

# Hennepin County (MN) Fire Chief Association

## Standard Operating Guideline

---

Subject: Standardized Rapid Intervention Team Activities

Date: July 23, 2010

Guideline Number: 10-01

---

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

This standard operating procedure provides a standardized approach and guidelines for the incorporation of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) into the overall incident management plan.

This Recommended Standard Operating Procedure (RSOP) defines the RIT concept; outlines the requirements for a unit intending to fulfill the role of a RIT; and discusses procedures regarding the dispatch, staging, operation, management and safety of a RIT.

This guideline is not intended to supersede individual department policy. Participation in these RIT standardized operating procedure is voluntary.

### **2.0 SCOPE:**

This RSOP applies to all units that respond as a RIT to fire and/or rescue incidents within Hennepin County, Minnesota. It also applies to all units fulfilling the RIT role while operating at fire and/or rescue incidents within Hennepin County.

### **3.0 DEFINITIONS:**

- 3.1 Incident Commander: Position within the Incident Command System that is responsible for the overall management of the incident. Synonymous with the word "Command".
- 3.2 Mayday: The distress signal used to alert the incident commander and all personnel operating on an emergency scene of a situation where a firefighter's life is in imminent danger.
- 3.3 Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A team which shall consist of a minimum of three (3) trained firefighters equipped and ready to assist firefighters whose lives are in danger.
- 3.4 Staging: An area on the fireground where personnel and equipment are kept to provide a reserve of personnel for orderly deployment.
- 3.5 Group: A level of organization within the Incident Command System. Groups are used to divide

the incident into functional assignments. Supervision of personnel is assigned to a Group Supervisor.

- 3.6 Division: A level of organization within the Incident Command System. Divisions are used to divide the incident into geographical area(s) of operations. Supervision of personnel is assigned to a Division Supervisor.
- 3.7 Incident Command System: A management system to safely manage, direct, and coordinate the activities of emergency response personnel.
- 3.8 Company: A group of fire personnel.
- 3.9 Rapid Intervention Dispatch: The automatic dispatch of an additional fire company (engine/ladder) to serve as an initial RIT.
- 3.10 Rapid Intervention Division/Group: A specific set of resources and supervisory officer that are formed to serve as a Rescue Division/Group in the event of RIT deployment.
- 3.11 Size-up: A system used to identify the nature and severity of the incident; to gather information; and to formulate an action plan.
- 3.12 RIT Kit/Bag: A storage bag designed to carry essential RIT equipment such as SCBA, facepiece, cutting tools and rope/webbing.
- 3.13 On-Deck: A personnel management system that maintains an adequate resource pool of personnel ready for immediate deployment for: reinforcing a tactical position, crew relief, another tactical position as assigned, or a Mayday/rapid intervention response.
- 3.14 RIT/On-Deck: Rapid Intervention Team responsibility is assumed and incorporated into the On-Deck resource management system.
- 3.15 Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH): An atmosphere likely to cause death or immediate or delayed permanent adverse health effects or prevent escape from such an environment.

#### **4.0 PROCEDURE:**

Rapid Intervention Team Requirements: Personnel

- 4.1 A minimum of three (3) trained firefighters who have demonstrated their knowledge and skills in fire suppression and rescue. Skilled in the following fire service skills:
  - Minimum certification at the Firefighter I level as recognized by the Minnesota Fire Service Certification system.
- 4.2 Minimum of one supervisor to provide direction, coordination and control of the assigned team.
- 4.3 Personnel assigned to operate in the RIT/RIT On-Deck shall have received training in operating in IDLH atmospheres.

## Rapid Intervention Team Requirements: Equipment

- 4.4 Full complement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with SCBA. Other initial mandated equipment includes:
- Portable radio(s);
  - Hand light(s);
  - Set of “Irons” (flat head axe and Halligan tool);
  - Search rope, minimum 150 feet; and
  - RIT Kit/Bag
- 4.5 A staging area may be established to provide a ready source of additional equipment. Tool staging may include:
- Thermal Imaging Camera
  - Basket stretcher
  - Saws
  - Ladders (folding and roof)
  - Pneumatic and hydraulic rescue equipment
  - Medical kit
  - Hand tools
  - SCBA
- 4.6 The following is the minimum equipment required to be stored in the department RIT Kit/Bag. Departments may add to this minimum equipment list. Minimum equipment in RIT Kit/Bag includes:
- Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Cylinder (or complete SCBA unit);
  - SCBA Face piece;
  - Wire Cable Cutters;
  - Rope (life safety). Minimum of 50’;
  - One (1) 10’ webbing section;
  - Two (2) carabineers: and
  - Two (2) 16’ sections of webbing.

## Rapid Intervention Team Requirements: Responsibilities

- 4.7 The RIT unit leader shall report to the Incident Commander (IC) or Operations Section Chief. The following actions shall occur or as the situation dictates:
- Ascertain where companies are operating, communication frequency, and general fireground strategy, and elapsed time from initial dispatch.
  - Familiarize crew with available RIT Kit/Bag.
  - Complete a 360-degree walk around of the structure. Observe access and egress points.

- Choose a tactical deployment area for the team where the team can quickly respond.
- Test power and hydraulic tools at the RIT staging area, prior to service.
- Stage outside of the collapse zone of the structure. Position at the corner of a structure if you believe structural integrity is compromised.
- Ask for a second RIT/on-deck team to be put into service if you believe you cannot reach all parts of a structure in a timely manner.
- The tools staged for the RIT team shall not be taken by non-members of the RIT team for structural firefighting.
- Monitor communications.
- Know where all crews are working in regard to the structure, both inside and out. Familiarize yourself with the layout of the structure.
- Request that ground ladders be placed to facilitate the quick entry/removal of firefighters.

#### Rapid intervention Team Requirements: Resources

- 4.8 To achieve adequate resources for suppression and RIT activities, the IC may incorporate one or both of the following strategies to increase on-scene resources:
- Upon the receipt of a working structure fire (calls indicating a working fire) incident or upon the request of the IC, an additional engine/truck/rescue company may automatically be dispatched to serve as the RIT. This RIT assignment does not replace traditional or automatic mutual aid. The RIT assignment is an additional set of resources used exclusively for RIT or On-Deck functions. The RIT assignment may be cancelled by the IC if deemed appropriate. A RIT assignment may also be requested for other incidents involving high risk to firefighters. Individual fire departments shall be responsible to amend their alarm levels and identify the RIT assignment with their communications center.
  - The agency may increase their first alarm and greater alarm assignments.

#### Rapid Intervention Team: Management and Communications:

- 4.9 The RIT shall be assigned and operate as a unit at all times. Crew integrity shall be maintained.
- 4.10 The RIT company shall respond using its normal radio identifier. When acknowledging this response, the communications center shall advise the responding company of the tactical radio frequency assigned.
- 4.11 The RIT capabilities shall be maintained. Do not assign fireground duties to firefighters specifically assigned to the RIT function.
- 4.12 The RIT shall monitor fireground operating radio frequencies.
- 4.13 In the event of a fireground emergency requiring a RIT deployment, the IC should consider the following:

- Request that the communications center clear the frequencies for "emergency traffic" and have the Mayday tone activated.
  - Have all companies maintain radio discipline.
  - The Rapid Intervention Division/ Group Supervisor shall manage and coordinate the response and the rescue and recovery of the downed firefighter.
- 4.14 The RIT unit leader shall coordinate team relief through the IC or Operations Chief as necessary. Both mental and physical readiness must be considered when scheduling RIT relief.
- The RIT unit leader shall be cognizant of the prevailing weather conditions for the RIT in staging. It is recommended that RIT members be rotated out of RIT staging following two (2) hours of service.
- 4.15 When the on-scene RIT is deployed, an additional RIT shall be assembled and/or dispatched to the scene.

#### RIT Safety

- 4.16 The RIT shall be assigned and operate as an intact company at all times.
- 4.17 The RIT Group and / or team leader shall be authorized and prepared to abort or back the RIT out of any situation if the mission becomes unachievable or too unsafe.
- 4.18 All members of the RIT shall take all reasonable safety precautions, in accordance with nationally recognized industry practices to ensure their own safety and the safety of their team members. There shall be at no time any freelancing or reckless acts by any member of the RIT.
- 4.19 While the RIT is in service, the Rapid Intervention Division/Group Supervisor shall be responsible for monitoring the length of time the RIT is in the hazardous area.
- 4.20 Personnel accountability shall be maintained by the Accountability or On-Deck officer.

#### Storage of RIT KIT/BAG

- 4.21 Apparatus compartments containing the RIT Kit/Bag shall be identified with the letter "R" (white letter, black background).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The safety and survival of lost and/or trapped firefighters will be enhanced by the formation of a team of properly equipped, rested, and readily available firefighters able to provide a rapid response to life-threatening emergencies on the incident scene.