**MAYDAY Procedure**

**Adopted:** February 2018 **Updated:**

The Polk County Fire Chief’s Association has adopted a standardized procedure for MAYDAY Procedures. The intent is to have each fire department respond in a like manner for the safety purposes of all personnel in the event of a mutual aid call.

**Definitions:**  
**Emergency** – Used to halt radio traffic to report immediate hazards or problems that could adversely affect operations or pose safety concerns.

1. “Mayday” should not be used if finding a lost or trapped civilian. Use “Emergency” message.

**Mayday** – Used to silence radio traffic to report a lost, missing or trapped firefighter(s). This   
 transmission will only be used in the following situations or conditions:

1. By a member or company that is lost, trapped, injured or otherwise in distress.
2. By Company/Unit Officer, Group or Division Supervisor or Command staff that cannot account for an assigned firefighter operating in the hazard area. This would generally occur following a PAR that fails to locate and account for the firefighter(s).
3. By a firefighter who witnesses, or has confirmed that a firefighter is lost, trapped or injured.

**Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) –** A dedicated crew of firefighters who are assigned for rapid deployment to rescue lost or trapped members.

**Guideline:**

1. Firefighter(s) or crew responsibilities:
   1. Transmit over fire ground channel: “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY.”
   2. Use of the emergency button integrated into the radio system.
   3. If command or dispatch does not acknowledge Mayday call in a timely fashion, repeat “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY.”
   4. After mayday has been acknowledged, report Who, What, Where.
      1. **Who**- name of member/company calling mayday.
      2. **What**- what the emergency is that is initiating the mayday call.
      3. **Where**- location of the emergency.

(Example: firefighter becomes separated from crew while working on the second floor of a structure, performing primary search. Ladder 995 firefighter declares a mayday:  
Ladder 995 FF: “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY!”  
Command: “Unit with mayday go ahead.”  
Ladder 995 FF: “Ladder 995, Firefighter Doe, I am separated from my crew on the second floor.”)

1. Tactical recommendations for distressed fire fighter(s):
   1. Activate PASS alarm after declaring mayday.
   2. Remain in radio contact with command and rescue crews.
      1. Be prepared for command to request additional information after who, what, where report.
   3. Direct flashlight(s) to ceiling in several directions.
   4. Perform self-rescue skills when possible.
   5. Conserve air supply as much as possible.
2. Command Responsibilities:
   1. Acknowledge the Mayday transmission.
   2. Record information as provided.
   3. Announce Mayday on the fire ground channel and advise all units to maintain radio discipline.
   4. Advise Communications Center of the Mayday and request a new fire ground channel if the incident warrants. It is preferred to not operate off separate channels whenever possible. This will allow crews operating inside to positively affect the rescue of a downed Firefighter and will ensure that firefighters switching channels don’t end up on the wrong channel, further complicating radio communications. If Operations require crews to communicate other events move these crews to another radio channel and leave IC, Safety, RIC and other crews actively participating in the Mayday on the original channel.
   5. Deploy RIC to the given or last known location.
   6. Evacuate building if conditions warrant (see h.)
   7. Conduct a PAR when possible.
   8. Do not abandon firefighting positions if crews are not in jeopardy and they must not freelance to the rescue efforts. Control of the fire is critical to firefighter survival and rescue.
   9. Verify at least one additional alarm has been dispatched. An additional alarm should include a minimum of 2 Engine Companies, 1 ladder company, 2 ambulances, and a Chief Officer. This should provide a minimum of 10 additional firefighters and 4 EMS personnel.
   10. Establish a new RIC when resources become available.
   11. Request additional resources as needed/required:
       1. Special/tactical rescue teams
       2. EMS resources
       3. Command & General Officers/Staff
       4. Support services/CISD
       5. Heavy equipment
       6. EMA
   12. Advise Communications Center of completion/termination of the Mayday event.