



**Rapid Intervention Team and  
RIT Officer**

Enactment Date:  
Effective Date:  
Replaces:

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Section 1: Scope                  | Section 6: Primary RIT Tasks             |
| Section 2: Team Requirements      | Section 7: RIT Activation Procedures     |
| Section 3: Establishment of RIT   | Section 8: RIT Officer (RITO) Assignment |
| Section 4: Reporting to the Scene | Section 9: RITO Qualifications           |
| Section 5: Scene Size-Up          | Section 10: Deactivation of RIT          |
| Form 1: RIT Tool Assignment Card  |  |
| Form 2: MAYDAY Card               |  |
| Form 3: RIT Officer Worksheet     |  |

**Definitions**

The following abbreviations that will be seen within this policy are as follows.

- IDLH – Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health.
- ISO – Incident Safety Officer.
- RIT – Rapid Intervention Team.
- RITO – Rapid Intervention Team Chief or Officer assigned to manage the RIT Team.
- IC – Incident Commander
- PAR – Personnel Accountability Report
- IMS – Incident Management System

**Section 1- Scope**

While operating at emergency incident scenes, firefighters experience one of the highest occupational injury risks. To minimize emergency scene risk, Division 20 establishes a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) within the Incident Management System (IMS). This policy meets the scope and intent of NFPA 1561, 1997 ed. 4-1.8.

This policy establishes a means to effectively assist firefighters suddenly threatened by a dangerous situation, to initiate an immediate rescue effort in response to a MAYDAY call, report of a lost or missing firefighter, or to other emergency reports.

This policy encompasses all emergency environments including those considered an IDLH atmosphere. Special response teams may require their team’s procedures to override this RIT policy. The Incident Commander must assure, regardless of the type of incident, that a RIT is in-place and appropriately equipped to rescue any firefighters in distress.

**Section 2- Team Requirements**

Rapid Intervention Teams (RIT):

- Consists of three to four firefighters.
- Shall be trained to the minimum level of firefighter II and have the same protective equipment as those operating at the scene.
- Must be trained and able to perform rapid firefighter rescue functions.



## Rapid Intervention Team and RIT Officer

Enactment Date:

Effective Date:

Replaces:

### **Section 3- Establishment of RIT**

Incident Command shall establish the RIT whenever emergency personnel are expected to operate under hazardous conditions that are deemed IDLH.

RIT structure should be flexible based on the incident's size and operational complexity. After careful scene risk evaluation, the Incident Commander shall provide one or more rapid intervention teams commensurate with the risk levels.

A. Prior to a MABAS level Box Alarm, RIT shall be either:

- On-scene personnel designated and dedicated as RIT.
- On-scene personnel performing other functions, but ready to perform RIT functions.

B. As the incident escalates to either a MABAS Box Alarm level, in size, or complexity, the RIT shall be dedicated, on-scene personnel.

- Departments may either pre-designate a specific RIT company on their box alarm cards or assign RIT to the first available company.

C. A formal RIT may take the place of, or include members from, the initial response company (2 In / 2 Out) that may have been established before RIT arrival.

### **Section 4- Reporting On the Scene**

Companies pre-designated or assigned to the RIT function will bypass staging and report directly to the Incident Commander.

- Apparatus should position so as to not interfere with other fireground operations.
- Incident Command must be made aware that the RIT apparatus will not be available for other tactical assignments (the entire company will be expected to perform RIT). The RIT shall report to the Incident Commander with the following minimum equipment:

#### **REQUIRED EQUIPMENT**

1. Set of irons (flat head axe & halogen bar)
2. Sledge hammer or maul
3. Search rope (150' length)
4. Hand lights (1 per firefighter)
5. Ground Ladder (24' recommended)
6. Portable radio w/ ALL required frequencies
7. Complete SCBA w/ Face piece
8. Spare SCBA Cylinders
9. 8' & 10' Pike Poles

#### **RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT**

- A. Portable Saw
- B. Oxygen and EMS Jump Bag
- C. Stokes Basket
- D. Thermal Imaging Camera
- E. Salvage tarp for equipment staging area

Structure size-up will dictate additional equipment that may be needed.

RIT shall stage all equipment on a tarp in an area most readily accessible to potential rescues.

RIT members are responsible for carrying individually assigned equipment as recommended in Division 20 training programs and individual department policy.



## Rapid Intervention Team and RIT Officer

Enactment Date:

Effective Date:

Replaces:

While the remaining crew assembles required equipment, the RIT company officer will meet face-to-face with, and get a briefing from, the Incident Commander. The briefing will consist of the following information:

- What is the action plan (offensive or defensive)
- What has occurred during the attack (significant events)
- Operating crew locations
- Other resources responding
- View of tactical worksheet
- Review available preplan information

### **Section 5– Scene Size Up**

The RIT is expected to perform initial and on-going structure assessments to determine possible RIT need due to firefighters in distress. Based on information received from the Incident Commander, the RIT will determine structure access points for rapid entry/exit and other firefighter survival keys. Scene size-up may be conducted by the RIT as a team or with members staged at the immediate access point while others perform the size-up. If the crew splits up to perform size-up, both crews **SHALL** maintain radio contact with the Incident Commander and each other.

RIT structure size-up will be based on firefighter survival; on what may cause firefighters to be trapped, lost or become missing inside the structure, and how RIT can facilitate their escape. Structure size-up may include, but not be limited to, the following: (See RIT checklist)

- a. Size-up structure, complete 360 degree walk around when possible
- b. Highest priority: Identify and remove any hazards that will block or slow firefighter building evacuation. Open or cause to be opened any exit that is locked, blocked or non-existent.
- c. Building dimensions
- d. Building occupancy
- e. Building construction type
- f. Placement of windows, doors and fire escapes
- g. Potential danger from high-security devices
- h. Fireground tactics being used
- i. Other operations

After completing the size-up, report to the IC any information that may dictate a change in operations. The RIT team should then stage at a primary entry point or other point determined by RIT size-up.

### **Section 6 - Primary RIT Task**

1. When assigned, RIT shall be responsible for the following primary tasks.
2. Respond to any report of firefighter(s) in distress (MAYDAY CALL).
3. Assess the need and call for placement of ground ladders.
4. Assemble minimum required equipment at primary entry point.
5. Monitor radio and maintain contact with IC.
6. Assess where firefighters are working in structure and any special tasks assigned.
7. Assure that tools assigned to RIT are appropriate to situation.
8. Receive situation status from Operations Sector or other sectors during deployment.

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|---|--|---|
|  | <b>Rapid Intervention Team and<br/>RIT Officer</b> | Enactment Date:<br>Effective Date:<br>Replaces: |
|---|--|---|

As part of the scene size-up, RIT may complete the following tasks if this does not take them away from the primary tasks and as long as these tasks support the incident’s strategy. These tasks will not include situations requiring direct entry into the IDLH environment or using their SCBA. Task assignments should take into account that the RIT should not be allowed to fatigue unless needed for rescue.

- Secure utilities
- Perform horizontal ventilation
- Open rear of structure in accordance with primary task function
- Unblock other areas of egress in operational areas.

If RIT deploys into an IDLH environment or as a result of a MAYDAY or other firefighter emergency, another back-up RIT must be immediately assigned, the alarm level escalated at least one level, and include an additional EMS response.

**Section 7 - RIT Activation Procedure**

RIT will be activated at any time a firefighter(s) are reported to be in distress, missing or unaccounted for. Upon receipt of any of these conditions, the RIT will deploy with appropriate tools and equipment for the situation. RIT will deploy to the location where the firefighter(s) are in distress or the last known location of the firefighter(s).

- RIT will operate on Fireground Red (153.830) and communicate with the ISO (if established) and communicate directly to the stricken firefighter(s).
- All other companies on the fireground will hold their positions and switch radios to Fireground White (154.280) and await instructions from IC.
  - An immediate PAR will be initiated within each company
  - Personnel will not evacuate or abandon their position unless conditions or orders from IC require

RIT will continue to operate in a rescue mode until firefighter(s) are located, assessed, evacuated from structure, and transferred to medical care. The decision to switch to a recovery mode will only be made by IC and the ISO (if established).

**Section 8 - RIT Officer Assignment**

MABAS Division 20 recognizes a RIT Officer assignment as an essential function during MABAS alarm incidents. MABAS Division 20 will assign a RIT Officer at all box alarm or higher incidents.

Duties of the RIT Officer include:

- The RIT Officer (RITO) will coordinate and act as RIT radio contact. This will enable the RIT to deliver rescue efforts without pausing to communicate on the radio. The RITO will be available to call for additional resources and to provide information to the Incident Safety Officer (ISO) or Incident Command (IC) as necessary.
- The RITO will work and communicate frequently with the Incident Safety Officer (ISO) in exchanging incident progress and safety concerns. These sectors will work independently of each other.
- Additional on-scene RIT teams are designated as Assist Team #1, #2, and so forth.

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|  | <b>Rapid Intervention Team and<br/>RIT Officer</b> | Enactment Date:<br><br>Effective Date:<br><br>Replaces: |
|---|--|---|

- This position will essentially serve as a Safety Officer for and with the RIT and will take steps necessary to insure the safety of the RIT while operating in the IDLH. RITO should utilize whatever means to insure sector safety including:
  - Use of Thermal Imaging equipment
  - Ordering of additional resources or changing fireground tactics to support RIT operation
  - Ordering the withdrawal or prohibiting entry into environments judged to hostile for crews to operate

### **Section 9 - RIT Officer Qualifications**

MABAS Division 20 establishes the following RITO position requirements. It is recommended that departments establish these same requirements as minimums for internal personnel.

1. Fire Officer Designation within sponsoring department and Fire Officer 1 certification.
2. OSFM Fire Department Incident Safety Officer.
3. Rapid Intervention Training.
4. Knowledge in building construction.
5. Knowledge in roles/responsibilities of the RIT, IMS and deployment of RIT.
6. MABAS Division 20 policies and procedures for RIT, Fireground Safety.

### **Section 10 - Deactivation of RIT**

RIT may be deactivated:

- After incident stabilization and when there are no existing IDLH atmospheres.
- After consensus is reached between the ISO, RITO.

The IC will make the final determination and announce to all companies working on fireground that RIT has been deactivated. After deactivation, RIT may be reassigned to other normal company tasks.