



ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

OG – 400-105

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Deployment

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This recommended standard operating procedure applies to all units that respond and operate as a RIT to fire and/or rescue incidents within Abington Township. This procedure will define the RIT concept, outline the requirements for a unit intending to fulfill the role of a RIT, and discuss procedures regarding the dispatch, staging, operation and management of a RIT. This is a recommended practice, developed to assist in a standardized response, and is not intended to supersede adopted fire company operating procedures.

1.2 Definitions:

- 1.2.1** **RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT)** The RIT is a team of firefighters specially trained and equipped to perform the rescue of a firefighter in distress. The sole purpose of the RIT is to be immediately available to assist a firefighter who becomes trapped, lost or incapacitated. A unit responding as a RIT shall respond with no less than four (4) interior firefighting qualified firefighters. Should a unit be dispatched but cannot complete the minimum staffing requirement, they shall inform EDS immediately so as to have the RIT assignment covered as soon as possible.
- 1.2.2** **RIT EQUIPMENT** It is highly recommended that each RIT company carry the relevant search and rescue equipment in one, easy to carry cotton/nylon bag. It is critical that all of the equipment carried including the accompanying hand tools, rescue ropes and guidelines, remain intact as one unit for quick deployment.
- 1.2.2.1** The minimum standard equipment that a RIT team should bring to the fireground with them is as follows:
- 1.2.2.1.1** SCBA donned by each member of the RIT team
 - 1.2.2.1.2** Handtools, including Axe, Halligan Bar, TNT/Sledge Hammer and Closet Hook
 - 1.2.2.1.3** Gas Powered Circular Saw with additional blades
 - 1.2.2.1.4** Thermal Imager
 - 1.2.2.1.5** Search Ropes
 - 1.2.2.1.6** Rescue Ropes
 - 1.2.2.1.7** Handlight/Flashlights – One for each member of RIT
 - 1.2.2.1.8** Portable Radios – preferably one for each member of the RIT team
 - 1.2.2.1.9** Additional SCBA bottle – preferably with a RIT connector and configured as a “RIT Pack”
 - 1.2.2.1.10** This equipment shall be set apart from any tools being actively used in the operation, and should be kept available for use by the RIT in the event of a RIT activation.
- 1.2.3** **“MAYDAY – MAYDAY” RADIO TRANSMISSION** This term shall be used ONLY to report firefighter who is in distress, lost, trapped, out of air, or down; when a collapse has

occurred or is imminent; or where any other circumstance that can seriously injure or kill the firefighter is present.

- 1.2.4 EMERGENCY EVACUATION SIGNAL** A signal ordered by the Incident Commander when emergency incident scene conditions dictate the urgent need to order the immediate departure of all firefighters from the area of imminent danger. Once removed from the structure, fire companies should perform an immediate roll call and report their personnel accountability status to the Incident Commander.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility to ensure that the actions described in this procedure are carried out belongs to the following.

- 1.1** Company Officers
- 1.2** All Members
- 1.3** The assigned RIT Officer

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 DISPATCH - EDS will automatically dispatch a RIT company upon a confirmed report of a structure fire and/or fire units have been placed in service. Additionally, on special operations such as river emergencies, confined space rescues, hazardous materials responses, etc., the Incident Commander may request a RIT to respond at any time, if deemed necessary.

- 3.1.1** The RIT should respond at emergency speed.
- 3.1.2** Via fire radio, the dispatcher shall notify the assigned unit of its designation as the RIT.
- 3.1.3** Via fire radio, the dispatcher shall notify the Incident Commander of the identity of the responding RIT.
- 3.1.4** If EDS receives a report from the emergency scene that the RIT has been placed in service to assist a firefighter who becomes trapped or is in distress, EDS will dispatch an additional fire company to function as a RIT, at emergency speed.

3.2 COMMUNICATIONS - The RIT should operate on the designated emergency scene frequency and remain in direct contact with the Incident Commander.

- 3.2.1** If deployed, the RIT officer should attempt to establish radio contact with the firefighter in trouble, as well as establish a separate radio channel for RIT Operations.
 - 3.2.1.1** If this is not possible, the time and place in which the firefighter in distress was last seen should be determined.
- 3.2.2** Although the unit's primary mission is to rescue a trapped or lost firefighter, team members must remember their personal safety is a top priority and proper communications are essential to safe operations. The members included in the search should be in constant communication with the Incident Commander or his/her designate, and provide frequent progress reports on:
 - 3.2.2.1** Hazards encountered
 - 3.2.2.2** Barriers/obstructions
 - 3.2.2.3** Victim location and condition
 - 3.2.2.4** Any needs

3.3 “MAYDAY – MAYDAY” RADIO TRANSMISSION - It is strongly recommended that all fire companies/units should be aware of and adhere to the ATFD Standard Operating Procedure for Mayday Procedures.

3.3.1 Any member may use the “MAYDAY” transmission to report a lost or trapped firefighter. This report should occur as soon as a firefighter perceives that a situation is rapidly developing, which is a direct threat to his/her life or the life of another firefighter. Ideally, the transmission should occur on the fireground frequency, however, the Incident Commander must be aware that circumstances may dictate that the transmission could occur on another channel. Upon receiving this report the Incident Commander should notify EDS that he has received a “MAYDAY” report, and if needed, request additional assistance.

3.3.2 The use of the term ‘MAYDAY’ will mandate that all other radio transmissions temporarily cease. This allows the firefighter, making the report, adequate airtime to complete his/her transmission without interference, which will allow the needed help to be activated immediately.

3.4 EMERGENCY EVACUATION -It is strongly recommended that all fire companies/units be aware of and adhere to ATFD Standard Operating Procedure for Incident Evacuation.

3.5 EMERGENCY SCENE GUIDELINES - The RIT should be prepared to go into service at a moment’s notice. The RIT’s activity at the emergency scene should be consistent with their mission: assisting a firefighter who becomes trapped or is in distress.

3.5.1 Upon arrival, the RIT officer should report to the Command Post unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander. After reporting to the IC, the RIT officer, accompanied by another member of the RIT, should survey the entire incident scene performing a quick, thorough sizeup. (To be effective, the RIT has to be proactive, continually sizing up the situation, remaining aware of the location of the firefighters inside the structure and obstacles to potential rescue operations.)

3.5.2 If necessary, the RIT officer should take advantage of all preplan information about the structure. The RIT officer should monitor the fireground radio frequency, note fire conditions and the location of all fire companies, evaluate portable and main ladder placement for firefighter egress, alert the Incident Commander or the Safety Officer to unusual structural features and locate all access points to all sectors of emergency scene.

3.5.3 After conferring with the Incident Commander, the RIT officer should establish an area to stage the RIT’s equipment. It is important to stage all necessary equipment RIT equipment in an expedient manner. The RIT officer, accompanied by one member of the RIT, may perform the incident scene survey while the remaining RIT members assemble the RIT equipment. Once the incident scene survey has been completed and the RIT’s equipment is in place, the entire RIT should remain near the Command Post, within verbal contact distance, in order for rapid deployment. The RIT officer should brief all members of the RIT as to the results of his/her incident scene survey.

3.5.4 The RIT should “stand fast” ready to take immediate action as directed by the Incident Commander. While “standing fast”, the RIT should determine the availability and location of aerial, tower, and portable ladders, portable lights, Hurst tools and or other tools and equipment which might be needed to perform “Distress” duties. While

“standing fast” two members of the RIT team shall have their SCBA masks in place with the air regulator attached but not connected to the mask for rapid deployment.

- 3.5.5** At the direction of the RIT officer, members of the RIT team may be instructed to take proactive steps in order to anticipate possible emergencies at the fire scene. Such proactive steps include, but are not limited to placement of ladders for egress for firefighters operating inside or on the roof of the structure, as well as placement of additional handlines to be used in the event the RIT is activated.
- 3.5.6** The RIT should operate on the designated emergency scene frequency. Portable radio messages should be monitored for any indication of members in distress.
- 3.5.7** Hazardous materials and confined space incidents already provide for rapid intervention rescue entry teams. Due to the highly technical nature and inherent hazards associated with this type of incidents, federal and state regulations mandate stand-by rescue entry teams, equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) are in place whenever entry teams are deployed. Therefore, if the Incident Commander requests a RIT to respond to a confirmed operation for either hazardous materials or confined space rescue, the RIT should report to the Incident Commander for an assignment to support those specialized rescue teams already in place.
- 3.5.8** In the event the Incident Commander receives a report of a firefighter trapped or in distress, the Incident Commander should brief the RIT officer on the following information:
- a. **L**ocation
 - b. **U**nit
 - c. **N**ame
 - d. **A**ssignment
 - e. **R**escue (needs)
- 3.5.9** The RIT should use its numerical company identification when placed into service and shall remain together and work as a complete team whenever possible. The Incident Commander may assign companies, as needed, to assist the RIT. However, the Incident Commander should be aware that it will be the normal reaction of companies at the scene to suspend firefighting activities and begin to try and assist missing members. The Incident Commander should make every attempt to continue firefighting activities while at the same time, assisting the trapped or missing firefighter.
- 3.5.10** When the RIT is deployed, the Incident Commander should restructure the strategy and tactics to include a high priority firefighter rescue effort. The Incident Commander should establish an additional RIT (using a unit already on the fireground), contact EDS and request an additional ALS ambulance, an additional RIT and a full extra alarm. Additionally, the Incident Commander should create a rescue division or group within ICS and assign a chief officer to oversee the rescue operation.
- 3.5.11** Inside the building, the RIT should advance to where the victims were last reported to be located and listen for PASS signals, tapping, cries for help, etc. RIT members should protect against becoming victims themselves.
- 3.5.12** If fire is in the search area, back-up teams with charged hoselines must immediately follow the first in rescue team.

3.5.13 When a RIT member reaches a downed firefighter:

3.5.13.1 If required, utilize RIT PACK

3.5.13.2 Turn off member's PASS to facilitate communications

3.5.13.3 Provide "nature and conditions" to Incident Commander and/or the chief officer assigned to the Rescue Operation.

3.5.13.4 Consider any ventilation options to improve conditions

3.5.13.5 Consider any egress options available to remove the downed firefighter in the quickest and safest manner available.

3.5.14 The RIT should continue search and rescue operations until the missing or trapped firefighter is located and removed, the RIT is relieved, or the RIT is ordered to abandon the operation.

3.5.15 The RIT may be released when the fire is declared under control and/or when the Incident Commander feels there is zero risk to the members working at the scene of the incident.

3.6 RESTRICTIONS -The RIT should not be used to provide relief for operating units. The Incident Commander should anticipate this need and have other units other than the RIT, available for this purpose.

3.6.1 The RIT should not be used for firefighting.

3.7 MISCELLANEOUS - If prior to the arrival of the RIT, the Incident Commander determines that a member may need assistance, he/she shall designate any of the following for assistance/rescue:

3.7.1 Companies in the stand-by position

3.7.2 Companies who are in the process of taking up their equipment

3.7.3 Available members, i.e., uncommitted drivers/operators, etc.

3.7.4 Once the arriving RIT is placed in service, those individuals should return to their former duties.

4.0 RECORDS

4.1 Master Document Listing