

Essex County Fire
Standard Operating Guideline

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RAPID INTERVENTION TEAMS (RIT)		

1. Intent and Purpose

- a. To address the minimum requirements and guidelines for the Rapid Intervention Team/Crew (RIT/RIC). To establish guidelines for Fire Department personnel when functioning as a member of RIT/RIC according to the N.F.P.A 1500 Standard.
- b. The RIT/RIC is a vital part of fire ground operations. The RIT/RIC is put in place *to assist Firefighter(s)* who become lost, trapped, disoriented, down due to an injury, or otherwise in need of rescue.
- c. The County RIT guideline dispatching a dedicated RIT upon a second alarm does not negate the need for a RIT at less severe incidents. Any time there are crews working in an IDLH atmosphere or where there is a potential for a firefighter, or group of firefighters, to become trapped, or in any other way, need assistance, the OIC of the incident shall request a RIT Company.

2. Definitions

- a. *Immediate Danger to Life and Health (IDLH) Atmosphere* - The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defines IDLH atmosphere for interior structure fires to be "an advanced fire that has spread inside of the building where high temperatures, heat, and smoke" are present.
- b. *Working Fire* - A situation where (1) there is a fire, and (2) in the Company Commander's opinion the situation will require the use of more than his/her immediate company to extinguish the fire, or (3) there is an IDLH atmosphere present.
- c. *Initial Stages of an Incident* - The opening period of an incident during which tasks are being undertaken by the first arriving company with only one team assigned to, or operating in the IDLH atmosphere.
- d. *Early Stages of an Incident* - The period of an incident immediately following its initial stages. This period is characterized by the operation of more than one team within an IDLH atmosphere.

- e. *Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)* - A *specifically designated Rescue Team* or at the scene of emergency incidents (beyond the initial stage of the operation) designed to provide personnel for the rescue of Fire Department members operating at an emergency incident if the need arises.

Note: The remainder of this Guideline will use RIT as the terminology for Rapid Intervention Team / Crew.

3. Scope

- a. The Incident Commander will establish a RIT at any working structure fire or any special operation incident where Firefighters are subject to immediate danger of injury in the event or other sudden event (i.e. Confined space, Haz-Mat, Trench Rescue, etc.). The size and number of RIT(s) will be flexible based on the type, size, and complexity of the incident. The Incident Commander will provide one (1) or more RIT(s) based on the needs of the incident. This company will solely be used for the purposes of RIT.

4. Guidelines

- a. The RIT will report to and be given their orders by the Incident Commander or his designee. In the event of larger scale operations the RIT may report to the Division Officer assigned to that area.
- b. The *RIT* should be comprised of a *minimum of three (3) Firefighters* {Officer/Leader and two (2) Firefighters} or more. Each member of a RIT falls under the Command of the RIT Officer. Whenever possible, a fourth member should be assigned to the group for efficient operations. If this fourth member is not from the RIT Department, he/she should have the same County RIT Training and know his/her responsibilities.
- c. The RIT Officer will be the only member reporting to the Incident Commander or Division Officer (if assigned) upon arrival. If the Company was assigned as the RIT on Dispatch he should inform the Incident Commander of this, so that they are not given any assignment at the scene other to stand-by prepared to rescue firefighters in distress. While in a position of readiness, the RIT will assemble tools, determine the locations of aerial and portable ladders, specialized power tools, and EMS location (see also RIT Assignments). All RIT tools will be provided by the host community.
- d. The RIT Officer and/or Team Leader will remain in visual and/or verbal contact with the Incident Commander, his/her designee, or Division Officer at all times during the Incident unless deployed. If the RIT Officer/Team Leader must leave the area to do a 360 degree of the building (size-up), he/she will inform the Incident Commander, his designee, or Division Officer prior to doing so.
- e. It is recommended that Tools for the RIT be placed on a tarp. *The Tools are for the RIT only*. This should be stressed to other members and Mutual Aid Companies prior to Incidents.
- f. It is also recommended that the Incident Commander have Companies already on the fireground place ladders for Crews already operating on the interior. This practice should be utilized when activities are on the second floor or greater. If not already done the RIT can raise ladders as long as it

doesn't jeopardize their assignment. Ladders should be raised at least to two (2) sides. Interior Crews should be notified of the placement of ladders.

Note: RIT Officer will be used for RIT Officer and/or Team Leader terminology the remainder of this Guideline.

g. The RIT Officer will give the Accountability tags to the Incident Commander or his/her designee upon arrival.

h. The RIT Company must have radio capabilities for the fire ground. Due to the varying radio systems within the County, it will be up to the Incident Commander and the RIT Officer to establish this when a RIT is assigned by the IC.

i. For large scale Operations there may be more than one (1) RIT. In this event it is recommended that Division(s) be assign to RIT(s) (i.e. for large facilities such as Malls, Warehouses, Nursing Homes, Factories, High Rise buildings, Multiple Alarms, etc.). In the event of a High-rise Incident, it is recommended the RIT be assembled one (1) floor below the Incident.

j. Common terminology for Firefighters in distress should be "MAYDAY" followed by your location and report if possible.

k. After the announcement of the distressed Firefighter(s) all Fire ground Officers/Crew Leaders are to conduct an Accountability Check of the members in their crew.

l. In the event that a Firefighter(s) becomes lost, disoriented, injured, or trapped, the Division Officer or Incident Commander will be notified immediately (MAYDAY). The RIT should not take it upon itself to respond to the call for help or deploy until the Incident Commander orders it. However, as the second set of "emergency ears" it has a responsibility to notify the Incident Commander or Division Officer (if assigned) that someone is calling for help and that it is ready to deploy to the call.

m. Once it has been established that there is a "MAYDAY" and it has been determined that ***a Firefighter(s) is in distress*** the Incident Commander or Division Officer (if assigned) will deploy the RIT into ***last known location in order to effect rescue or assists crews attempting rescue.***

n. The Incident Commander will advise Dispatch that there is a Firefighter(s) in distress ("MAYDAY") on the Incident grounds. The Incident Commander should ensure that EMS crews are notified of the situation and prepared for injured personnel. Once this transmission has been received, Dispatch will report the "MAYDAY" over Dispatch Frequencies being used at the Incident, and state "all Companies standby with radio traffic unless you have an Emergency" (i.e. *Distinguished alert tone* "MAYDAY", Alien Center Road Command has a "MAYDAY", all Companies standby with radio traffic unless you have an Emergency).

o. The Incident Commander will then order the next alarm for additional resources. These resources are to be utilized as support for the RIT on location. Another RIT, identified by the Incident Commander, will be assembled on location. This RIT maybe deployed at the discretion of the Incident Commander for the following:

- i. No progress has been made by the original RIT.
- ii. To enhance the rescue effort.

iii. Larger scale incidents.

Note: This RIT may come from Staging or additional Alarm Companies.

- p. The Incident Commander or designee will request progress reports from the RIT Officer (RIT Progress Report) every ten (10) minutes once deployed. Dispatch will provide time notifications every ten (10) minutes after initiating a RIT operation. It is recommended that an Officer, other than the Incident Commander, handle the RIT operations. This will enable the Incident Commander to maintain focus on the original Incident and Accountability.
- q. In the event that the RIT is making poor progress, it is recommended that the Incident Commander or designee deploy the next RIT. However, the Incident Commander must perform a risk analysis to ensure that crews aren't being placed in harm's way with no chance of rescue and high chance of injury.
- r. When the RIT has completed its assignment, they are to PAR with the Incident Commander or Division Officer (if assigned) for Accountability and report to rehab. RIT members are to report to Rehab on the Fire ground after (1) hour, or usage of two (2) SCBA bottles. Members may need Rehab prior to this benchmark. The RIT Officer will notify Incident Commander or Division Officer (if assigned) and be released by another RIT before reporting to Rehab. The RIT Officer is to be aware of his/her member's conditions and climate condition(s) at all times. He/she should use the above as a guideline.

5. Restrictions

- a. The RIT will not be used to provide relief for Operational units until the Incident has been declared *Situation Contained* and the risk to firefighters who may still be operating on the interior has been assessed. The assessment process will include the Incident Commander, Operations Officer (if assigned), and Safety Officer (if assigned). It is recommended that the Division Officers (if assigned) and RIT Officer be part of assessment process also. The operations must be deemed safe by the above for the RIT to be released from its duties.
- b. If the Incident Commander determines that the immediate use of the RIT in a capacity other than that of the RIT is an absolute necessity, it may be utilized. ***This should be done as a LAST RESORT (i.e. effecting civilian rescue).***

6. Tools and Equipment for RIT

See Appendix A

- a. The tools and equipment for the RIT are to be placed in an *easily accessible* location close to the Command Post or Division Post, but not to block exit/entrance of it. These tools should be placed

on a tarp designated for the RIT. The tools and equipment are not to be used by any other members on the Fire Ground. The list of recommended tools are for varying rescue efforts and may be controlled by the situation/conditions.

- b. Each member should be assigned tools prior to being deployed at the incident. The RIT Officer is responsible for the assignments.
- c. In addition to the tools listed in appendix A, all RIT personnel shall be equipped with full NFPA compliant PPE and have a flashlight and radio.

Note: The RIT may need tools and equipment not listed in Appendix A and should take the scene situation into consideration when assembling their tools.

Note: Remember tools must be easily accessible to the RIT only.

7. RIT Assignment

- a. Once the RIT acquires the necessary tools its duties should be reviewed. During the 360 degree check of a building, the RIT officer should identify and if possible correct potential hazards.

8. Training

- a. Training should be done in accordance with Essex County Fire Chiefs Association Training Division and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy standards ensure all crews are trained to the same level of competence.
- b. This training should be done annually

9. Motto of the RIT: “He/she who sits and waits... also serves!!! Many of RIT have stood fast, and taken up without getting a piece of the action, and this generally does not appeal to the firefighter's action-oriented nature. We want to Fight Fire. However, The *saving of one Firefighter's life* is worth all the training, standing fast, and frustration of not getting into action. Standing fast is serving.

APPENDIX 1 TOOL LIST

200ft Search Rope (AW410)

K Tool Kit (T986)

Rabbit Tool (AE097)

Skedco (SK200 OR)

Tarp12'xU' (J680)

Partner Rescue Saw (FD750)

Saw Field Kit (PN#SFK)

Saw Box (ASB)

Firemaxx multi purpose tool

Lock Blocks (AJ320 4X4)

Lock Blocks (AS525 2X4)

Cribbing Holmatro Set A

Cribbing Holmatro Set B

Thermal Imaging Camera Bullard T-3 Max

T-3 MAX Truck Charger

HK Porter Bolt Cutters 30"

3 pc Vise grip set

Side Cutting Pliers

Cable Cutters

12" Channel Lock Pliers

7 pc Screwdriver set

Utility Knife

Tool Bag

Scott RIT Pak with "METRO" Bag