
Section: 5.12 Firefighter Survival

Effective Date: 09/04/2007

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Approved by: SMFD Officers 03/22/2006

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all South Metro Fire Department personnel responsible for emergency response.

PURPOSE

The nature of fire fighting places the firefighter at risk of becoming lost or trapped. Survival depends on a mix of predictable self survival actions and early recognition by the lost firefighter and the incident commander.

Basic Self-Survival Responsibilities***DON'T GET TRAPPED/LOST AND DON'T RUN OUT OF AIR.***

The rescue of trapped or lost firefighters in a burning building is especially time sensitive because we work with a limited air supply.

- All members entering the Hazard Zone should have a portable radio and personal rescue tools.
- Minimum crew size is two and crew members must remain intact.
- Crews must have an assignment and must be working under the supervision of Command.
- Crews will follow Air Management guidelines.

PROCEDURE**1. CALL FOR HELP IMMEDIATELY**

Firefighters who find themselves lost or trapped must immediately use "Mayday" to announce their situation while they continue to attempt to find their way out. firefighters should not delay notification of distress. Notifications should occur as soon as the firefighter THINKS they are in trouble. The longer you wait to tell somebody you are in trouble the more you jeopardize yourself and the rescuers lives.

2. Other Radio Channel

If a lost firefighter can not contact Command, dispatch, or any other units on the assigned radio channel, the firefighter should go to another channel to attempt contact and declare an emergency. Channel 1 – Fire Main is preferred. It's important to find any channel that works. Once communication is established remain on that channel and messages will be relayed to Command.

3. Activate PASS Device

As soon as a firefighter recognizes he/she is lost or trapped, the PASS device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. The device must remain on until rescued. If the device interferes with the lost firefighters communicating critical radio messages to incident commander or rescuers, the device may be turned off temporarily. Once messages are completed, the device must again be manually activated.

4. Crews Stay Together

Members that separate from each other make it difficult for rescuers to find all firefighters. Crew members that stay intact as a crew enhance their chances for ALL being rescued and allows easier, more efficient extrication.

5. Follow the Hoseline or Lifeline Out

Crew members should stay with the hoseline (or lifeline) and follow it out whenever possible. All firefighters must remember that the male couplings lead toward the nozzle (the fire), female side of the couplings toward the pump (outside). The hoseline should always be treated as a safety line to the outside. Where lifeline ropes

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are in use, follow the lifeline to the exterior.

6. Search for an Exit

A lost firefighter should always attempt to get out of the building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows, or other egress is not available, firefighters should next attempt to reach an exterior wall.

Once at the wall he/she will be able to search for doorways, windows, and hallways which generally lead to the outside. Rescuers will first search hallways, around walls, and around windows and doors, before sweeping large interior areas. For this reason, firefighters must avoid collapsing in the middle of open spaces. Getting to hallways, doors, or windows will increase the chances of being rescued early. Breaching walls for escape or fresh air can aid in survivability. These actions also provide predictable activities that will aid rescuers.

7. Retreat to a Safe Refuge

Where the firefighter cannot find a way out, but there is a safe refuge (protective room or floor) away from the fire that the firefighter can retreat to, he/she should take advantage of this location. Command and the rescuers should then be advised of the location by whatever means possible.

8. Stay Calm and Conserve Air

A conscious effort must be made by the lost firefighter to control breathing. Unnecessary talking or physical activity must be ceased, unless absolutely needed. Firefighters must control and pace their physical exertion activities in order to extend their SCBA air supply.

9. Horizontal Position

If a firefighter cannot get out, he should assume a horizontal position on the floor that maximizes the audible effects of the PASS device. The firefighter should attempt to take this position at an exterior wall, doorway or hallway that maximizes quick discovery by rescue crews.

10. Flashlights & Tapping Noise

If assuming a position to await rescuers, the firefighters should attempt to position his flashlight toward the ceiling. This will enhance the rescuer's ability to see the light and locate the downed firefighter. If able, the firefighter should attempt tapping noises to assist rescuers in locating him (i.e., hitting a tool against a metal roll-up door).

11. Company or Sector Officers

Company officers or sector officers who are unable to locate a crew or firefighters assigned to them, must immediately notify command and use "MAYDAY" to notify all personnel operating on the fireground. When possible the company or sector officer should include who's missing, last known location, and actions being taken. Fire fighting positions must not be abandoned during the rescue effort; the Company and Sector officers MUST control free-lancing. Command will initiate a rescue effort.