

Augusta County Emergency Services Officers Association

*Augusta County Government Center
P.O. Box 590 – 18 Government Center Lane
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Fire-EMS Standard Operating Guideline

Section:	4 Fire Operational Information
Title:	Rapid Intervention Teams
Date:	August, 2008 (Revised September 2013)

RAPID INTERVENTION TEAMS (RIT)

Purpose

- A. To provide the Personnel of the Fire and Rescue Department a policy to better assure health and safety during structural firefighting and suppression operations
- B. To provide the Personnel of the Fire & Rescue Department a policy that outlines the difference between “Initial Rescue Teams” (IRT’s) and “Rapid Intervention Teams” (RIT’s).
- C. To provide the Personnel of the Fire & Rescue Department a policy that outlines when the transition from an IRT to RIT is made.
- D. This policy will serve to comply with the Two-In/Two-Out provisions in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Final Rule (29 CFR Part 1910).
- E. **DEFINITIONS & ABBREVIATIONS:**
 - a. **Early Stage of Operations:** Transition after the initial stage of operations. This is typically when additional companies arrive at the scene, and/or when there are more than one interior crew operating.
 - b. **IDLH:** Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health. IDLH Atmosphere: An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive, or asphyxiant substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual’s ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

- c. **Incipient Fire:** A fire in the initial or beginning stage which can be controlled or extinguished by portable fire extinguishers. However, it is the policy of the Augusta County Department of Fire Rescue to deploy a minimum of a 1 3/4" handline anytime there is fire inside of a structure. Though the incipient fire may actually be controlled by a smaller line or portable extinguisher, a 1 3/4 inch hand line shall be used in most cases.
- d. **Initial Rescue Team (I.R.T.):** The initial company personnel arriving at the scene (typically 5 or less). The personnel of the I.R.T. may have additional tasks.
- e. **Initial Stage of Operations:** The first arriving company or personnel, when the fireground staffing is five (5) released firefighters or less.
- f. **“MayDay”:** Universal call for “help”. The term MayDay is used by many other services groups and organizations and is recognized as the call for “help” in a crisis situation.
- g. **Rapid Intervention Team (R.I.T.):** A specifically designated team (minimum two members) designed to provide for the rescue of emergency service members operating at emergency incidents if the need arises. The designated RIT shall not have any tasks assigned to them that would delay their response or deployment to a fireground “MayDay”.
- h. **Released Firefighter:** An individual certified at the minimum of NFPA Firefighter Level I.

Standard Operating Procedure

1. The first arriving company shall determine if the incident involves an IDLH atmosphere. At no time shall individuals enter an IDLH atmosphere independently. Teams of at least two (2) SCBA-equipped personnel shall be required for entry into such an atmosphere at all times. The requests for additional resources are highly supported and recommend ensuring fireground operations are safely conducted. Additional requests may be made prior to arrival at the scene.
2. In fire situations, it will be necessary for the incident commander to determine if the fire is in the incipient stage. A team of two released firefighters may take action to extinguish an incipient fire without the establishment of an initial Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).
3. If the presence of an IDLH atmosphere has been determined, and there are less than five (5) released firefighters on the scene, the companies shall wait until at least five (5) qualified firefighters are assembled on the scene before initiating operations within the IDLH atmosphere. Two (2) released firefighters may begin operating within the IDLH atmosphere as long as two (2) additional, released firefighters (properly equipped) are outside the IDLH

atmosphere to serve as the initial rescue team (IRT), and one person maintains the operation of the pump.

4. One (1) of the two (2) IRT members must be responsible for establishing the on-scene accountability system. The second IRT member may be assigned other tasks and/or functions so long as these tasks and/or functions can be abandoned, without placing any personnel at additional risk, if rescue or assistance is needed. In some cases this may be an indication for the Incident Command to take over pump operations (only during the IRT stage).

5. Until five (5) firefighters are assembled, operations outside of the IDLH atmosphere shall commence immediately. Such operations include, but are not limited to: establishment of water supply; exterior fire attack; establishment of a Hot Zone; utility control; ventilation; placement of ladders; forcible entry; exposure protection; and any other exterior operations deemed appropriate by the incident commander.

6. As the incident progresses to the point of additional companies and personnel arrive at the scene, the incident shall at that point transition from “initial” stage of operation to “early” stage of operations and/or more than one (1+) interior team is placed into the structure. At that point, an identified and dedicated Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) shall be established and positioned immediately outside the IDLH atmosphere. This team shall be fully outfitted with protective clothing and SCBA with the air mask in a ready position to don, a portable radio, and other required rescue equipment. Both team members will be dedicated to perform rescue and shall not be assigned other duties (except for incident accountability) unless a replacement team member is assigned.

7. A charged hose line shall be dedicated to the RIT (whereas it was not required for the IRT during “initial” stage of operations, however it is strongly advised).

8. If the incident is in a high or mid-rise structure, large area facility, or other areas with multiple IDLH atmospheres, the incident commander shall establish the necessary number of rapid intervention teams so that rescue can be accomplished without a deployment delay. A team should be considered for each remote access point on any large facility. The incident commander will be responsible for determining the number of teams needed based on the specifics of the incident.

9. If personnel become trapped, disabled, or otherwise in need of assistance by the RIT, the incident commander shall announce this action to the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) via radio. In turn, ECC shall transmit the Emergency Message Signal (MayDay) and announce that a rescue is in progress. All radio traffic not directly related to the personnel’s rescue shall cease immediately to facilitate the rescue.

10. An immediate personnel accountability report (PAR Check) shall be conducted as specifically outlined in the Accountability Systems Guidelines SOG. The incident commander shall then assign personnel to assist in the rescue and to assist the rapid intervention team as deemed appropriate. The RIT shall continue to inform the incident

commander of their progress and actions taken during the rescue. Fire suppression forces shall remain in place, and their efforts continue until a risk/benefit analysis is conducted and indicates that the suppression forces' safety is at high risk and more hazardous than beneficial to the overall operations

11. Should the incident commander order a building evacuation, a PAR Check shall be conducted immediately after the building has been evacuated. The RIT shall remain in place for immediate activation should a team fail to report during the PAR.

Exceptions:

12. If, upon arrival at a fire emergency, personnel find a fire in its incipient stage, extinguishment of such a fire shall be permitted with less than five (5) persons on the scene. Extinguishment of outside fires such as dumpster, brush, or automobiles, shall be permitted with less than five (5) persons, even if SCBA are being worn.

13. Upon arrival at the fire emergency if the incident command has five (5) persons (released firefighters), but feels that the fireground conditions or experience levels of those firefighters would introduce an unacceptable risk to safety, interior operations may be delayed until adequate staffing numbers arrive on the scene. This does not preclude exterior operations outlined in Paragraph 5 of this SOP.

14. If, upon arrival at the scene, personnel find an imminent life-threatening situation or probable life-threatening situation where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action shall be permitted with less than five (5) persons on the scene – when the probability of a rescue is made in accordance with normal size-up indicators and evaluation factors. (Examples: report of persons inside, signs of persons inside, etc.). The incident commander shall evaluate the situation, considering the occupancy, time of day, day of week, reports from persons on the scene, signs that persons may be inside the structure, etc. Entry may be considered if signs indicate a probable victim rescue. In the absence of clear signs or a report from a responsible person on the scene that people are in the structure, it is to be assumed that no life hazard exists and interior attack shall not be initiated until the minimum five (5) persons arrive on the scene.

15. If personnel are going to initiate actions that would involve entering an IDLH atmosphere because of a probable or imminent life-threatening situation where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, and personnel are not on the scene to establish an IRT, the members should carefully evaluate the level of risk that they would be exposed to by taking such actions. In all cases, a minimum of two (2) people shall form the entry team.

16. If it is determined that the situation warrants immediate intervention and five (5) people are not on the scene, the incident commander shall notify ECC of the intent to enter prior to the availability of a IRT. ECC shall then be requested to notify all responding companies of this action.

17. Should the incident commander on the scene deviate from this guideline, the actions taken shall be documented on the fire incident report. The narrative of this report shall be made by the incident commander and outline the reasons, rationale, justification, and end result of the deviation. All information in the report shall be of enough depth so as to provide a comprehensive understanding of the actions taken.

18. Refer to (Initial Fire Ground Operations SOG) for firefighting and suppression operational aspects.

