



Lost, Trapped, or Missing Firefighter (MAYDAY) Regional Procedure #03

Adopted by:
WCFCFA
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PURPOSE

It is the intent of the Williamson County Fire Chiefs Association (WCFCFA) to establish a guideline that applies to all personnel in the event of a "Mayday". An emergency radio declaration used anytime a firefighter cannot safely exit an IDLH hazard zone is considered a "Mayday".

BACKGROUND

The WCFCFA "MAYDAY Regional Procedure" is a cooperative effort between all members to assure that a MAYDAY is handled the same across Williamson County.

PROCEDURE

Maydays must be declared/transmitted as soon as the person or crew(s) affected knows that they cannot safely exit an IDLH hazard zone. This is especially true for a person or crew(s) who are experiencing a mayday with a diminished air supply. The sooner the mayday is transmitted, the sooner the IC and operating crews can react to resolve the mayday.

A. Resources:

Resources become a critical factor in managing any mayday. When a "Mayday" is declared, dispatch will automatically dispatch the next greater alarm and request an additional EMS unit. Example: a mayday is declared at a residential fire; a second alarm is automatically dispatched without a formal request by the IC. The second alarm will respond and automatically go to level 1 staging waiting for an assignment.

Based on the mayday CAN (Conditions, Actions, and Needs) report, the IC will need to ensure proper EMS resources are on scene or if additional are needed. If additional EMS resources are needed, this request will need to be made by the IC.

B. Fire Control:

Controlling and extinguishing the fire gives the entire team the time needed to resolve the mayday. ICs, Group, and Division supervisors must address and coordinate controlling the fire if any active fire exists during a mayday. Operating interior crews that are actively addressing fire control when a mayday occurs should continue with their fire control efforts, unless new risk factors would prohibit such continuation (collapse, explosion, secondary device, etc)

C. Communications:

When a mayday is declared, all suppression and mayday operations will remain on the same tactical channel.

During a mayday, a "NO-PAR" policy will be in effect. This means that unless a crew does **NOT** have PAR, PAR information is **NOT** transmitted over the radio to reduce the amount of radio traffic.

In some mayday instances such as a collapse, the IC may need to perform a roll call to determine the full scope of the mayday. The roll call will be driven by the IC, and units will only respond when the IC calls for them.

All units will maintain radio silence once a mayday has been transmitted. Crews will **ONLY** transmit if they are having a mayday, if they have priority traffic, or if they have a status change.

For the person or crew(s) reporting the mayday, their needs given in their CAN report must be specific. The IC will determine necessary actions based on the CAN report. Not only does this provide the correct resources to assist the person or crew(s) in distress, it also prevents over reaction.

D. Deployment of RIC:

~~RIC will not self-deploy when a mayday is declared. RIC must equip themselves as if they are going to perform the rescue~~

based on the needs given during the CAN report. RIC will remain prepared and ready to enter but not do so until given the order by the IC after face-to-face communication when possible.

E. Air Supply:

Managing air supplies is a major consideration during mayday operations. This includes the air supply of the person or crew(s) reporting the mayday, as well as the air supplies of any other crew(s) assigned to the IDLH hazard zone.

Any firefighter unable to move under their own power will require extra time and resources to move from the IDLH hazard zone. With air supply as a limiting factor, the IC may need to arrange for firefighter removal to take place in stages so that RIC and other firefighters participating in the removal do not have to declare a mayday due to low air supply.

F. IC Gives Orders to Help “Help Order”:

80% of maydays are resolved by self-rescue, rescue by a member of their own crew, or a crew working next to firefighter(s) in need.

To avoid freelancing during a mayday, the IC will assist “HELP” a firefighter who is experiencing a mayday in an orderly fashion:

1. Communicate self-rescue techniques to the firefighter(s) in distress
2. Use the mayday firefighter(s) own crew to assist with rescue
3. Use a crew already working inside the IDLH hazard zone to assist with rescue
4. Use a RIC to assist with rescue

Mayday Communications Algorithm

Once a firefighter or crew determines that they cannot safely exit the IDLH hazard zone, declare a mayday on the incident tactical channel by announcing mayday 3 times



MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY



While continuing to keep the microphone keyed up, the firefighter(s) and/or crew(s) declaring a mayday will provide a CAN report that includes:

- Who is having the mayday
- What caused the mayday
- Last known or known location
- Give detailed information in your needs to resolve the mayday



The IC will acknowledge the mayday CAN report



If the IC or dispatch does not acknowledge the mayday, firefighter(s) push(es) emergency button on radio



The IC will provide self-help information to the mayday firefighter(s) and/or crew(s)



If required, the IC will make necessary deployments to start addressing the mayday



The IC will contact dispatch and ask for “Emergency Tones”



After “Emergency Tones” have been activated, IC will transmit over the tactical channel:

- Update that includes the who, what, and where of the mayday
 - Inform all crews on scene to maintain radio silence
- Request any additional resources that may be needed to resolve the mayday



Dispatch will repeat the IC’s report verbatim



The IC will continue to operate the mayday based on the CAN report. If a Group or Division supervisor is in place, the IC may push the mayday to that supervisor, and the IC will continue to manage the overall incident and suppression efforts.

Putting the fire out makes the whole scene safer for all.

Firefighter or Crew Level Mayday Responsibilities:

Firefighter(s) or crew(s) who have a mayday must:

- Call for a mayday as soon as possible you know you cannot safely exit the hot zone
- Declare a mayday by saying “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY”
- Immediately give a CAN report that includes conditions, actions, and needs as well as who you are, what created the mayday, and your location
- Remain calm and begin self-help/self-rescue techniques
- Monitor and conserve your air
- Activate your PASS alarm if appropriate
- Maintain radio contact with IC

All other firefighters or crews operating in the hot zone must:

- Maintain radio silence
- Only announce your own mayday, priority traffic, and status reports
- Be ready to assist with rescue if needed
- Crews should continue with fire control measures

Division Supervisor Mayday Responsibilities (if in place):

Division supervisors must:

- Control entry point of the division
- Assess their resources
- Request resources to get the job done
- Put the fire out!!!
- Consider critical factors
- Develop a rescue plan

- Utilize the “Help Order”
- Do not put too many resources on the interior
- Organize, properly equip, and brief RIC before deploying
- Give clear and realistic objectives to the rescue teams
- Implement, assess, and reinforce rescue efforts

IC Mayday Responsibilities:

- Confirm the critical factors and the overall strategy
- Take control of communications process
- Follow communications algorithm
- Change IAP to high priority rescue effort
- A NO PAR policy will take effect
- Assign Group or Division supervisors if not already in place
- Coordinate support and rescue efforts
- Expand the command organization only as needed
- Put the fire out!!
- Establish a treatment area
- Consider the medical and technical requirements for the rescue

Clearing the Mayday:

Once the mayday has been mitigated, the IC should contact dispatch and clear the mayday radio traffic. The report should include:

- A brief mayday conclusion report
- The strategy of the incident, “are we remaining offensive or going defensive”
- Resource determination, “are we keeping all units or releasing the second alarm”

References

Bluecard: Managing Maydays