

Genesee County Association of Fire Chief's
Recommended Operating Guideline

Effective 12-18-91
Revised 07-21-16
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SUBJECT: Firefighter Safety 91-2

SCOPE

This guideline shall apply to all Genesee County fire departments who may request assistance under the Genesee County mutual aid agreement, or the emergency coordination system, and all Genesee County fire departments that may render emergency assistance to a requesting fire department.

Under no circumstances shall any aspect of firefighter safety be sacrificed in order to increase the speed of emergency operations. Emergency operations shall not commence until all involved personnel have donned the necessary protective equipment required.

PURPOSE

The Genesee County Association of Fire Chief's shall provide for the officers and firefighters of Genesee County, the highest degree of personal safety while responding to, working within hostile environments, and returning from an emergency incident.

The safety and welfare of all fire personnel and the reduction of liability while on mutual aid or emergency coordination responses does not fall solely within the Genesee County Association of Fire Chief's, but is the responsibility of all fire personnel.

PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Full protective clothing shall be worn by all members of all fire departments who are involved in emergency incidents indicative of fire, potential fire, explosion, potential explosion, release of any type of hazardous materials, or when involved in any other type of hostile environment.

For the purpose of this guideline, full protective clothing shall comply with Michigan Department of Labor (MIOSHA Part 74) standards and consist of the following:

- Helmet with face shield or goggles
- Turnout coat
- Turnout pants
- Protective hood
- Boots
- Gloves
- Respirator protective device (SCBA) with full face piece and working PASS device
- Two (2) identification tags

SELF CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

For the safety of all fire personnel while working in atmospheres where toxic products of combustion or oxygen deficiencies and toxic substances may occur or be present, all persons will be required to wear SCBA.

In addition to the above, all personnel working below ground level or inside a confined space where the atmosphere may be hostile or where the atmosphere is suspected to be hostile, or where the atmosphere may rapidly become hostile, shall use SCBA until the safety of the atmosphere can be established.

All fire personnel when mutual aid or an emergency coordination effort is requested shall be provided with SCBA and a face mask, before arriving on scene of the emergency incident by their individual departments.

All fire fighting personnel when having reached the required two (2) bottle exchange maximum limit will be directed to a rehabilitation area for triage and rest before resuming fire fighting activities.

Reference to GCAFC ROG# 95-1 (Emergency Incident Rehabilitation) shall be used for firefighter rehabilitation.

FACIAL HAIR

In accordance with the Michigan Firefighter's Training Council's programs for Firefighter I and II, National Fire Protection Association 1500 (NFPA 1500), and MiOSHA Part 451 (Respiratory Protection), no fire personnel shall be allowed to respond to any mutual aid or coordination effort within Genesee County with facial hair, that could affect the face mask seal.

The best information available from manufacturer's consultants in the field of fire fighting, and MiOSHA states, members should be clean shaven for the best possible seal between the face and the breathing mask. MiOSHA recommends no more than 24 hours growth. Although there is no magical length that will determine a violation of this ROG, as some individuals grow facial hair faster in a 24 hour period than others. It is recommended personnel be checked prior to responding to avoid complication on the fire scene.

Therefore, all personnel shall be shaven on all areas of the face, neck, and chin that come in contact with the breathing mask for the best possible seal.

Note: All personnel shall be examined at the primary manpower staging areas by the fire department requesting mutual aid, or by the county coordinators. No personnel shall be allowed to participate in fire fighting activities while having facial hair that affects the seal, and will be removed from the fire scene.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

To insure that all responding firefighters to a mutual aid request (excluding automatic mutual aid alarms) or emergency coordination incidents are capable and qualified to perform the task required at an emergency incident, a minimum level of training or experience is required.

All fire personnel shall be trained to the following minimum level:

- Firefighter I (Firefighter I/II preferred)
- NIMS: ICS for the Fire Service
- NIMS 700
- NIMS 800

EMERGENCY ALERT TONES

The radio emergency alert tone is a warbled tone that is activated by the Communications Center. This tone should be an indication for all radio traffic to cease and for all personnel operating on the fire ground to prepare for emergency radio traffic.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIGNAL

The emergency evacuation signal will consist of five (5) three (3) second blasts of an air horn, emergency warbled alert tone over the radio, followed by the Communications Center dispatcher announcing for all personnel operating on the fire ground to immediately exit the building and to stand by for PAR.

Once activated, all routine fire ground radio traffic will immediately cease which will allow the incident commander to have communications with section officers so a personal accountability report (PAR) can be completed.

When the emergency evacuation alert is sounded, all personnel will immediately evacuate to their safe area and report to the section officer. Crews will remain in the safe area until directed otherwise. The emergency activation signal will continue until all personnel are accounted for.

The emergency evacuation signal may be utilized whenever an impending life-threatening situation arises.

MAYDAY PROCEDURE

Fire ground conditions are constantly changing. As conditions change the incident commander (IC) and/or operations officer (OPS) must alter any and all fire ground activities, as the incident requires. A universal understanding of when to declare a Mayday and/or activate the fire ground signal is imperative for safer and more effective fire ground operations. The method of notification must be easily understood and easy to implement.

The following situations will initiate a Mayday call, but not be limited to: trapped, entanglement, cut off by fire, cut off by collapse, through the floor, pinned, SCBA failure, firefighter down, and/or lost/disoriented.

To declare a MAYDAY the person initiating the MAYDAY should activate their emergency alert button on their radio and transmit on the radio, "MAYDAY... MAYDAY... MAYDAY."

Once a MAYDAY call is received the dispatcher at the Communications Center will sound the emergency alert tones and announce for all units on the fire ground to hold radio traffic that there is a MAYDAY on the fire ground, Unit with the MAYDAY you have the air.

The incident commander should properly acknowledge the MAYDAY. MAYDAY operations shall remain on the talk group the MAYDAY was received on. Fire ground operations shall continue but on a different talk group which will be requested by the incident commander from the Communications Center. Command will designate one person to monitor the fire ground talk group and monitor progress in locating the distressed personnel.

Once the MAYDAY has been acknowledge the firefighter initiating the MAYDAY call will do their best to provide information utilizing the acronym LUNAR by giving their location, unit, name, air status, and resources needed.

Personnel who become trapped or disoriented should execute all necessary self-rescue activities to assist in their own rescue (including activation of their PASS device (after radio transmission), tapping noise, flashlight, etc.)

The rapid intervention team (RIT) leader shall coordinate with the incident commander to carry out the rescue mission.

All fire suppression activities shall continue unless ordered to cease by the incident command staff. To avoid freelancing and to improve safety when a MADAY is called personnel operating on the fire ground should continue with their assignments and not move towards the firefighter who called the MAYDAY.

PAR should be completed as soon as possible to determine how many firefighters are in a MAYDAY situation.

ENFORCEMENT

Primary responsibility for adherence to this guideline rests with the officers and firefighters of the member fire departments within Genesee County who will respond to mutual aid or emergency coordinators requests.

Direct responsibility for enforcement of this guideline will rest with the Genesee County Association of Fire Chief's membership, and the Genesee County emergency coordinators.