



## Missouri Valley Fire & Rescue Department

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### STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

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##### Chronological History

Effective: January 1, 2010

#### EMERGENCY PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM GUIDELINE

This guideline is written to identify a system of incident site personnel accountability. The purpose is to account for all emergency personnel, at any given time, within a small geographic area, within the “**Hazard Zone**” of an incident. Use of the system will provide enhanced personal safety for the individual responder and will provide the incident command staff with an improved means to track and account for all personnel working in the “hazard zone”.

The “**hazard zone**” shall be defined as an area that requires an SCBA or in which a responder is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment of the structure. This would include entering a structure reported to be on fire, operating in close proximity to the structure during exterior operations, confined space, technical rescue, etc.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability involves a personal commitment to work within the safety system at an incident.

- Command should always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of where resources are committed at an incident.
- Command will always be responsible for including accountability as a major element in the strategy and attack planning, and must consider and react to any barriers effecting accountability.
- Sector officers should always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews assigned to them. This will require the Sector Officer to be in his/her assigned area and maintaining close supervision of crews assigned to them.
- All crews are to work for Command or a Sector Officer - **NO FREELANCING.**
- Crews arriving on the scene should remain intact for all intent and purpose. A minimum crew size will be considered two or more members and radio communication is preferred.
- All crews, entering the “hazard zone”, should be supervised by a Company Officer or the Officer in Charge.
- All crews should go in together, stay together, and come out together. Reduced visibility and increased risk will require strict adherence to this policy.
- If a radio fails while in the hazard zone, the crew will exit unless there is another working radio within the crew.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS:

To enhance accountability and to improve tracking of emergency responders in the hazard zone, accountability tags

system will be used. These tags involve a plastic card with the crewmember name affixed that is turned into an Accountability Officer. The Accountability Officer may be a pump operator, Sector Officer, or a designated Accountability Officer, depending on the nature, type, and complexity of the incident.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY EQUIPMENT:**

Accountability equipment shall consist of a laminated plastic card attached to snap hook. Each card shall display the department name and the name of the person it is issued to.

When not in use the tags should be affixed to the rear ring of the users issued helmet. When placed in use the tags should be attached to the vehicle collector ring located in each unit. This collector ring is a 2" ring on the interior of the vehicle.

### **TACTICAL BENCHMARKS:**

Several accountability benchmarks are included in tactical operations. The Personnel Accountability Report ("PAR") involves a roll call of personnel assigned. For the Company Officer, a "PAR" is a confirmation that members assigned to his/her crew are accounted for. For the Sector Officer, a "PAR" is an accounting for all crewmembers assigned to his/her sector. Report of "PAR's" should be conducted face-to-face within the company or sector whenever possible.

**Example:** "Rear Sector to Command, I have a "PAR" (all assigned members accounted for).

A Personnel Accountability Report shall be required for the following situations:

- Any report of missing or trapped emergency responders.
- Any change from offensive to defensive mode.
- Any sudden hazardous event at the incident - flashover, backdraft, collapse, etc.
- By all crews reporting an "All Clear" (All crews responsible for search and rescue will ensure they have a "PAR" for their crews at the time they report an "all clear").
- **After 30 minutes elapsed time**
- At a report of "under control".
- Any situation in which the Incident Commander deems necessary.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICERS:**

Accountability Officers may be driver/pump operators, sector officers, or personnel assigned to sectors to serve as accountability officers for the sector officer.

The first apparatus to arrive at the scene of the incident will serve as the initial accountability location. The driver/pump operator will serve as the initial Accountability Officer. All crews entering the incident will deliver their accountability tags to the accountability location prior to entering the "hazard zone". As sectors are implemented, Sector Officers will manage accountability tags only if he/she is not entering the "hazard zone" (i.e., defensive operations). Where the Sector Officer must enter the "hazard zone", accountability tags will remain on the first apparatus (accountability location). As officers arrive on the scene they may be assigned accountability responsibilities for given sectors.

### **LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- LEVEL I – This level shall be used during all fire/rescue responses. Accountability tags shall be removed from the helmet location and placed on the unit Collector Ring.
- LEVEL II – When command has been established and a "hazard zone" identified the Collector Rings should be collected and placed on a status board or binder to track the location and status of all Fire/Rescue and support personnel working on the scene of an incident.

## **RULES OF THUMB:**

Accountability tag implementation should consider the following basic rules of thumb:

- Tags never enter the “hazard zone”.
- Tags must be maintained at the point of entry to the “hazard zone”.
- Tags must reflect only those personnel presently in the “hazard zone”.
- Crews must turn in their tags upon entering and must retrieve their tags upon exit from the “hazard zone”.

## **RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT):**

As the incident escalates, and/or crews are operating at a special hazard (i.e., confined space rescue), Command will assign “Rapid Intervention Team(s)” (RIT). Members assigned to “RIT” duty will serve as stand-by rescue personnel during all hazardous operations.

## **LOST/MISSING EMERGENCY PERSONNEL:**

An absent member of any crew will automatically be assumed lost or trapped in the “hazard zone” until otherwise determined safe. Company/Sector Officers must immediately report any absent member to command. For any report of missing/lost personnel Command should request the next greater response assignment or mutual-aid. Command should then initiate an immediate roll call (PAR) of all personnel operating in the “hazard zone”. Command should dispatch the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to the last reported working area of the missing responder to begin a search. Simultaneously with these actions, Command must adjust on-scene strategies to a priority search and rescue effort.

## **EVACUATION ALERT:**

In the event an emergency evacuation of personnel operating inside the “hazard zone” is required, the Incident Commander should order an established evacuation alert. This alert shall consist of a steady three minute siren tone. This alert should also consist of a special radio alert transmitted via two-way radio of a verbal announcement for all personnel to evacuate the “hazard zone”. Once the evacuation is complete a PAR shall be called for and all personnel accounted for.

## **TERMINATING THE PASSPORT SYSTEM:**

The accountability should be maintained through a benchmark of “under control”, at which time a “PAR” for all crews should be obtained. Command will determine at that time, based on the situation and risk, as to whether to continue with the accountability system. If visibility is still impaired or a significant hazardous condition still exists, Command may choose to extend the accountability system further.

Upon termination and release from the incident, Company Officers and crewmembers should ensure that the accountability tag is returned to the specified location on the apparatus and that the system is up-to-date.

**By Authority of:  
Fire Chief**

**Eugene Shaeffer**