

FIRESCUE INTERACTIVE

VOLUME 4 ♦ ISSUE 2



FEBRUARY 2000

RAPID INTERVENTION

EMERGENCY AIR SUPPLY

Firefighter Survival.....	3
Managing YOUR MAYDAY.....	5
Hey in there, Don't break any windows!.....	7
Essentials of Incident Command.....	8
Firefighter Survival Gear.....	10

ATTITUDE!

So you've responded as part of a rapid intervention team on a number of working incidents over the past year. Is your attitude *nothing will happen — we don't even need to be here?* (We certainly hope not!) Are you responding with the proper equipment and tools to get the job done or simply providing **lip service** so that if something happens nobody is held accountable. **Guess What?** If something happens somebody will be held accountable — and the rapid intervention team will be the first place that they start looking for answers. *Enough said about attitude!*

EMERGENCY AIR SUPPLY

Emergency air supply is a critical function that must be considered by the rapid intervention team. In most instances,

when a *Mayday* is broadcast for missing, downed, or injured firefighters, locating the firefighter and ensuring adequate air supply are the most important functions the RIT can provide, prior to getting them out.

What tools and equipment do you bring as part of your rapid intervention team assignment? Are you prepared to deal with air supply problems of the distressed firefighters located by the RIT?

For starters, since we're supposed to be working in teams of at least two, the minimum number of compromised air supplies that must be considered is two. Are your RITs taking two complete SCBA units (or streamlined versions) with them when they are deployed? Have all members of the RIT been trained to quickly resolve any air supply problems encountered? In zero visibility conditions?

*Remember,
sharing...of thoughts,
ideas, experiences,
innovations and just
plain comments will
allow us to reach levels
together that we could
never reach alone!*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



AIR SUPPLY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Does your department use personal quick-connect regulators or masks? What about surrounding departments? Is your equipment compatible with all other departments you respond with? Have you planned for incompatibilities? The list of questions on emergency air supply can go on and on.

SOME OPTIONS AVAILABLE...

REMOVE THE FIREFIGHTER FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

Depending on the distance inside the building, and the proximity to an exit (window, door, safe area inside the building, etc.), one of the quickest ways to solve a low air situation is to remove the firefighter from the environment.

When choosing this option the RIT should be certain that they can get-in and get-out without problems and that the removal time would be quicker than securing the air supply of the downed firefighter. *Tough call!*

BUDDY BREATHING

Many of today's SCBA units are equipped with *buddy-breathing* capabilities. By using a *buddy-breathing hose* two similar SCBA units can be attached and the air supply shared. An advantage of this operation is that the air supply of the distressed firefighter is never interrupted.

A major disadvantage is that the air supply is shared and two people are now using whatever air supply was

available. *Two people, twice-as-fast (roughly).* The RIT must find the downed firefighters before addressing air supply (that consumes air). The air remaining after performing the search, coupled with the reduced air supply of the firefighters that were found, may not provide enough air to exit the structure. Remember, searching for and then removing a downed firefighter takes a great deal of effort and increases your air consumption!

Buddy breathing may be viable for inside pairs that run into reduced air situations. It may also work in the event that a downed firefighter is found by an inside crew. The distance inside the building along with the air remaining between firefighters will determine the outcome – Command should still be notified and the RIT activated. ***For RIT operations a complete RIT Air Pack is a much better option.***

RIT AIR PACKS

By including spare SCBA units (*RIT Air Packs*) as part of the initial RIT equipment – a full, independent, air supply for the distressed firefighters will be brought into the building with the RIT. With this option, each RIT member's SCBA cylinder is fully available to them. An emergency has already been declared so there's no sense in handicapping the RIT before they begin.

Complete SCBA units, with the harness and straps, can be difficult to manage during an emergency search for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING NETWORK

Publisher: James M. McCormack

FIRESCUE Interactive is the official publication of the Fire Department Training Network, a division of FIRESCUE Incorporated. The Network is dedicated to increasing fire fighter awareness, knowledge, skill, and ability, through quality training. The opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Network. Materials may not be reproduced without permission. FIRESCUE, and the FIRESCUE logo, are trademarks of FIRESCUE Incorporated.

ISSN: 1092-907X

Join us in sharing training information. Submit your material to: Fire Department Training Network, P.O. Box 1852, Indianapolis, IN 46206. E-mail: info@firescue.com.

© 2000 Fire Department Training Network

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

It's not hard! Type it, hand write it, send it in on a tape, video tape a session, or however else you feel comfortable sharing ideas that will make the job easier. We're all here to do the best we can and by sharing information we all stand a better chance at being successful the next time out.

Send submission to
FIRESCUE Interactive
ATTN: Editor
P.O. Box 1852
Indianapolis, IN 46206
(317) 823-9678
(317) 823-0839 FAX
email: info@firescue.com



FIREFIGHTER SURVIVAL

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Here's a partial listing of skills that have become popular over the last few years. Check off the skills that you've performed and are proficient at. If all items aren't checked then get to work! Make it a new year's resolution to get you, and your crew, through every one of these survival skills - your lives may depend on it!

New skills are created and developed all the time by firefighters. This is not a comprehensive list it simply contains some of the skills that have been highlighted over the past few years. The best way to remain proficient is to practice these skills. Reading about a skill and performing it are two different things. Under the intense conditions of your own emergency it's doubtful that you'll recall a skill that you read about (if you do you're lucky). More importantly, successfully completing a skill that you've never tried before is even less likely.

These skills aren't difficult, they're not time-consuming, and they're not for somebody else. These skills may save your life someday - make it a new year's resolution to practice each and every one of them. In addition, make it a point to stay abreast of the new tips and techniques that are sure to be developed throughout the year. How? Read, attend seminars, attend conferences, attend training classes. It's our job as firefighters to pass on any new tips or techniques we come up with - *that's part of fire - fighter survival.*

- SCBA mask confidence course/training
- SCBA low-profile maneuver
- SCBA disentanglement
- SCBA failure - emergency exit
- Out of air situation- emergency exit
- Orientation - find and follow a hose line out
- Orientation - locate a wall and follow it out
- Retreat to a room and close door
- Breach a wall to a safe area
- Window exit -ladder slide
- Window exit - rope slide
- Window exit - hang
- Window exit - hang and drop
- Denver drill - restricted window rescue
- Nance drill - firefighter through the floor
- Firefighter drag - SCBA harness
- Firefighter drag - webbing / sling
- Moving a firefighter up / down stairs
- Firefighter rescue – ground ladder
- Firefighter search - PASS device assisted
- Firefighter search - radio squelch assisted
- Firefighter search - conventional
- Searching with a personal search rope
- Large area search
- Firefighter in distress (*see Managing YOUR MAYDAY*)
- And more...



AIR SUPPLY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



The RIT pack (below) is a streamlined version of a complete SCBA. By eliminating the straps and harness the unit is easier to carry and less likely to get hung up. The face piece is an essential component of the RIT pack.



firefighters. Preplanning before the emergency will definitely help. **What steps need to be performed to secure the air supply of a downed firefighter using the pack you brought in? Is there enough time to strip one SCBA and place a new unit on the firefighter? Are all firefighters on the fireground using the same type of SCBA? If not, what steps need to be performed to secure the air supply?**

Some manufacturers have come out with RIT air packages. Streamlining a few of your own air packs can provide the same result and be more cost-effective (you already own them). If you know your SCBA unit inside-and-out, like you should, then stripping it down to the bare essentials (an easy-to-carry, completely functioning unit)

SCBA INCOMPATIBILITIES...

Low Pressure, High Pressure, Different Brand

The **first step** in dealing with incompatible equipment is to **preplan** prior to the emergency. Survey the surrounding departments and find out who has what. A couple of phone calls is all this step takes – *and they're local!*

The **second step** in dealing with this problem is **familiarization**. During the phone call, ask if you can borrow an SCBA so that members of your department can become familiar with it. *Why is this important if you're bringing a fully-functional unit with you?*

This allows you to become familiar with the unit, check out the straps and how they adjust, how the unit goes on and can be removed, and how the face piece and regulator are attached. When operating as part of a RIT, in a no visibility environment, it may be your job to secure a firefighter's air supply. *That's not the time to become familiar with the equipment.*

The **third step** is **hands-on training!** All firefighters should be given the assignment of securing the air supply of a downed firefighter that is using a different brand SCBA. The training should be done in no visibility conditions.

shouldn't be that difficult. Obviously this can't be done for every possible company so there must be a way to ensure that these *RIT Air Packs* are available for the RIT at the scene.

Make sure the RIT Air Pack includes a face piece. The face piece will be needed if the firefighter is not wearing the same type of SCBA. Another possible use can occur if the firefighter has a damaged face piece.

SECURING THE AIR SUPPLY...

BUDDY BREATHING

Securing the air supply using a buddy breathing hose will only work with the same brand SCBA that has been outfitted with the buddy breathing capability.

This option requires that the RIT firefighter be proficient at connecting the buddy breathing hose and ensuring there is adequate air supply, for both firefighters, to exit the area. One other consideration is the length of the buddy breathing hose. If the distance between both fire-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Managing **YOUR** **MAYDAY**

MAYDAY! Sooner or later it just might happen to you. The big question is - *are you prepared to deal with it?* Consider the following scenario - upon arrival you encounter heavy smoke in a two-story double residence. The company you're with is assigned to search and rescue, the first due engine is in the process of making the hydrant and advancing the attack line - the search begins. The house is very cluttered and it's difficult to make progress. As you begin to make your way to the second floor the stairs give way and you're in the basement - your partner already made the floor and doesn't realize you're not right behind. The engine crew runs into a slight delay and the fire begins to gain the stairway to the second floor.

This is just one scenario. There are any number of situations that can lead to a firefighter MAYDAY. Consider the above scenario or think about a situation in your community that could produce a similar result. What have you, and your department, done to manage your own personal MAYDAY?

Consider the Options...

There are a couple of options to consider when dealing with your own MAYDAY. The first option involves alerting the IC and trying to deal with

your problem. The second is alerting the IC and trying to assist companies in locating you - because you're unable to deal with your problem due to an injury. *Either situation is possible!*

In the event that you're able to quickly solve the problem the following considerations may not come into play. Temporary confusion is not an emergency but it can lead to one. Don't jump the gun but don't allow tunnel-vision during a true emergency be the cause of tragedy.

Consider the following actions as some of the problem-solving steps to use during your MAYDAY:

ORIENT YOURSELF

While this may be a difficult thing to do - take a few seconds to calm down and get your bearings. What's the status of your air supply? What were you doing? Were you near a wall? Advancing or following a hose line? Were you on the first floor, second floor, in the basement? Who was with you and where are they now? By performing a quick assessment of the situation you may be able to quickly solve it. Don't panic and begin moving aimlessly throughout the structure - your entry should have been system-

atic and your actions during this problem solving should be the same.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CREW

There should be at least one other firefighter with you! Are you separated? Can you communicate? Constant communication during fireground operations is essential, especially among individual crews. If for some reason you are unable to contact your crew then it's likely they don't know your situation.

Fireground noise makes it difficult to hear, period! Radio technology doesn't help the situation. Does every member on the fireground carry a portable radio? If not, is there at least one radio per inside crew? Where do you carry your radio? In your chest pocket? Pants pocket? Do you use a lapel microphone? **Can you hear everything that is being relayed over the radio?** (*Probably not!*) Consider these things when trying to contact your crew inside a structure.

Consider the normal course of action in notifying your crew. The first thing that's usually done is simply calling out to the other crew members - *through an SCBA*. If the crew isn't real close then they probably can't hear you. A radio transmis-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



YOUR MAYDAY...FROM PAGE 5

Sending firefighters into structures without providing them training to respond to their own emergencies should never be allowed.

sion may come next - *if everyone carries a radio*. What happens next if those attempts fail? One other option is sounding a tool. Make as much noise as possible with the tool and/or activate your PASS device (see below). ***Don't give up in trying to communicate inside the structure but don't let tunnel-vision prevent you from dealing with the real problem!***

ALERT COMMAND

This is the time that the radio you've always carried pays for itself - if you use it! All too often a firefighter in trouble waits until late in the stages of the situation before calling for help - Why? The easiest thing to do - if the problem is overcome - is to make another radio transmission declaring the problem solved. Whether you're injured and can't move or simply disoriented and beginning to troubleshoot the problem, notifying Command is an early step in the process. In the event that you're unable to solve the problem help is already on the way.

Some of the more important things to relay to Command are: your unit number, the problem, your location (or last known location), what assignment you were performing and the status of your crew. It may be that your crew is unaware of the problem or they may be actively working to correct it - in any case it is important for accountability reasons.

SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The above actions during your MAYDAY should take only a few seconds. Dealing with the problem should be your highest priority - and the above actions are part of dealing with it. Over the past few years there has been a tremendous amount of emphasis placed on *Get Out Alive, Firefighter Survival, and Rapid Intervention* training. During your MAYDAY, we can only hope that you've been paying attention and been involved in this type of training. There are a number of skills that can be attempted to solve your MAYDAY and it's time to put them to the test. Use what you've learned - improvise if you have to -

to find a way to solve your problem and get out. Help should already be on the way. **Don't omit the next step if your initial attempts to solve the problem don't succeed!**

ACTIVATE YOUR PASS

This means manual alarm mode - it should already be turned on! One of the first things that all firefighters need to focus on is the sound of an activated PASS device during fireground operations. The first thing that should be done when you hear a PASS device going off is to check and make sure it isn't your own. If it is then reset it! ***How many times have you ignored a nearby PASS device? How often was it yours? How many times have you let an activated PASS device move right by you?***

During your personal MAYDAY, activate your PASS device to alert others that you need help. If the members of your department are trained and conditioned to proactively react to an activated PASS device then they'll know somebody is in trouble. You may only be a few feet from other firefighters but they won't know unless they hear you. Don't focus solely on solving the problem and become so exhausted or overcome that your PASS device must remain motionless for 25 to 30 seconds before it activates. That 30 seconds may allow the RIT to pass right by - they should be moving at a pretty fast clip because they're searching for a firefighter in trouble. ***Why take a chance!***

SOLVE THE PROBLEM

This was discussed just before *Activating Your PASS* but is repeated here because it is critical to continue trying to solve the problem. Seconds count! Remain calm, orient yourself, know that help is on the way (you've broadcast a MAYDAY and activated your PASS), and systematically attempt to solve your problem.

IF YOU CAN'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM

If you're unable to solve the problem then do everything you can to make sure the RIT can locate you. Communicate with Command again. Communicate with the RIT if possible. Make sure your PASS is activated. Sound with a tool. At this point the success of the operation hinges on the RIT's ability to find you. ***Make sure you and your department are prepared in the unlikely event that you find yourselves in this situation!***

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



Hey in there, don't break any windows!

Tom Brennan
 Chief (retired) – Waterbury, CT, Fire Department

“Hey in there, don't break any windows!” Is this a familiar cry, scream, or radio message on your fireground? The single universal quality that this statement shares on most firegrounds on which a structure (possibly occupied) is being attacked is that it is shouted from the outside of the building. The fire is usually “doubtful,” not yet under control, and the interior teams are suffering from the new firefighter disease, “Lackapeople.” As many times as I have heard it myself while in a primary search tactic, I have never heard it next to my ear that was close to the floorboards while I was wishing I was out of there.

The question remains, When you are searching the interior of a fire building and come to a window, do you break it or not? Hmm, well, if you were to ask me, my answer would be simple: “If breaking that window will make you comfortable enough to search another foot on the primary search, break it.” We would most definitely talk about it later in the critique, and its lesson will be obvious for all. So, break it for now and for many, many reasons.

REASONS FOR BREAKING THE WINDOWS

1. You may need it for your own mental and physiological stability. That means that instead of turning around and aborting the primary search, you continue.
2. The area has additional light—real light, not fire glow. Panic in the search team has settled back a few notches. Don't forget the calming effect breaking glass has on the other inside crews as well.
3. It gives the victims who are unconscious and in some type of uncontrolled breathing or who are not breathing a little more time for us to find them. The carbon monoxide levels at the floor level begin to drop.

IF BREAKING THAT WINDOW WILL MAKE YOU COMFORTABLE ENOUGH TO SEARCH ANOTHER FOOT ON THE PRIMARY SEARCH, BREAK IT.

4. Visibility improves, at least at floor level. You can see things that were hidden by the pressurized blackness before the window was broken.
5. It can get a little cooler.
6. In one- and two-story buildings (three and four with personal ropes), you just identified for yourself your second means of egress when and if conditions deteriorate within the next few moments.
7. The outside people (if they stop shouting, “Stop breaking the glass!”) will know where you are. You told them you were going there, remember? Now, they know exactly where you are because searching firefighters, not civilians, break windows. Now, they can properly place portable ladders at your second means of egress.

VENTING REMINDER

Remember, fire buildings can be vented in two ways (at least at this writing, though we are going in a direction in which soon there will not be enough people to do anything).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Essentials of

*Chief Alan Brunacini
Phoenix, AZ, Fire Department*

INCIDENT COMMAND

The eight Command Functions that follow help create a fireground game plan that drives the basic incident management system.

COMMAND FUNCTION #1

ASSUME/CONFIRM/

POSITION COMMAND

Major Goal: *To quickly establish and confirm a single IC and to place the IC in the most effective command position.*

Confirm command assumption as soon as you arrive, and then act like Command on the radio, stay put in your rig unless the direct engagement of your body can make a difference in saving the kid, submerging the fire, or protecting your crew. The early windows of opportunity offer the best chance for us to achieve offensive outcomes - fire customers with a lot of interior seniority are generally dead; and older, well-established, expanding fire situations exist in bigger defensive windows. Eliminate and ZIP (zero impact period) or initial free lancing by loading the beginning of the event with strong, empowered command - it's our best chance of starting under control, staying under control, and never losing control. The first five minutes are worth the next five hours.

COMMAND FUNCTION #2

SITUATION EVALUATION

Major Goal: *To develop a regular approach to situation evaluation, using the standard forms of information management and incident factors.*

Avoid fancy evaluation systems during fast and dirty initial fire ground stages. Look at what's going on from

where you are, pick out the critical stuff, forecast where the problem is going, get someone (company/sector) on the opposite side from you who can report on Side C conditions. Try to convert assumptions to facts - don't be distracted by minor stuff - don't let the fire hypnotize you - avoid tunnel vision - stay awake/stay ahead of surprises. Don't let a lot going on in the beginning overload you. Sort out and line up information around rescue/fire control/property conservation and focus on going to work on those priorities. You must retain your command sanity, particularly in the beginning of the event. The fire will do everything it can to distract you. These distractions can make effective information impossible. If looking at the fire makes you nuts, turn your back on it.

COMMAND FUNCTION #3

COMMUNICATIONS

Major Goal: *To initiate, maintain, and control effective incident communications.*

Capture control of the communications process from the very beginning. Pay attention, listen critically and quickly position yourself to always be available for incoming radio messages. Continually direct and connect incident communications in a positive way to help folks trying to communicate from tough spots. Effective communications becomes the major capability and mechanism (tool) of the IC. Remember, the IC pretty much is out of business if he/she loses control of the overall communications process. Always use the command post as your communications field office. Take your time, don't talk too loud or fast. Create a positive command image by being the incident radio superstar - don't ever let 'em see you sweat - sound cool - be cool.



PROFILE OF THE EFFECTIVE IC

- Creates effective action/continual focus on standard outcomes
- Technically competent/street smart
- Disciplined and consistent/flexible and responsive
- High consciousness and awareness level
- Strong tactical focus/manages distractions and stress
- Psychologically stable/cool head
- Risk/safety manager - always reflects concern for personnel & customers
- Information manager/quick decider
- Straight forward communicator - talks clearly/listens critically
- Command competent: system activator - SOP manager
- Focus on function/strong ego control
- Strong delegator (continually assists/coaches subordinates)
- Develops, uses and escalates organizational elements to fit situation
- Invents creative and innovative solutions

COMMAND FUNCTION #4

DEPLOYMENT

Major Goal: To provide and manage a steady, adequate, timely stream of appropriate resources.

Figure out what you will need based on what is going on and your best shot at what will happen and then order that resource from Alarm. Don't screw around - be pessimistic, order big, order early (send it home if you don't need it). Don't write a tactical check you don't have the resources to cash. Virtually every fire ground operation requires real, live firefighters to execute. Most of the time the limiting factor in effective resource management is

how many firefighters the system can deliver in the beginning of the event. Delivering an army of firefighters after the window of opportunity closes is just interesting. You pick the time and the place where you're going to fight and take enough with you to get the job done.

COMMAND FUNCTION #5

IDENTIFY STRATEGY/DEVELOP ACTION PLAN

Major Goal: To use a regular, systematic method to make basic strategy decisions and to develop and initiate an action plan.

Quickly and consciously decide if we go inside or stay outside - wherever possible, front-end load a rapid, strong, offensive, inside attack, but control those overly aggressive souls who have a post hypnotic suggestion that all initial operations are automatically offensive and instinctively jump into the interior even if they are about to wear it. Our strength is quick force - if you aren't bigger and badder than the problem - the problem wins. Stay connected to the troops and always be ready to change strategy/location to match changing conditions. Never, ever, trade firefighters for dead customers or lost property. Initially and periodically ask yourself, "Is what we're trying to accomplish worth the risk I'm taking with our human resources (firefighters)?" If the answer is "no," stop doing what you're doing. Remember, you didn't light the fire - God meant some buildings to burn.

COMMAND FUNCTION #6

INCIDENT ORGANIZATION

Major Goal: To develop an effective incident organization using the sector system to decentralize geographic and functional responsibility.

Quickly create a sector-based organization to delegate area (7 sides) and major functional responsibility. Organize early and aggressively - create and then push your own power curve. Establish only the part of the command system that is required to get the job done. Don't get overloaded - don't play catch up. Assign the initial unit in area/function as a sector for early organization and control. Take on a partner before you get into trouble. Stay in the command post, listen, support your sectors and let them manage right from where the action is actually going on - stay strategic - emphasize safety - micromanagement sucks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



FIREFIGHTER

SURVIVAL GEAR

Constant training is required to remain proficient at any job - firefighting is no different. The excuse that “*we don’t need to train - we do it every day*” is nothing more than an excuse. Most of the busiest fire companies train on a continuous basis - staying prepared and keeping up with the latest techniques and technologies. What’s this got to do with firefighter survival gear, right? Basically, if you can’t take care of the basics during an emergency then it’s unlikely you’ll be able to take care of yourself or your crew!

What Could Go Wrong?

Who knows! It’s really not about what could go wrong as much as it’s about what you’re prepared to do about it. What do you carry, on a regular basis, that you consider *survival gear* that will help you survive? Are you proficient at using the *survival gear*?

A PARTIAL LISTING...

Everyone carries different things - and sharing that information with others is the only way to expand on the possibilities. Take a minute to review the gear that you carry and that the members in your crew carry. Next, take a minute to think of what could go wrong inside a structure and how prepared you are to deal with the situation.

Radio (911 for Firefighters)

Every firefighter on the fireground should have a radio - but that’s not a reality. At the very least, every crew should be radio-equipped. If there are only enough radios for each crew then it’s essential that the crew develop a system of maintaining communication while inside. Constant checks with crew members will keep confusion down and maintain accountability. In the event that you or your crew develop a problem it can be relayed to Command.

PASS Device

Many departments have gone with integrated PASS alarms - we’ve solved the problem of not turning on the PASS now we just need to enforce the SCBA use policy! If a situation arises that you can’t solve then activate your PASS alarm. If the problem is solved turn it off, reset it, and let the RIT team and Command know. It’s that simple! If the PASS isn’t activated then you may not be found.

Flashlight

A little light can go a long way - even if it’s just to calm things down. Battery maintenance, either by keeping some on hand or maintaining a constant charge on rechargeable batteries, is a big issue. How many times have you tried to use a flashlight only to see the dim light go out? Another thought - if you are in a MAYDAY situation and awaiting help - leave your flashlight on and pointing away from you. This light may be something that allows you to be found.

Hand Tool (Axe, Halligan, Extinguisher)

They’re too heavy. They’re for the truck guys. We only need one per crew. What’s your personalized excuse?





Hand tools can provide a way out! Maybe it's a personal choice when you enter a structure but it's your choice. Have you ever breached a wall to retreat from a life-threatening condition? With your hands and feet? Maybe with drywall but what about paneling or plywood? Consider taking a hand tool with you anytime you're inside a structure. The locked door you encounter may be your only way out and with heat keeping you close to the floor a tool may be your only option.

Harness / Escape System / Escape Rope

This has become popular personal gear with the recent popularity of *Get Out Alive* training programs – *and it should be!* A harness and escape system are great additions to your survival gear as long as you remain proficient in using them. Too many firefighters are beginning to carry this type of equipment without ever training in realistic conditions. When your personal emergency strikes time is critical - the system is only as good as your ability to use it. Escape systems should be considered when working in multi-story occupancies.

Some firefighters have opted to carry just an escape rope - instead of a harness and / or system. Once again, training is critical to the success of these tools. They are worth their weight in gold as long as you remain proficient with them.

Search Rope

Disorientation has been known to kill firefighters. When performing search operations it's not always possible to stay on the wall. The size of the room dictates the type of search

that will be effective. When working as part of a search team a search rope can increase your efficiency and effectiveness. Again, training is critical to gaining and maintaining that efficiency.

Webbing / Sling

Webbing can be used for any number of things. It is a great piece of equipment to assist in moving a downed firefighter. While the SCBA strap works well, the webbing can give you a little more room so that you're not constantly fighting with the SCBA tank during the drag. The webbing can also be used to control a doorway, or maintain contact with a search partner during the search. It's a versatile piece of equipment that doesn't take up much space.

Don't Forget Door Chocks

Pretty simple, but how many actually carry them? A hose line may prevent a door from shutting completely, or the door may cut off the water supply. One thing is for sure - if you don't have a hose line the option doesn't exist. Carry a few door chocks with you - make sure they're large enough to get the job done.

Don't forget about doors that automatically lock behind you. If, for some reason, a door chock gets knocked out on these types of doors make sure you've used something to prevent the lock from locking. A piece of inner tube with door knob holes will prevent a lot of extra effort.

TRAINING SESSION

Here's a simple training session for a rainy day - or any day for that matter. This session will not only help familiarize your crew with the various pieces of *firefighter survival gear*, it will let them know what each member carries.

Have all participants, wearing their PPE and carrying any equipment they would normally carry into a structure, form a small circle where everyone can see each other. Pick a starting point and have that firefighter begin by explaining each piece of equipment carried.

After all participants have finished - and repacked all their equipment - have a brief discussion to see if there may be other equipment or suggestions that would be useful. If there are ideas that come up, see if the equipment is currently available on the apparatus. If it's not then suggest the department look into it.

Rick Decorie, Lieutenant — Danville, IL, Fire Department

Take a few minutes to review your *Survival Gear*. Do you need to make a few adjustments? Are you proficient with the equipment you're carrying? *Are you carrying something else? Let us know and we'll pass it along to others.*



AIR SUPPLY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4



A limitation of buddy breathing is that both firefighters are sharing the same air supply.

fighters approaches the length of the hose then the air supply of one or both firefighters may be compromised! Keep that in mind when using this option.

RIT AIR PACKS

The difficulty in securing the air supply using an SCBA brought in with the RIT depends on the type of SCBA being used by the downed firefighter.

Same Brand SCBA

If the same brand of SCBA is being used the process involves switching the downed firefighter from their air supply to the new air supply. This may involve a complete regulator swap or a simple quick-connect hose swap. In any case, everything should be ready to go before making the exchange to reduce the amount of exposure to the environment. Once the exchange is made simply secure the RIT pack to the firefighter and remove him.

Different Brand SCBA

When the RIT encounters a different brand SCBA securing the air supply is a bit more involved. In this case, the entire face piece will need to be swapped due to the incompatibilities. *As stated above – make sure everything is ready to go before making the swap to ensure minimal exposure to the environment.* The new face piece is already attached to the RIT pack so once the swap is made simply secure the RIT pack to the firefighter and remove him.



An important component that must be included in the RIT pack is a means to attach the pack to the firefighter. This pack is attached with a carabiner to the existing SCBA harness. By leaving the original SCBA on the fire - fighter the straps can be used to assist in removal.

A FEW ADDITIONAL POINTS...

- Make sure the RIT pack air supply is full before entering and that it's turned on before making the exchange.
- **Leave the existing SCBA in place and utilize the straps to assist in removing the firefighter.**
- Consider incorporating *Air Supply Secured* as one of the fireground benchmarks for RIT operations.

TRAINING POINTS...

- Train all crews on all aspects of RIT emergency air supply operations.
- Refresh all crews on the use of buddy breathing hoses (if applicable), their advantages, and disadvantages.



YOUR MAYDAY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

AIR SUPPLY TRAINING SESSIONS

Use a vacant structure, training facility, or the apparatus bay to conduct the following RIT emergency air supply training scenarios. Scenarios should progress from familiarization to full-blown, no-visibility, rescues.

Quick Removal from the Environment

This option has limited uses but should be included in all training sessions to avoid tunnel vision during emergency operations. Securing the air supply may be as simple as moving the firefighter to a nearby window and awaiting a ladder! Deploy a RIT to search for a downed firefighter. Place the firefighter in close proximity to a window. When the RIT finds the firefighter they should secure the air supply by removing the firefighter through the window.

Buddy Breathing Exit

All firefighters with buddy breathing capabilities should be proficient at establishing buddy breathing and exiting the building. Set up a scenario where an interior crew comes across a firefighter with a low air emergency. Have a crew member establish buddy breathing and exit the building with the firefighter.



Be familiar with all SCBA you may come in contact with. The face piece quick-connect and buddy breathing connection are in the same area on this particular unit. Are they on yours?

RIT Air Pack

Deploy a RIT to search for a missing firefighter. When the firefighter is found secure his air supply using the RIT air pack. Once secured, remove the firefighter from the building.

Conduct this evolution for each type of SCBA that may be encountered. Make sure to include at least one scenario that requires exchanging the face piece.

MAYDAY TRAINING SESSIONS

There are a number of *Get Out Alive, and Rapid Intervention* skills that can be done during company training sessions. The following training sessions should focus on the above steps for solving your MAYDAY. All of these drills should be done using SCBA in no visibility conditions.

Find a Hose line and Follow to Safety

This session involves orienting yourself inside the structure, finding a hose line, determining the direction to safety and following the line out. Use a vacant structure, training facility or the apparatus floor and lay out a charged attack line. Incorporate loops in the line and place obstacles to be encountered (furniture, etc.). In no visibility conditions place a firefighter away from the attack line and have them find their way out. Add a few smoke detectors for sound and distraction. **Make sure the loops and obstacles provide the firefighter with a challenge. Do your firefighters know how to follow the couplings out of a building?**

Alert Command & PASS Device

Using the same scenario as above, have the firefighter locate the line and move to safety. At a point in the line provide an obstacle (a closed apparatus door works well) that can't be overcome. At this point the firefighter should alert command of the problem and provide information that will assist in locating and removing him. The information should include the line and the obstruction. After the transmission the firefighter should activate his PASS device. Depending on the size of the structure there may be an exit or exterior wall nearby. Try anything to get out but don't get too far away from the location the RIT is coming to.

Additional Training...

Every firefighter, and department, should participate in *Get Out Alive and Rapid Intervention Team* training. Sending firefighters into structures without providing them training to respond to their own emergencies should not be allowed. Sending, or assigning, rapid intervention teams that have not trained to perform rapid intervention skills is like not having a rapid intervention team at all.

How have you prepared to handle your own MAYDAY? Send in any tips or techniques you have come up with so that they can be shared with others.



ESSENTIALS...FROM PAGE 9

COMMAND FUNCTION #7

REVIEW/REVISION

Major Goal: *To complete the steps required to keep the strategy and action plan current.*

Set up in the beginning so you can move and maintain control to always match your current plan with current conditions. Pay attention and keep forecasting where the problems are going. Use strong sectors and ongoing communications to stay mean and mobile. Control conditions - don't live with a bad situation... evaluate, react, revise, do something different. Always have firefighters in a retrievable mode, consider retreat and survival, and be ready to move quick. Be extremely careful of desperate situations where the only way firefighters can possibly survive is to put the fire out. Don't screw around with deteriorating conditions. Remember, it's almost impossible to revise a non-plan.

COMMAND FUNCTION #8

CONTINUE/TRANSFER/TERMINATE COMMAND

Major Goal: *To develop a standard approach to command transfer, and to operating the mid-point and final stages of command.*

Set up command to outlast the fire. Use the CP advantage, establish sectors, invest in sound-current evaluation, connect everyone with effective communications. Use the command staff to support long term IC impact and durability. Don't beat up the entire command staff during the front end of long campaign events. Forecast incident time and assign rotating teams to provide ongoing command. Effective command transfer and escalation uses organizational management capability to strengthen, expand, and improve command. All the fire understands is water and could care less if a Captain or Deputy Chief is the IC. If you can't improve the quality of command, simply don't transfer it.

HEYIN THERE...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

There is venting for fire, which includes vertical and horizontal ventilation. This is textbook venting. First, vertical ventilation usually is equated with the roof. This move should not be coordinated and should be started without orders on arrival.

Then horizontal venting is performed, enhancing the conditions on the fire floor after the nozzles have charged and are preparing to move inward. First ventilate the openings opposite the nozzle direction, behind the fire, in the rear. Then, as the line moves in the occupancy, initiate assisted horizontal ventilation where possible at the flanks.

Venting for life is different. It is to open the structure to gain access to suspected life-whether it is seen on arrival, reported verbally on arrival, or suspected by size-up. You must do something to the building to get to your objective. Vent to redirect the fire. Vent to calm yourself down. And vent for all the reasons given above.

I remember sharing a podium with another instructor for a two-day seminar for fire chiefs in a Middle Atlantic state (where the fire wizard is purported to live). I was speaking of the exact event depicted here when a chief rose to his feet and said, "Sir, no one breaks any glass on my fire-ground until I get there." To which I retorted (to this insane statement), "What if you're on vacation?" After which, he went to the ICS manual, addendum 7b, and left the room.

Random Thoughts...Fire Engineering – April 1998

SHARE YOUR LAST TRAINING SESSION

We'd like to hear about your last training session and we're sure that the other members in the Network would as well. Send in a brief description of your last training session. Include the equipment needed, amount of time it took, and any other particulars that made the session work.

Remember, sharing...of thoughts, ideas, experiences, innovations and just plain comments will allow us to reach levels together that we could never reach alone!

Fire Department Training Network

Join Today!



a division of FIRESCUE Incorporated

The **Fire Department Training Network** is a network of individuals, departments, companies, and manufacturers dedicated to increasing fire fighter awareness, knowledge, skill, and ability, through quality training. *In plain english, we're a group of firefighters that are constantly picking each others brains to find out the latest tips and techniques available to make the job easier.* An important feature of the Network is that we're constantly trying to keep each other motivated to continue training and learning, finding interesting ways to make the same old stuff challenging and unique ways to make the new stuff sink in.

The Network, through the membership, is constantly trying to stay up with the latest technologies in the profession. We're continually striving to come up with more efficient and innovative ways to get the job done and share that

information with each other. "Re-inventing the wheel" is not what we're after – but more importantly – we're searching for **unique ways to make today's training fresh, exciting, and effective.** We get together when we can, communicate as often as possible, and try to remain as focused as possible all in an effort to achieve increased levels of knowledge and performance. It's the strength of the members, and their contributions, that helps us all stay interested, motivated and moving forward.

One of the greatest advantages of the Network is the tremendous number of ideas, techniques, tips, and tricks that pass between the members. A firefighter's greatest challenge is continued motivation and desire to learn, or refresh, required skills. Once learned, a skill must be continually reinforced in order to result in proficient use when the skill is

needed. Many times we learn or study a technique and then "shelve" the learning until many months, or years, later when we are required to pull it out under emergency conditions and hope we remember how to perform it. With today's time demands on individuals and groups the reduced time available results in more reliance on training which occurs less frequently. Potentially a **BIG PROBLEM!**

We go under the belief that there are many successful and innovative ways to perform any job. The Network strives to broaden the knowledge base of all members, and the profession, by providing exposure to as many techniques as possible in hopes that the new outlook, different approach, or re-exposure to the material enhances the proficiency, success and safety of all who are involved.

APPLICATION ON BACK!

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

1 INDIVIDUAL

\$48⁰⁰/YR

Members receive the monthly publication *FIRESCUE Interactive: The 21st Century Training Guide*, a Network window decal and a membership card. Members also receive discounts on FIRESCUE products, access to other Network members with similar interests, and the opportunity to share, interact, and grow with others in the profession.

2 DEPARTMENT

\$240⁰⁰/YR

In addition to the above listed benefits, Department members also receive a monthly training package dedicated to an individual training topic/task which includes a training plan, activity worksheets, student handout master, class roster and resource listing.

3 COMPANY

\$300⁰⁰/YR

Company membership is for those manufacturers and companies that support training. Company members receive the same benefits as individual members plus discounts on advertising in *FIRESCUE Interactive*, and access to the Fire Department Training Network Referral Service.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION ON BACK...

FAX OR MAIL APPLICATION TO:

Fire Department Training Network

(317) 823-9678 • (317) 823-0839 FAX
WWW.FDTRAINING.COM



FEB. 26 – MARCH 4, 2001

*Indiana Convention Center and RCA Dome
Indianapolis, Indiana*

1-888-TEL-FDIC

Visit the Training Network at www.fdtype.com

NETWORK APPLICATION

Name: _____ Rank/Title: _____

Department/Agency: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

- MEMBERSHIP TYPE:**
- Individual
 - Department
 - Company

FDIC020

PAYMENT

The Fire Department Training Network
is a division of FIRESCUE INTERACTIVE.
MAIL TO: Fire Department Training Network,
P.O. Box 1852, Indianapolis, IN 46206
(317) 823-9678 • (317) 823-0839 FAX

Bill me Check enclosed Department PO _____

MC/Visa #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Fire Department Training Network
P.O. Box 1852
Indianapolis, IN 46206