency such as potential collapse, etc, which should be reported to the Incident Commander. The order to evacuate must be given by the Incident Commander or the Safety Officer. Operating personnel are encouraged to bypass normal communications channels to communicate danger or imminent collapse or injury/life-threatening situations by issuing “URGENT!” radio communications. A sector officer may withdraw his unit upon recognizing such a situation and should advise the Incident Commander.

Emergency Evacuation is called for when life-threatening danger is imminent; i.e. – structural collapse, severe fire conditions, etc. When **Emergency Evacuation** is ordered, all apparatus at the incident will activate air horns using short blasts for approximately thirty (30) seconds.

- All members will immediately leave the structure or area and report with the company officer to their respective apparatus or Command Post. Hose and equipment (tools) are to be left behind.

- Upon declaration of an Emergency Evacuation, Dispatch shall sound the Emergency Evacuation (high/low) tone on the Fireground Channel and announce: “All companies operating in (community) at (incident name) are to evacuate the building immediately!” This shall be repeated three (3) times.
- Radio traffic shall be curtailed; urgent traffic permitted only to permit trapped members to use airways unimpeded.
- SAFETY shall conduct a PAR to verify status of all members after units have acknowledged the order to evacuate. Results of the PAR shall be forwarded to Dispatch for recording, as soon as reasonably possible.
- Each Company officer shall conduct a PAR of his/her respective company. This PAR should be taken face-to-face, not by radio, with results reported to the IC or SAFETY when polled. This will leave the airways free for emergency calls by a trapped member. **If any member is unaccounted for, this shall be reported to the IC IMMEDIATELY.**

(Note: It is important that names of individual members NOT be used during the conduct of PAR by radio or in any transmission related to a personnel emergency on the fireground. Confidentiality and protection of identities must be maintained during any fireground operation.)

ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL:

Orderly withdrawal is called for when Command elects to affect a change in strategy (i.e. - from offensive to defensive attack). Orderly withdrawal can indicate that units will be withdrawn from a specific area or areas within a structure or from the entire structure in order, for example, to permit the use of master streams to darken down a fire.

The order to withdraw in an orderly manner will be given by radio or face-to-face to the units to be withdrawn. Officers shall acknowledge the order and affect the order immediately. In an orderly withdrawal, there is no imminent life-threatening danger or collapse potential; however, this order is not negotiable. Units may remove tools and back out hose lines from the building but offensive operations must cease when the withdrawal order is given.

When the orderly withdrawal is completed, the IC or SAFETY shall cause a PAR to be conducted, to verify that the area of concern is clear and all units accounted for, and report the results to Dispatch for recording.

ADDITIONAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

- When mutual aid apparatus is entering another community, the company officer shall notify the host community Dispatch to identify the company, that they have entered the host community, their destination (to the fire, to staging, or to cover), and the number of personnel aboard.
- It shall be the responsibility of the company officer of a mutual aid apparatus to deliver that company's collector ring with correct identification tags to the Incident Commander or SAFETY upon arrival at the Command Post.
- At no time should accountability tags enter the hot zone of any incident.
- Should the arriving mutual aid apparatus be assigned a critical or immediate task prior to "tagging in" with the Incident Commander or SAFETY, the task shall take precedence over the tagging; however, accountability tags shall be restored at the command post as soon as practical to maintain the Accountability System.

A principal purpose of the Accountability System is to discourage and prevent "Freelancing" or self-dispatching to incidents or tasks. Tactical units or teams shall at all times be maintained. When extreme circumstances dictate that individuals be assigned tasks away from their team, the unit officer shall ensure that team integrity is restored as soon as possible. Every effort must be made to ensure that the Accountability Status Board at the command post reflects the actual number and location of members at the scene.

ORDER FORM

COMPANY ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS

CITY/TOWN NAME _____

COMPANY DESIGNATION _____

CIRCLE ONE IF APPLICABLE: QUINT RESCUE TANKER AMBULANCE

TAG COLOR _____ (LEAVE BLANK, FOR ECFCA USE ONLY)

CITY/TOWN NAME _____

COMPANY DESIGNATION _____

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TAG COLOR _____ (LEAVE BLANK, FOR ECFCA USE ONLY)

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TAG COLOR _____ (LEAVE BLANK, FOR ECFCA USE ONLY)

Send to:

Home-Cort Advantage

7 James Street

Homer, NY 13077

607-749-5653

WWW.home-cort@twony.rr.com

\$4.50 to \$6.00 per tag

FIREFIGHTER ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS

CITY/TOWN NAME _____

Rank	First Name	MI	Last Name
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Badge # or ID# (If applicable)

CITY/TOWN NAME _____

Rank	First Name	MI	Last Name
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Badge # or ID# (If applicable)

CITY/TOWN NAME _____

Rank	First Name	MI	Last Name
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Badge # or ID# (If applicable)

CITY/TOWN NAME _____

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