	ROFR Section: 800		TFCA Best Practices:	
	Effective: 5/2011	Revision:	Fire Chief: 	

Rapid Intervention Team

PURPOSE

Red Oak Fire Rescue often responds to incidents that present a high risk to firefighter safety. This procedure identifies the requirements and operation of Rapid Intervention Teams (RITs). Other related procedures are Lost/Trapped Firefighters Basic Self-Survival and Rescue-Lost Firefighters Command Responsibilities.

This procedure increases firefighter safety at emergency incidents by providing resources for fire fighter rescue at the onset of an event before a team enters an unknown atmosphere, potential or actual IDLH (immediately dangerous to life and health) environment. It should integrate with procedures that are already in effect, such as the requirement for a back-up rescue team for hazardous materials entry. The objective of a RIT crew is to have a fully equipped rescue team, on-site, in a ready state, to immediately react and respond to rescue injured or trapped firefighters or civilians.

REQUIRED USE OF RIT

This procedure shall be implemented at all "working" structural fires beyond the incipient stage, and other incidents where fire department members are subject to hazards that would be immediately dangerous to life and/or health in the event of an equipment failure, sudden change of conditions, or mishap.

Examples of special hazards include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive Fire Operations (assumed to be IDLH)
- Hazardous Materials Incidents (IDLH, potential IDLH, or unknown atmosphere)
- Trench Rescue
- Confined Space Rescue

Standard Exceptions to the RIT Requirement at Structure Fires

1. When the fire is in an incipient stage that could be controlled by a portable fire extinguisher.

2. When the fire has been declared “under control” (at the discretion of Incident Command).
3. Defensive operations in which all personnel are operating in an External Division and are within eye sight of the Division Officer.

IMPLEMENTATION

The unit assigned to RIT should stage in a location to maximize their options and await instruction from Command. This company should be prepared for a RIT assignment if an emergency occurs. Once RIT has been established, all RIT members must remain in a pro-active heightened state of readiness. During operations, RIT will normally be assigned a standby position near the Command Post.

Command may assign more than one company as a RIT if necessary. Operations of a large or more complex nature may call for multiple RIT units to standby at different entry points. During an event that requires more than one RIT, the RIT Officer shall report to the Division Officer. After dispatch of a company, Command has the following options for use:

1. Assign the company to RIT duties.
2. Assign other duties, such as heat relief for working crews overhaul duties, etc.
3. If assigned anything other than RIT duties, Command must request an additional company as a RIT unit to be available for emergencies affecting firefighters.

En-route, potential RIT crews should monitor the radio channel, noting location of operating companies.

Upon assignment of RIT responsibilities, the RIT Officer should:

1. Report to the Incident Command Post.
2. Present passport to the Incident Commander.
3. Receive briefing from the Incident Commander on pertinent information.
4. Perform a 360° walk-around of the structure observing significant features such as, but not limited to:
 - A. Means of egress
 - B. Fire Behavior
 - C. Alternate entry points
 - D. Utility service locations
 - E. Overhead obstructions
 - F. Location of all operations crews

Upon completion of walk-around, the RIT Officer shall notify Incident Command of any immediate concerns. The RIT Officer shall brief the RIT crew of the above findings. Based on the RIT briefing, the crew shall develop an incident action plan. During operations, the incident action plan is a dynamic plan. Changes to the incident action plan shall be made as the incident changes.

During the RIT Officer's walk-around, the RIT crew shall be performing the following operations:

1. Deploy the RIT tarp (preferably within eyesight of the command post).
2. Place all tools in the designated areas of the tarp.
3. When applicable, obtain a pre-plan book.
4. Start all power tools and allow them to run long enough to reach maximum operating temperature.
5. Prepare means of egress
6. Ladder the building on a minimum of two sides (structures greater than one story and during roof ventilation operations)
7. Prepare tag lines at entry points.

During RIT assembly, EMS crews shall be performing the following operations:

1. EMS crews should stage near the command post or RIT tarp.
2. EMS shall make ready all EMS equipment (Cot, backboard, airway kit, trauma kit, and cardiac monitor).
3. In the event that it becomes necessary for EMS to deliver emergent care to firefighters or civilians, a second MICU will be notified for transporting the patient. Every effort will be made to maintain no less than one dedicated MICU on scene until it is deemed that EMS is nonessential.
4. EMS may be demobilized in conjunction with RIT demobilization (at the discretion of Incident Command).

EMS crews shall remain in a pro-active state of readiness, continually re-evaluating their action plan as the incident progresses.

All RIT crew members will assume a ready state, including full protective clothing and SCBA. For other types of incidents the protective clothing and equipment will be appropriate for the hazards. The RIT Officer will closely monitor the radio at all times.

In some cases the RIT may need to conduct a recon to maintain awareness of working companies and conditions. The team must be able to react immediately to sudden emergency events at the incident site. In all cases, the RIT must have the ability to rapidly deploy.

In some situations, protective hose lines may be pre-deployed. RIT companies should assess the need for other access points to provide for egress, rescue, and ventilation. Forcible entry may be necessary.

Dispatch shall immediately be contacted with a declaration of "May Day". Command will sound emergency traffic and declare the "May Day" and advise responding units. Whenever a RIT is deployed, it should be replaced as soon as possible to back up the crews involved in a rescue operation. In the event of RIT deployment, the next greater alarm assignment shall be called.

If RIT units are needed to respond to a sudden emergency in which the Division Officer is incapacitated (physically or emotionally), the RIT Officer will assume division responsibilities for the area in which the emergency exists until that position can be filled

by alternate personnel. Rescue Division should coordinate their activities with the involved division to maximize safety during the rescue operation.

If not deployed as a RIT unit, Command may assign this company as a relief unit and rotate them with interior companies. RITs can be used for any appropriate assignments after all crews are out of danger, PAR's have been obtained, and an IDLH atmosphere no longer exists. In the event of a persistent IDLH atmosphere, RIT must be replaced with an alternate company.

The Rapid Intervention Team is by far the most significant safety tool on an emergency scene. Members of RIT must be cognizant that their services could be needed at any time, without warning. Consequently, it is of high importance that all RIT members remain focused on operations at all times. As well, it is imperative that a constant re-evaluation during the stand-up of RIT takes place as the incident progresses. RIT is most effective when all members of the team are continually forward-looking and anticipating the unexpected. RIT members must concentrate on the incident and immediately react to the emergent needs of anyone in distress.



APPENDIX A

RIT Tarp Accessories

For Quick Accessibility

Drag Bag

- 1 Hour Cylinder with air line
- Tag Line
- Door Chocks
- Bolt Cutter
- Wire/cable Cutter
- Pry tools
- Channel Locks

Flathead Ax/Halligan

TNT Tool

Search Rope Bag

TIC

Stokes Basket

Chain Saw

K-12

Pike pole

Pry Bar

For Incident Progression

Lighting

Spare Bottles

Attic ladder

Charged Hose

Specialized Items

Air Bags

Hydraulics

Cutters

Spreaders

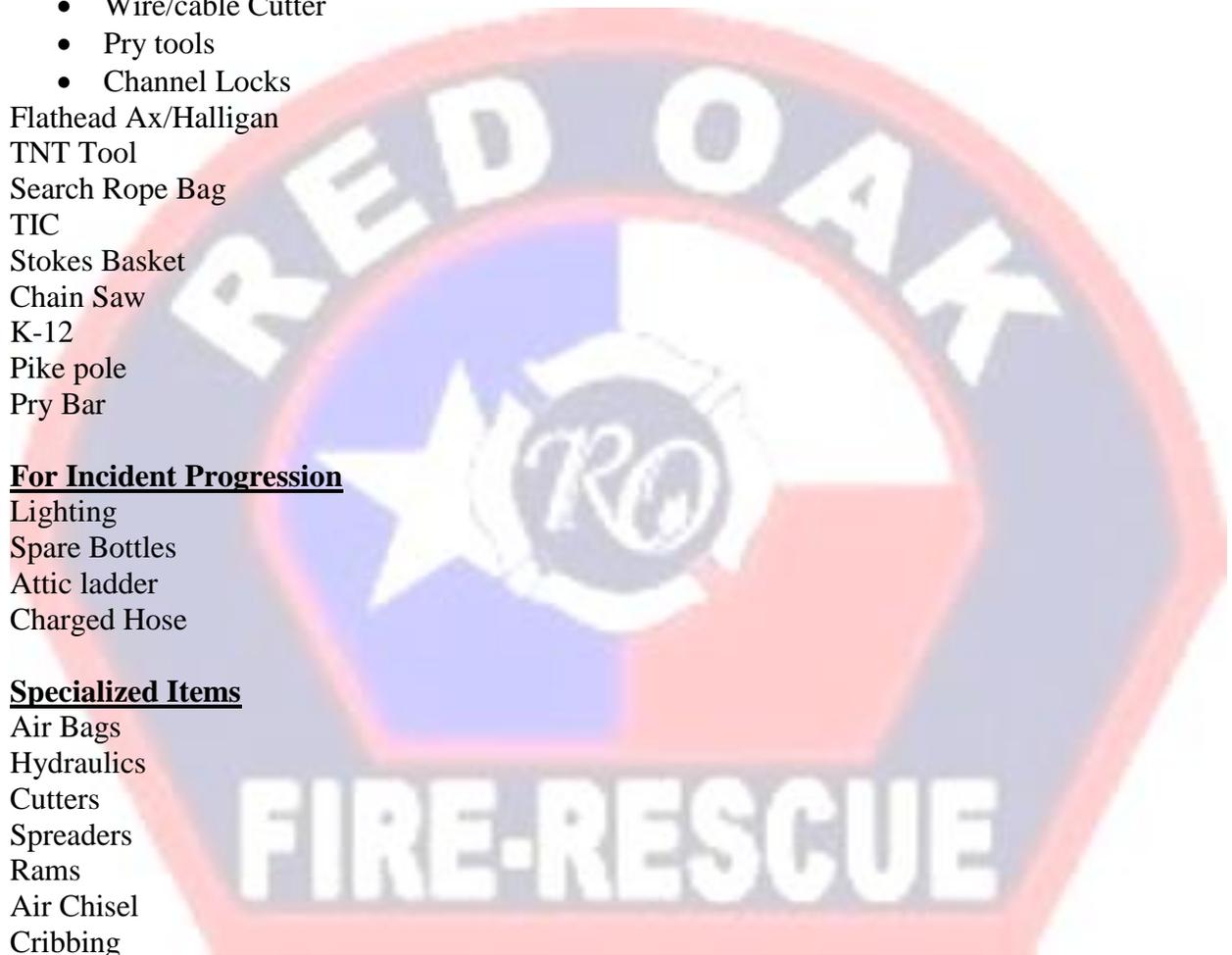
Rams

Air Chisel

Cribbing

Large Area Search Kit

Further equipment will be determined after the RIT officer has completed the walk around.



Rescue - Lost Fire Fighters Command Responsibilities

PURPOSE

This procedure identifies individual, company and Command level activities for the search and rescue of a lost or trapped fire fighter(s).

LOST OR TRAPPED FIRE FIGHTERS

The rescue of trapped or lost fire fighters in a burning building is especially time sensitive. There is a very narrow "window of survivability" for a fire fighter who is out of S.C.B.A. air supply or trapped by approaching fire. Individual fire fighters must not delay reporting to Command if they become lost, trapped or in need of assistance. Company officers must also not delay the reporting of lost fire fighters or inability to complete accountability reports. Command and Division officers must always assume that the missing fire fighter is lost in the building until the fire fighter can be accounted for. Command must also restructure the strategy and action plan to include a high priority rescue effort.

"MAY-DAY" RADIO MESSAGE

The radio message "May-Day" will be used by lost or trapped fire fighters to report their status as being in trouble and needing rescue. Any member may use "May-Day" to report a lost fire fighter. Any report of "May-Day" will receive priority radio traffic. The term "May-Day" will be reserved **ONLY** to report lost or trapped fire fighters. The term "emergency traffic" will be used to report other emergencies.

The term "May-Day" typically will be used in the following situations:

- By the member who is lost, trapped, or in trouble.
- By the company officer, Division officer, or other member who cannot account for an assigned fire fighter who is operating in the hazard zone. This "May-Day" would generally occur following a PAR report that fails to locate/account for the suspected lost member.
- By a member who witnesses or has confirmed that a fire fighter is lost or in trouble.

COMMAND RESPONSE TO A MISSING FIRE FIGHTER

The incident Commander **MUST ALWAYS** assume that a missing fire fighter is lost or trapped in the building until the fire fighter is accounted for. Rapid, concise, decisions and actions must be taken to increase survivability. The following is a list of actions to be taken by Command for a reported missing or trapped fire fighter. These are guidelines and do not necessarily need to be accomplished in the order listed. The first five (5) must be accomplished very rapidly.

- **EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**
Immediately upon a report of a missing or trapped fire fighter "Emergency

Traffic" will be sounded to alert all personnel working on the fire ground of the situation. "May Day" will be announced to alert all operating units of a lost or trapped fire fighter (example: "Command to all units we have a 'May-Day with Division 1").

- **CHANGE THE PLAN TO A HIGH PRIORITY RESCUE EFFORT**
The incident Commander must restructure the plan to include a high priority firefighter rescue effort. A rapid, well thought out, rescue plan must be developed and the Command organization expanded. The plan and objectives must be communicated to other Command staff and Division officers for implementation.
- **IMMEDIATELY REQUEST ADDITIONAL ALARMS**
At least one additional alarm or mutual aid company should be immediately requested including a medical unit. Additional multiple alarms may be requested based on circumstances and potential. Early consideration should be given to heavy equipment resources in the event of a collapse.
- **FIREGROUND ACCOUNTABILITY**
A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) must be immediately requested from all companies operating on the fire ground. This is especially important in situations of structural collapse. Command cannot develop an effective rescue plan until accurate information is available on the number of missing fire fighters, their identification; their last reported work area, and which companies are affected.
- **COMMIT THE RESCUE DIVISION**
Deploy the Rescue Division to initiate search and rescue efforts (typically the last reported work area). Rescue Division will coordinate activities at that location. Additional available resources in staging or rehab may also be committed to rescue efforts.
- **WITHDRAWAL OF COMPANIES FROM AFFECTED AREA**
In some situations, such as collapse, crewmembers can get separated. The only practical method to obtain an accurate roll call for a PAR may be to withdraw crews to the exterior. Withdrawal is a judgment call based on circumstances at the time, information available, and resources. It may not be practical or possible to do. However, the absolute need for an accurate roll call (PAR) and information on missing fire fighters remains a critical priority.
- **DO NOT ABANDON FIRE FIGHTING POSITIONS, PROVIDE REINFORCEMENT**
Abandoning fire fighting positions during the rescue effort should be avoided. Command and crews should take aggressive measures to protect trapped or missing fire fighters from the effects of the fire. Efforts should be concentrated on reinforcing existing positions and keeping the fire out of the rescue area and providing appropriate ventilation and lighting. In some situations it may be appropriate to write off some areas of the building in order to relocate companies and crews to better protect the rescue effort.

- **ASSIGN CHIEF OFFICER TO THE RESCUE DIVISION**
If possible a chief officer should be assigned to direct the rescue Division and rescue operations. Depending on the size of the rescue area and the complexity of operations, more than one chief officer may be needed to fill additional support positions or Divisions. The Division officer will assign specific areas or grids of the building to each rescue team (company) to conduct searches before entering the building. Search efforts must be closely coordinated between Divisions and Command must be kept informed.
- **ASSIGN A SAFETY OFFICER TO THE RESCUE EFFORTS**
Rescue operations are high risk. The rescue operation may be taking place in post-collapse conditions or a **flashover** environment. Emotions may be high and fire fighters will tend to want to free-lance and take chances. A Safety officer must be assigned to monitor activity and evaluate the safety of the operation. An available chief officer should assume this Division as soon as possible. Other Safety Division responsibilities will be to conduct an assessment of the hazards, thus, allowing time for the rescue Division officer to concentrate on the critical rescue effort. These Division officers must work hand in hand to insure that a safe and effective rescue operation is conducted.
- **EXPAND THE COMMAND ORGANIZATION**
With additional resources enroute, along with the critical rescue needs, the Command organization must expand ahead of the demand. The incident Commander must be proactive and aggressive in developing and expanding the Command organization.
- **SPECIAL CALL OFFICERS**
Additional officers will be needed to fill Command team positions and key Divisions including Welfare. Commands should special call additional officers, and initiate a call back of off-duty officers and personnel as needed.
- **EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF TREATMENT AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISIONS**
The incident Commander must have treatment personnel in a position to immediately treat any rescued fire fighters. A transportation Division must also be in place and coordinating activities with the treatment Division officer.
- **OPEN or UNLOCK ALL DOORS, IF APPROPRIATE**
All doors in the immediate area should be unlocked or forced open, and at least the immediate interior area quickly searched. Where practical, the doors should be left open to provide an emergency escape route, unless doing so will have negative effects on the fire. In all cases, the doors must remain unlocked.
- **VENTILATE, MAINTAIN LIGHTING**
Reducing smoke conditions, through effective ventilation, improves the air quality for any victims, and will enhance search and rescue capabilities through increased visibility of the interior. Ventilation should be aggressively employed. Early lighting of the operation (both interior and exterior) needs to be included.

- **COORDINATE AND CONTROL THE SEARCH EFFORTS**
The incident Commander and Rescue Division officer must insure that a complete, coordinated and controlled search is conducted. Close coordination of all search efforts is a must in order to eliminate duplicate searches that waste time. All areas must be thoroughly searched.
- **R.I.T. - S.C.B.A. RESCUE KIT**
Each rescue team should enter the building with at least one R.I.T.-S.C.B.A. Rescue Kit for each reported lost/trapped fire fighter. Missing fire fighters may have exhausted their S.C.B.A. air supply or may be trapped and cannot be quickly extricated. In each case the fire fighter must be provided "clean" air to increase survivability. The kits have a quick refill capability.
- **TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAMS**
Technical Rescue Teams (TRT) and other specialized equipment should be requested at all structural collapses that have trapped fire fighters.
- **WATCH FOR STRUCTURAL STABILITY OF THE BUILDING**
Command and all personnel must watch the structural stability of the building throughout the rescue effort. Where a structural collapse has occurred, or the fire or other event has compromised the structural integrity of the building, a structural specialist should evaluate the structure if possible. Technical Rescue Teams (TRT) may be called upon to assist with shoring the rescue area, or for the use of other specialized equipment.
- **STRONG SUPERVISION REQUIRED**
Strong supervision and control of activities will be required by all officers. Emotions will be very high. Firefighters in this situation will tend to want to free lance or take higher risk. Treatment personnel will need to be restricted to only those needed. Crowd control of our own non-essential personnel may be required.
- **MEDIA CONTROL**
Command will need to assign someone to control the media early and throughout the incident. Information on the identities and conditions of lost fire fighters must be restricted until after next of kin are notified. Media film crews should be restricted to areas that are safe and at a distance that will prevent visual/facial identification of any victims.
- **WELFARE DIVISION**
A welfare Division will need to be established early. This will aid in notification of next of kin and allow Command to stay ahead of the media's release of information. A ranking chief officer should be assigned to direct this task.
- **CONFIRM WITH DISPATCH TO MONITOR ALL RADIO CHANNELS**
Command must ensure that dispatch monitor all radio channels (Channels 1-16). Should a lost fire fighter declare emergency on a channel other than the

fire ground channel, Command must be immediately directed to the lost fire fighters channel for direct communications.

