

SOUTH PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

SOG #:	6.311	Effective Date:	1/14/2019
Title:	Mayday / Priority Traffic	# of pages:	4
Category:	Safety	Classification:	Red

1. **PURPOSE:** To define situations, terminology, radio and other procedures and policies for use when firefighter(s) are in an actual or potentially life threatening situations.
2. **POLICY:** The following defines terms, details initiation procedures, delineates responsibilities of personnel and explains the termination process of a Mayday.
3. **PROCEDURES:**

Definitions:

Mayday: An actual or potentially life threatening condition or situation. This would specifically include situations in which a firefighter's egress is blocked. Examples include but are not limited to:

- 1) Trapped by structural collapse or fire extension
- 2) Unconscious FF
- 3) FF with a life threatening injury
- 4) FF with a non-life threatening injury in a hazardous area
- 5) Missing FF not found within 60 seconds
- 6) FF lost, trapped or disoriented and not corrected within 60 seconds
- 7) Low Air Alarm Sounding
- 8) Other similar situations or conditions which are actually or potentially life threatening

Priority: A situation involving hazardous conditions or situations which need to be rapidly relayed to Command but not rising to the level of Mayday. Examples include but are not limited to:

- 1) Finding a civilian victim
- 2) Non-life threatening injuries in non-hazardous areas
- 3) Severe fire extension
- 4) Water supply loss
- 5) Imminent collapse
- 6) Interior fire attack being discontinued and changed to exterior attack
- 7) Reduced SCBA air supply (approaching low air alarm)

Mayday Initiation procedures:

When a firefighter is involved with a situation which he/she believes to be a Mayday he/she shall immediately transmit this over his/her radio as follows:

Declaring a Mayday:

Unit declaring the mayday shall transmit **“Mayday, Mayday, Mayday this is [radio designation] with Mayday traffic”**. Upon this transmission ALL fireground radio traffic shall cease immediately. Command and only Command shall answer the Mayday traffic. If Command does not immediately acknowledge the Mayday and appears to have not heard the transmission, then other personnel may briefly notify Command of the traffic, in person when appropriate. When answered by Command the unit declaring the Mayday shall transmit the following information to Command, preferably in this order: (LUNAR);

- 1) Location of Mayday
- 2) Unit(s) radio designations
- 3) Name(s) of personnel in danger/missing/injured
- 4) Air Supply Remaining / Assignment
- 5) Resources or assistance needed

Actions of Personnel declaring a Mayday:

After declaring a Mayday and communicating with Command as outlined above personnel who are in a Mayday situation should take the following steps as appropriate:

- 1) Activate PASS device. This will make it easier for rescuers to find missing or trapped firefighters, even if they are unconscious. The PASS should be turned off when communicating over the radio. When lost or trapped firefighters are reached by a rescue team then PASS devices should be returned to automatic.
- 2) Stay together as a group. One group of firefighters is easier to find than individuals and the team possesses more ability.
- 3) Search for an exit, stay on the walls. Self rescue is always an option and search crews will be following walls on the way in to you.
- 4) If an exit cannot be found, find a safe location. A room with a door which can be shut to slow the fire is preferable to an open area. Some areas of a collapsed structure are more stable than others.
- 5) If staying put, lay on your side with your head toward the wall and your feet projecting into the room, in a corner if possible. This will improve your chances of being found as well as put you in the safest spot.
- 6) Attempt to signal by tapping w/ tools on floor, pipe or hard surface, flashing lights etc.

Actions of Command after receiving Mayday:

After receiving a Mayday and communicating with unit(s) involved as outlined above Command should take the following steps as appropriate:

- 1) Have Fire Alarm transmit an alert tone and announce that a Mayday is in progress with a brief description of the situation.
- 2) Signal 1000 shall be implemented, only radio traffic pertinent to the Mayday is allowed on the originally assigned OPS channel.
- 3) All other units operating on the scene will switch to the MAYDAY channel (which is normally channel 16 on all portables).
- 4) Commit the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) as appropriate.
- 5) Conduct a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) to account for all units.

- 6) Assign a Rescue Branch Officer to oversee the Rescue Group including, as appropriate, communications with the Mayday unit(s). Do not ask Mayday units to change radio channels. All other units will move to the MAYDAY channel.
- 7) If it is safe to do so continue as many fire ground operations as possible to assist the RIT operation.
- 8) Request additional units as required, consider additional alarm(s).
- 9) Assign an Ambulance crew to the Rescue Group for the Mayday firefighter(s) only.
- 10) Assign personnel to create another RIT team that can respond to an additional activation or as a replacement for the first team.

Actions of other personnel when a Mayday is in progress:

When a Mayday situation has been declared, non-involved personnel shall respond as follows:

- 1) Remain at assigned location and function until reassigned.
- 2) Limit radio traffic – NO traffic on the original OPS channel, use runners if possible to communicate normal operations.
- 3) Conduct a PAR in your area.
- 4) Reduce high risk operations.

Clearing a Mayday:

Only Command can clear a Mayday situation and only after the following actions:

- 1) Conduct a PAR to account for all units including RIT and Mutual Aid.
- 2) Ensure that a RIT is ready to continue operations.
- 3) Have Fire Alarm sound an alert tone and announce that the Mayday operation is concluded and to resume normal fireground operations.

ICS note:

It is the intent that Mayday communication initially be handled at the highest on scene level. Normally this will be the Command designation. In larger incidents such as HAZ-MAT incidents this level may be the Operations designation. The intent is to bypass multiple levels of supervisors to achieve rapid results at the highest appropriate level.

Priority Initiation procedures:

When a firefighter is involved with a situation which he/she believes to be a priority situation he/she shall immediately transmit this over his/her radio as follows:

Priority situations:

Unit needing to contact Command with the information shall transmit “[radio designation] to **Command with priority traffic**. Upon this transmission ALL non-Mayday fireground radio traffic shall cease immediately. Command shall answer the traffic. If Command does not immediately acknowledge the Priority traffic and appears to have not heard the transmission, then other personnel may briefly notify Command in person when appropriate. When answered by Command the unit calling with Priority traffic shall transmit the needed information. Upon receipt of the information, Command may issue further radio traffic to deal with the situation. All other non-mayday traffic will continue to hold until Command announces that “**Priority traffic is cleared, resume normal radio communications**”

Additional information:

Other units may exercise their judgement if they have new, pertinent information to add to the information transmitted by the initial unit. In general, other units should only transmit if they have vital new information that will affect the decision process, not just suggestions and “me too” comments.

Multiple problems:

In certain situations, more than one priority situation may exist, or may exist along with Mayday traffic. Units must exercise radio discipline and only transmit if absolutely necessary. Face to face communication is preferable and the value of your input must be considered. Mayday traffic always takes priority over priority and shall be declared whenever appropriate.

4. REFERENCES:

- None

By Order Of:



James P. Wilson
Fire Chief