

# DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



Originating From	Issue Date	Revision Date	Attachments
<b>Emergency Services Bureau</b>	<b>05-20-1995</b>	<b>06-04-2013 (05-21)</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**SUBJECT:** Rapid Intervention and IDLH Initial Entry Teams  
**APPLICABILITY:** All Operations Personnel

## **POLICY**

A procedure for the deployment and rescue of operational personnel working in Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmospheres in accordance with NFPA 1500, Sec. 6-5, and OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134. The Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services (DFRS) shall maintain a safe practice of an Initial Entry Team and Initial Rapid Intervention Crew (IRIC), formerly known as “Two-In/Two-Out”, while engaged in structural firefighting and other operations in IDLH atmospheres.

To further support the Department’s responsibility for personnel safety, a Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) shall be established while engaged in structural firefighting and other IDLH or oxygen deficient atmospheres for the rescue of operational personnel.

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Initial Entry Team** – a team of at least two (2) qualified personnel equipped with full protective equipment and qualified to participate in interior structural firefighting operations. These personnel must maintain constant visual and/or voice contact with each other while entering and working in the IDLH atmosphere. At least one member of this team must be equipped with a radio, and all members of this team shall have a radio if possible.
2. **Initial Rapid Intervention Crew (IRIC)** – a team of at least two (2) qualified personnel who observe the initial entry team entering the IDLH atmosphere and are available, trained and equipped with full protective clothing and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for immediate response to rescue the initial entry team. One (1) of these members must maintain contact with the initial entry team either visually and/or by voice or radio contact. The team can include the IC that is operating in the Tactical Command mode. At least two members of this team must be equipped with a radio, and all members should have a radio if possible.
3. **Initial Phases of an Incident** – includes the phases of an incident where tasks are being performed by the first arriving company with an initial entry team assigned or operating in a hazardous area.
4. **Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)** – a crew specifically designated by the Incident Commander (IC) at the scene of an emergency beyond the initial stages, consisting of a minimum of four (4) qualified personnel, one being the RIC Supervisor. The RIC shall be available for the rescue of firefighters should the need arise. Depending on the size and complexity of the

# DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



incident, the IC shall establish one or more RICs. The RIC replaces or enhances the IRIC that is required during the initial phases of the incident. ICs should consider reinforcing the RIC with a Special Service company in order to provide the most effective number of personnel and compliment of tools for a potential rescue.

5. Interior Structural Firefighting – the physical activity of fire suppression, rescue or both, inside buildings or enclosed structures that are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage (fire growth beyond the first material ignited).
6. Immediate Danger to Life and Health (IDLH) - an atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.
7. Known Life Hazard – circumstances where responding personnel hear or see a person in distress or receive reliable information from emergency dispatchers at Howard County's Public Safety Answering Point (Howard Communications) or bystander that someone is in the IDLH atmosphere and in danger.
8. MAYDAY – a radio term used to alert the IC, Howard Communications, or other operational personnel on the emergency scene that operational personnel are in an imminently life-threatening situation.
9. Oxygen Deficient Atmosphere – an atmosphere with oxygen content below 19.5% by volume.
10. Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) – An organized reporting activity designed to provide positive confirmation of the location, assignment, and number of personnel assigned to a division, group, or unit operating within a hazard zone.

## **PROCEDURES**

11. Initial Rapid Intervention Crew procedures shall be implemented during the initial stages of any operation within an IDLH atmosphere. They are established for the protection of the initial entry team and shall be maintained until the full RIC is in service and the IRIC is reassigned by the IC.
12. Unless there is a known life hazard, **NO** operation shall be conducted in an IDLH atmosphere until the IRIC is established.
13. When the first arriving unit does not have sufficient staffing to implement IRIC, the second arriving unit shall be responsible to establish and maintain the IRIC until relieved or reassigned by the IC.

# DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



14. Personnel making the decision to enter an IDLH atmosphere who are not in compliance with these procedures shall be required to justify their decision.

### **RAPID INTERVENTION CREW (RIC)**

15. The Department has implemented the RIC procedure as a standard practice for all emergency incidents beyond the initial phases which have teams operating in a hazardous or IDLH atmosphere.

16. Regardless of which unit is assigned to the RIC, the IRIC requirements shall be maintained until a full RIC (minimum of four qualified personnel) is ready to assume the RIC responsibilities, unless there is a known life hazard.

17. A RIC shall be established any time one of the following conditions exists:

- Structure fire where SCBA's and 1 ½" hose line (or larger) will be used.
- Operational personnel are operating inside an IDLH or potentially IDLH atmosphere.
- Incidents with the possibility of collapse or entrapment of operational personnel may exist.
- Incidents where operational personnel might become lost or disoriented.
- When deemed necessary by the IC.

18. It shall be the responsibility of the IC to ensure that RIC has been assigned and established.

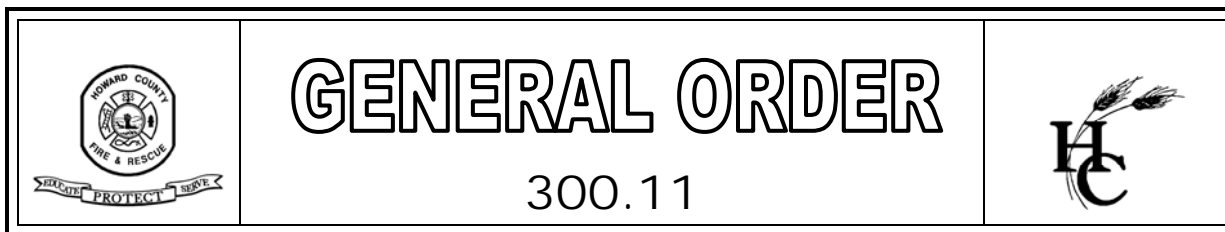
- Unless otherwise directed by the IC, the company responsible for RIC shall be as is outlined by THE resource deployment model found in the appropriate Department policy for that occupancy type (e.g. for a residential structure, as per the corresponding General Order)
- If the IC deviates from the default RIC assignment outlined by the resource deployment model in Department policy, an IRIC and then RIC must still be assigned and accomplished using first alarm resources. The only possible exception to this is when KNOWN life hazard rescue operations are actively taking place. ICs should consider reinforcing the RIC with a Special Service company in order to provide the most effective number of personnel and compliment of tools for a potential rescue.

19. Once established, if any assigned RIC unit is redirected for other immediate life saving assignments, the IC shall ensure that additional resources are assigned to the RIC immediately, or as soon as is at all possible.

20. The RIC shall only be used for duties related to the safe evacuation and rescue of operational personnel.

21. The RIC shall remain within view or radio contact with the IC at all times and shall only carry out those assignments provided by the RIC supervisor at the direction of the IC.

## DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



22. On certain incidents, the RIC may be placed in a forward position to provide quicker access to operational personnel operating in the hazard area such as:
  - The floor below the fire on a high-rise or mid-rise building fire.
  - Near the point of entry on large buildings such as shopping centers, schools, or warehouses.
  - Where deemed appropriate by the IC.
23. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INCIDENT COMMANDER, GROUP, DIVISION SUPERVISORS, COMPANY OFFICERS AND OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL
24. The IC and all fire ground supervisors (section chiefs, branch directors, group supervisors, and company officers) shall maintain constant awareness of the location and operational functions for all of their assigned units, groups, divisions, and personnel.
25. Officers assigned the responsibility for a specific tactical level management component (i.e. division or group Supervisor) at an incident shall directly supervise and account for companies / crews operating in their specific area of responsibility.
26. Company officers shall maintain an ongoing awareness of the location and condition of all members of their company.
27. When assigned to a company, operational personnel shall be responsible to remain under the supervision of their assigned Company Officer.
28. All operational personnel operating within an IDLH atmosphere shall ensure that their "PASS" device is operational.
29. Operational personnel shall operate in teams of no less than two (2), one of which shall have a portable radio.
30. It shall be the responsibility of all operational personnel to monitor changes in the fire conditions, structural stability, and changing ventilation conditions throughout the operation. Anything that could cause harm to operational personnel (sudden increased ventilation, extreme fire behavior, missing stairways, holes in the floor, open elevator shafts, partial structural collapses, etc.) shall be immediately reported to their supervisor and to Command. If you see something ... say something.
31. Safety hazards shall be communicated to all operational personnel by the IC
  - Entry into hazardous areas shall be restricted by various methods such as rope, tape, or a firefighter assigned (if safe to do so).

# DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



32. Upon arrival on the scene, the RIC Supervisor shall meet face-to-face with the IC and be briefed on the following:

- The current operational plan of action.
- The location of all companies and divisions or groups supervisors operating within the structure
- The location of the fire and possible areas of extension.

33. A copy of the building preplan or operational diagram shall be provided to the RIC by the IC.

34. The RIC Supervisor shall complete a 360 degree size up in order to develop a rescue plan. This plan shall typically include:

- Identification of specific hazards.
- Conditions and obstructions observed.
- Size / height of building
- Type of construction
- Occupancy
- Basement type
- Confirm the location and probable progression of the fire
- Assess the current ventilation factors impacting fire conditions
- Confirm the location and number of operating personnel
- Points of entry and exit

35. The RIC Supervisor shall:

- Remain within view or radio contact with the IC at all times.
- Develop the rescue plan based on the information provided during the briefing and size up that ensures sufficient egress is provided for interior crews and shall include ensuring that:
  - Ensure at least one ladder is located at each floor near the fire area
  - Ensure window bars are removed
  - Ensure all exterior door and gates are opened
  - Ensure any obstruction that would interfere with rapid evacuation of personnel from the structure is removed.
  - Ensure that the IC is aware of any additional resources necessary to implement the rescue plan without delay.
  - Be prepared to brief the IC regarding the rescue plan in writing if directed to do so.
  - When possible, the RIC shall not be used to accomplish these tasks if it will result in fatigue and an inability to carry out strenuous rescue efforts, which may be required.
  - Ensure that each member of the RIC has been briefed on the rescue plan and that each member understands their individual assignments.

# DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



36. The following minimum resources shall be compiled by the RIC at all incidents involving structural firefighting and other IDLH or oxygen deficient atmospheres:
- Sufficient resources to implement the plan.
  - Spare SCBA with face piece
  - A dedicated hose line
  - Sufficient ground ladders
  - 125' life line
  - Forcible entry tools (flathead axe, haligan bar, hydraulic entry tool, bolt cutters), lights, power saws, and other equipment deemed necessary
  - One portable radio for each two-person team
  - The RIC shall obtain these resources from apparatus (engines, trucks, or squads) that are in close proximity to the incident.
37. After compiling the minimum resources noted above, the RIC shall work with the IC to obtain any other specialized equipment needed (stokes basket, hydraulic rescue tools, air bags, torches, collapse equipment, rappelling equipment, etc). The RIC Supervisor and RIC members shall have a minimum of two portable radios.
38. The RIC Supervisor shall monitor the radio for a MAYDAY or other distress / safety messages, progress reports, changes in the interior and exterior conditions or urgent messages.
39. DEPLOYMENT OF THE RAPID INTERVENTION CREW (RIC)
40. Mayday procedures outlined in General Order 300.04 shall be strictly adhered to by all operational personnel.
41. When a MAYDAY has been transmitted and immediate rescue cannot be affected by interior crews, the IC shall notify Howard Communications and typically deploy the RIC to the last known or reported location of firefighters calling the MAYDAY.
42. The RIC will be referred to as “Rapid Intervention”.
43. The RIC Group Supervisor shall obtain as much information as possible from the IC regarding the exact nature of the problem and implement the rescue plan. This shall include determining how many firefighters are involved and if they are:
- Missing, lost, trapped, cut off by fire
  - Injured or require immediate medical attention
  - In need of immediate SCBA equipment

# DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



44. To assist in obtaining the above information, the acronym “LUNAR” shall be used:

- **L**ocation (last known location including floor number, quadrant, etc.)
- **U**nit (identification of the crew and their unit assignment)
- **N**ame (name of the individuals that need rescue or recovery)
- **A**ssignment (the last known assignment given to the individuals)
- **R**esources needed (what equipment is needed to implement the rescue plan)

45. The Rapid Intervention Unit or Group Supervisor shall communicate to the IC the progress being made and any changing conditions and other resources needed.

46. The IC shall be the only individual with the authority to cancel or terminate a Rapid Intervention operation.

## REFERENCES

General Order 300.02 Accountability

General Order 300.04 Mayday

General Order 300.07 Incident Command System

General Order 310.01 Single Family and Townhouse Structure Fire Operational Guidelines

General Order 410.01 Communications

## FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

NONE

Approved:



---

John S. Butler  
Deputy Fire Chief