


Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

FIRE CHIEF'S GENERAL ORDER

NUMBER: 11-04

February 1, 2011

TO: All MCFRS Personnel

FROM: Fire Chief Richard Bowers 

SUBJECT: Creation of an All Hazards MAYDAY Procedure - Amendment to the *Standard Operating Procedures for Safe Structural Firefighting Operations*

This FCGO amends and supersedes in its entirety, Section III., **MAYDAY** (pp. 8 – 11) of MCFRS Policy and Procedure 24-07AMII, **SOP for Safe Structural Firefighting Operations**, dated 12/1/05. **This FCGO will be effective on April 3, 2011, after a 60-day training period.** All MCFRS personnel must become familiar with, and when appropriate, implement the procedures in this FCGO.

The purpose of this amendment is to emphasize that a MAYDAY can occur at any type of incident. Therefore, an All-Hazards MAYDAY Procedure is warranted. This new procedure incorporates lessons learned from previous MCFRS Mayday incidents.

.....

III. MAYDAY. A MAYDAY is an emergency distress signal indicating that one or more fire/rescue personnel need emergency assistance to escape an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmosphere, or another life threatening situation.

This FCGO describes: a. Conditions that warrant a MAYDAY; b. Procedures for declaring a MAYDAY; and c. Incident Commander Actions during a MAYDAY.

a. **Conditions that Warrant a MAYDAY**

All personnel must be able to recognize situations where they, their crew, or another crew may be in imminent danger. Personnel must declare a MAYDAY when they are involved in, or witness other personnel involved in distress, including any of the conditions below.

1. A crew member has fallen through a roof or floor;

2. A crew member has been caught in a catastrophic event such as a flashover, explosion, backdraft, or collapse;
3. A crew member has become entangled, trapped, pinned, stuck, or separated from their crew in an IDLH atmosphere;
4. A crew member may be disoriented, missing, lost, or off a hose line or tag line in a large/open area with limited visibility;
5. A crew member's primary exit is blocked by fire or structural collapse and an alternate exit is not immediately available;
6. A crew member's low air alert activates and an immediate exit is not available; or
7. Any other situation when the life safety of a crew or a crew member may be immediately at risk.

b. **Procedures for Calling a MAYDAY**

1. The crew member(s) declaring a MAYDAY must immediately notify the Incident Commander by:
 - A. depressing the Emergency Button (EB) to activate the radio's ruthless preemption feature (enabling that radio to override all other voice transmissions on a trunked Talkgroup); and
 - B. verbally transmitting on the assigned tactical Talkgroup "**MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY,**" followed by their unit number, their location, the nature of the MAYDAY, and their resource needs.
2. The acronym **LUNAR** may be used as a memory aid for transmitting critical MAYDAY information to the Incident Commander. **LUNAR** stands for:
 - L** – Location
 - U** – Unit
 - N** – Name
 - A** – Assignment and air supply
 - R** – Resources needed
3. After successfully transmitting the MAYDAY, crew member(s) must activate their Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device(s) to assist rescue crews in finding their location.
4. When the crew member cannot successfully transmit a MAYDAY on a trunked Talkgroup, the two additional actions below may be taken.

- A. Depress the EB and transmit the MAYDAY on the NOVEMBER Talkgroup to reach the closest Battalion Chief's active Vehicle Repeater System (VRS). If the closest Battalion Chief's VRS is in STANDBY mode, the EB signal will activate the VRS.
 - B. Transmit the MAYDAY on the OSCAR Talkgroup. The Incident Commander may not be able to receive the MAYDAY on OSCAR Talkgroup, so other units on the scene must be prepared to relay the MAYDAY message to the Incident Commander. By pressing the PTT and then the EB, a distinct warble tone is transmitted over the OSCAR Talkgroup to alert listeners of the MAYDAY; however, ruthless preemption and transmitting the radio ID does not work on the OSCAR Talkgroup. ***For these reasons, all portable radios must be kept in the programmed SCAN mode, and the Incident Commander, Rapid Intervention Company (RIC), and Rapid Intervention Group (RIG) must monitor the OSCAR Talkgroup.***
- 5. When an EB is activated with no MAYDAY voice transmission, the ECC must notify the Incident Commander of the EB activation. The Incident Commander must attempt to verbally contact the crew member with an activated EB. If no response follows two requests, the Incident Commander must declare a MAYDAY.
 - 6. The Incident Commander must declare a MAYDAY for any crew or crew member that is unaccounted for during a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) after two requests.

c. **Command Actions During a MAYDAY**

- 1. Upon receiving a MAYDAY, the Incident Commander must acknowledge the MAYDAY, and then declare radio silence on all appropriate tactical Talkgroups in use on the incident.
- 2. All units must continue to conduct their tactical assignments until the Incident Commander instructs them otherwise, with due consideration for the existence of an active MAYDAY.
- 3. The Incident Commander must attempt to determine the exact location of MAYDAY crew members, the nature of the MAYDAY, and the resources needed to conduct rescue operations.
- 4. The Incident Commander must direct the Stand-By Team, the RIC, or the RIG to intervene and conduct rescue operations. The Incident Commander may reassign any units near the MAYDAY crew members to assist in rescue operations.

5. The Incident Commander may request units not directly involved in the MAYDAY to switch to an alternate tactical Talkgroup, if the command team has adequate personnel and voice radios to manage operations on multiple Talkgroups. If the Incident Commander instructs it to do so, ECC must transmit an Alert Tone (CentraCom Tone #1), and then announce the alternate tactical Talkgroup.
6. The Incident Commander must ensure a PAR is rapidly conducted when a MAYDAY has been declared, beginning with the units in the greatest danger. Any crew or crew member not accounted for during the PAR must be considered an additional MAYDAY.
7. When the MAYDAY situation has been stabilized and all operations return to normal, the Incident Commander must transmit a "MAYDAY ALL CLEAR" announcement.
8. The Incident Commander must conduct and document a Post-Incident Analysis for the MAYDAY Incident, in accordance with MCFRS Policy and Procedure # 20-02, *Incident Command System, Attachment – Post Incident Analysis*.