

Waterloo Vol Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

POLICY FOR LOCATING MISSING MEMBERS DURING INCIDENTS

1. Scope and authority

This procedure applies to all members.

As a mutual aid agreement, this document shall not in any way alter, impede, diminish, or negate the authority of any chief under any law of the State of New York within his own department, district, and/or jurisdiction.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the operating procedure is to establish a uniform policy on rescuing a missing member. This standard is intended to meet the requirements of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120, 1910.134, and 1910.156. This procedure is not intended to provide instructions for every situation that may arise.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 All members of the Waterloo Vol. Fire department are responsible for insuring that this policy is adhered to.

3.2 In those circumstances beyond the scope of this order, the incident commander at the scene of the fire or emergency shall use his/her own discretion in complying with the intent of this order.

4.0 Objectives

It is the intent of this department to protect all members while operating at the scene of the fire or emergency. Proper immediate actions taken by the incident commander and the members on-scene may result in the successful rescue of a member in distress.

5.0 Implementation

5.1 The incident commander should implement the missing member procedure immediately after a major change in an operation (explosion, collapse, change from offensive to defensive, etc.), or upon notification of a missing member.

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5.2 The incident commander shall initiate a roll call.

5.2.1 The IC must bear in mind that initiating a roll call does not necessarily require evacuation of the entire fire building and all personnel therefrom. Evacuation of all members from the fire building can often place the missing member in great jeopardy since all defenses of the missing member's position have been removed by such evacuation. Roll calls can often be accomplished by radio/verbal communications while leaving vital defense operations in place, by making proper use of the IC and accountability systems. Total evacuation of the fire building should always be done when the safety of all members is in jeopardy (i.e. potential collapse).

5.2.2 If evacuation of the fire building is warranted, it shall be done by transmission of a mayday message over all radio frequencies in use on the fireground and by the sounding of several series of four long (5-10 seconds) blasts over all apparatus air horns. Upon hearing the evacuation signal, all members shall immediately leave the fire building and assemble for roll call.

5.3 Officers of all units at the scene must immediately conduct a roll call of their unit(s) utilizing the daily assignment sheet and the multiple alarm sign-in sheet, reporting results to the incident commander when requested.

5.4 If the incident commander determines that a member is unaccounted for, he/she shall institute the following missing member procedure:

- A. Attempt to contact the missing member via portable radio on the fireground frequency.
- B. Clear the fireground portable radio frequency assigning alternate frequencies as necessary. Maintain at least one portable on fireground frequency to attempt contact with the missing member. The commander shall also request strict radio silence on county frequency. At least one separate portable shall be maintained at the command post for each frequency in use on the fireground.
- C. Attempt to determine where the member was operating or last seen.
- D. Activate one or more firefighter assist search team(s) to attempt locating and rescuing the missing member.

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- E. Immediately assemble all support personnel on the scene (i.e. engine drivers, safety officer, f.a.s.t., etc.) Near the command post (exposure one side) with fresh scba.
- F. When it is confirmed that a member is missing, increase assignment to the next higher response.
- G. Request at least one ambulance to the scene and request med flight on stand-by if warranted.
- H. Consider using feedback assisted rescue (f.a.r.) for a lost portable radio equipped member.
- I. The incident commander should consider that a missing member might have fallen through the floor(s) or roof.

5.5 The incident commander should consider the following tactical actions:

- A. Move hose lines to protect area of trapped firefighter.
- B. Give the area of search maximum ventilation.
- C. Open or force open all available doors, windows or other entry points in area (for escape).
- D. Breach walls, if appropriate.
- E. Raise additional ladders as entry and escape points.
- F. Increase lighting to affected area.

6.0 Notifications

6.1 An officer supervising a member who becomes missing shall transmit a "member missing" message. If an officer or any member is missing, any member who is aware of the situation may transmit the message. This signal shall be transmitted over portable radios on the fireground frequency and will alert all concerned that a member is missing.

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6.2 Member transmitting the "member missing" message will give the following information to the incident commander after the initial message is acknowledged:

- A. Name and unit of missing member
- B. Missing member's assignment
- C. If the missing member is equipped with a portable radio
- D. Last known location of the missing member

6.3 Any firefighter operating at the scene of an emergency who finds them self in a compromised situation shall attempt the following procedure:

- A. Confirm that their pass alarm is in the on position.
- B. If equipped with a portable radio, transmit the signal "mayday-mayday-mayday" on fireground frequency.
- C. If not acknowledged, switch to county frequency and transmit a "mayday-mayday-mayday".
- D. If at any time the signal is acknowledged, attempt to state location and immediate problem.
- E. If not equipped with a portable radio, attempt to signal using any means possible (manually activate the pass alarm).
- F. It is critical to activate the pass alarm and allow continuous signal until located by the fast team.
- G. Go to a window or opening, if possible.
- H. Breach a wall to get into a safer part of building, if appropriate.

6.4 All firefighters shall reduce their chances of becoming lost or trapped and increase their chance of rescue by adherence to the following:

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- A. Follow accountability procedure.
- B. Do not freelance.
- C. Work as part of a company as much as possible.
- D. Know what floor you are on and what part of the building you are operating in at all times.
- E. If not part of a team, be certain that a sector officer, safety or operations know your whereabouts and mission.
- F. Have a working flashlight, full p.p.e. (turnouts), pass alarm, a full scba and, when possible, a portable radio.
- G. As much as possible, try to observe construction type occupancy, height, width, and depth of building, exposures, fire escapes, entry points, fire protection systems, and fire location before entering building.
 - h. When performing a search, especially in a large undivided space, consider using a search line.