

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines
Fireground Operations

Fireground Operations, SOG 3.20

FIREFIGHTER EMERGENCY/MAYDAY

1. Intent and Purpose

This is a general guideline for UCFD personnel should they become lost, trapped, disoriented, down due to an injury, or otherwise in need of emergency assistance during fireground operations and emergency incidents

2. Procedure

Prior to entering hazard zone personnel should verify radio setting and arm pass device. The flashlight should be turned on when the pass device is armed as an extra safety device

a. EMERGENCY/MAYDAY CALL

- i. The Firefighter(s) should immediately initiate an EMERGENCY or MAYDAY when they are in need of assistance (i.e. Lost/Trapped/Missing/Injured, etc.) on the radio to the IC, of his/her situation, followed by location and report if possible {See Command Communications and Rapid Intervention Team/Crew}. If possible initial call should include the amount of air remaining.

Note: Each Firefighter on the fireground must make their own determination if they are having, their crew is having, or there is an EMERGENCY vs. a MAYDAY on the fireground. The earlier that it recognized and then acted upon the greater the chances that there will be a successful outcome. An EMERGENCY can and should be upgraded to a Mayday if needed. All of the information in this SOG should be reinforced through regular training throughout the year

- ii. An **EMERGENCY** is a report of a **possible** trouble or dangerous situation on the Fireground (i.e. possible building collapse, lost but not in danger yet, etc.).
- iii. A **MAYDAY** is a report of **immediate** trouble or dangerous situation on the Fireground (i.e. building has collapse, or lost and in danger).

iv. EMERGENCY or MAYDAY examples:

1. Possible building collapse (EMERGENCY).
2. Partial or complete building collapse with potential Firefighter / crew trapped or while crews operating in a building that has experienced a collapse. (MAYDAY).
3. Run out of air in hazard zone (MAYDAY).
4. A firefighter/crew is separated and/or lost (EMERGENCY or MAYDAY-decision based on situation, conditions, and training).
5. A firefighter/crew is injured, or down, or will need assistance exiting hazard zone MAYDAY.
6. If the time required to safely exit a hazardous area exceeds the amount of air remaining in their SCBA MAYDAY.

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines
Fireground Operations

7. If a hose crew experiences a nozzle or hoseline failure, or in a situation where the loss of effective fire flow poses a significant risk to the crew in a hazard zone MAYDAY).
8. Any situation in which a firefighter falls through a floor either partially or fully. = MAYDAY
9. Any situation in which a firefighter is pinned trapped by an object or they are blocked from their egress route. = MAYDAY

Note: When any of the above examples or similar situations are encountered a firefighter or company officer should broadcast emergency traffic as a minimum to notify the IC of a potentially hazardous situation. The Incident Commander may utilize his judgment in dealing with the situation and may upgrade the situation as he or she sees fit

- b. Stay Calm, Preserve Your Air Supply
 - i. A conscious effort must be made by the firefighter(s) to control his/her breathing (i.e. skip breathing techniques or other means of air conservation should be immediately initiated). Unnecessary talking or physical activity must be ceased, unless absolutely needed (i.e. call for help or getting out). Firefighters must control and pace their physical exertion activities in order to extend their air supply. This is your most critical limitation absent direct trauma or flame impingement.
- c. Activate PASS
 - i. As soon as a firefighter(s) recognizes he/she is or they are in trouble the **Pass device must be manually activated** to sound the audible tone. The device should remain “ON” until rescued. The firefighter(s) should attempt to silence the PASS when communicating on the radio. Once radio transmissions are completed, **the PASS device should be reactivated.**
- d. Situation/Problem Reporting
 - i. Firefighter(s) should attempt to communicate their exact location; if unknown, members should attempt to describe their surroundings (i.e. E31 to command, FF Rosco or Unit number, I’m trapped on second floor, in a bedroom near the rear of the structure). Following each transmission (if possible) the firefighter should reactivate his/her PASS device and place his/her radio near his/her ear to ensure additional communications are not missed.
- e. Stay Together if Lost or Trapped as a Crew
 - i. As a general rule, it is much easier to find a group rather than individuals. Members that separate from each other make it difficult for rescuers to find them. Crewmembers that stay intact as a crew enhance their chances of being rescued and allow for an easier, more efficient rescue operation.

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines
Fireground Operations

- f. Search for an Exit
 - i. Firefighter(s) should always attempt to get out of the building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows, or other means of egress are not available, firefighters should next attempt to reach an exterior wall. Rescuers should first search hallways, around walls, windows and doors, before sweeping large areas due to prior training and standardized firefighter actions. For this reason, firefighters in trouble should avoid large open spaces. Getting to one of these areas (exterior wall by windows or doors) increases the chances of being rescued early.
- g. Attempt to Follow a Hose/Life Line to Safety
 - i. Crewmembers should stay with a hose line (or lifeline) and follow it out whenever possible. All firefighters must remember and be continually trained in the self-survival of coupling identification with gloves on. Female side of the couplings when felt first point toward the pump – EXIT. Male side of the coupling when felt first point toward the nozzle – FIRE.
- h. Retreat to an Area of Safety
 - i. Where the Firefighter(s) cannot find a way out, but there is a safe refuge (protective room or floor) away from the fire hazard that the firefighter(s) can retreat to, he/she should take advantage of this location.
CAUTION: Firefighter(s) in trouble MUST make every effort to advise rescuers of their actions to assist in locating them - situation reporting, sounding, etc. Command should be updated as much as possible.
- i. Horizontal Positioning
 - i. If a firefighter(s) cannot get out, he/she should assume a position on the floor that maximizes the audible affects of the PASS device. Proper positioning is dependent on the surrounding conditions (i.e. heavy heat environment, place your face in a corner with your hands shielding your face from exposure with your back facing outward thereby enhancing the directional projection of the PASS device). Try not to trap the pass device between your body and the floor or wall.
- j. Flashlights/Tapping
 - i. If assuming a position to await rescuers, firefighter(s) should attempt to position his/her flashlight toward the ceiling and/or continue rotating the beam side to side to signal potential rescuers. If able, the firefighter(s) should also attempt to create tapping noises to assist rescuers in locating him/her (i.e. hitting a tool against a metal roll-up door, floor, or hard surface within the immediate area).