

Operating Guideline # 817

Mayday Declaration

December 9, 2019



**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines to be followed when crew initiate an emergency call for assistance – MAYDAY.

**ISSUE/RATIONALE:**

Interior firefighting operations are dangerous. When an emergency occurs, a standard approach to resolving the emergency is important and often critical for firefighter survival. Emergencies that can be experienced include, but are not limited to:

- Becoming entangled, pinned or stuck, with a low-air alarm sounding,
- Becoming separated from their partner and hoseline.
- Becoming lost or disoriented in no visibility conditions and unable to locate an exit

In such circumstances, firefighters should not hesitate to initiate the MAYDAY procedures outlined in this OG.

**GUIDELINE:**

1. Personnel operating in the hot zone who experience an emergency must stay calm and broadcast the emergency signal via their portable radio repeating the word “MAYDAY” three (3) times. Following the declaration of a MAYDAY, all other radio users shall immediately begin radio silence to allow Incident Command to communicate freely with the situation.

2. Immediately following the declaration of the “MAYDAY” situation, the initiating crew member shall provide a radio report indicating their radio alias (sector assignment) and name, location, issue causing the emergency, and help needed. (eg. – *“Command this is Rescue 1 firefighters Smith and Jones; we are on the second floor at the rear of the building near the CD corner, we have a partial collapse of the floor and need a ladder raised to the window on the C side so we can get out”.*)

3. Upon hearing a “MAYDAY” and report, Command will:

- a) acknowledge the “MAYDAY”
- b) initiate Rapid Intervention Team (R.I.T) procedures
- c) Assign a senior officer to oversee resolution of the MAYDAY
- d) Call for a Personal Accountability Report (P.A.R.) of all fireground personnel
- e) Call for additional resources as necessary
- f) Maintain command and continuity of fire control efforts.

4. Personnel who declare a Mayday should institute the following self-survival actions where possible:

- a) Manually activate their PASS alarms
- b) Stay calm and consciously preserve the air supply in their SCBA
- c) If trapped or disoriented with a partner or crew, remain together at all times,
- d) Search for an exit (look for light and listen for exterior sounds)
- e) Attempt to locate/follow a hose line or lifeline to safety
- f) If exit cannot be made, retreat to an area of safety if possible,

Operating Guideline # 817

Mayday Declaration

December 9, 2019



- g) Assume a horizontal position to enhance the sound of the PASS alarm and increase thermal protection,
- h) Use a flashlight as a signalling device and/or attempt to make noise with tools and other objects.

5. Incident Commanders should be able to get the following from the member declaring a Mayday:

- a) Location the member was operating in, as well as any change (ie. fell through roof)
- b) Unit or task the member was performing (Fire Attack or Fire Ventilation)
- c) Names of the members in trouble
- d) Air check of the air that is remaining for the members
- e) Resources required to get to the member or get the member out.

6. Should a member see another member become involved in an unexpected fire event, such as falling through the roof or an explosion or collapse they can call a Mayday for the members if they are in trouble or unresponsive to calls.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors) and firefighters (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the provisions of this document and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

**REFERENCES:**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)