

RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM

Purpose:

This guideline is intended to establish policy for first alarm response companies to a structure fire that has progressed beyond the incipient stage. The following addresses the on-scene staffing required to initiate an interior attack. This guideline meets the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) regulation, 1910.134.

Definitions:

- A. Incipient Stage Fire: The first phase of fire development with the beginning being actual ignition and extending until heat, smoke and/or gasses make the atmosphere hazardous to life or health.
- B. Interior Structural Firefighting: The physical activity of fire suppression, rescue, or both, inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage.
- C. IDLH: Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health, an atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible health effects or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.
- D. Imminent Life Hazard: A situation where a human could suffer impairment, injury or death, if he or she is not removed from the IDLH environment as soon as possible.
- E. Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A team of firefighters assigned the specific task of locating and rescuing firefighters that are in distress.

Establishment and Deployment:

- A. The RIT is to provide personnel for the rescue of members operating at emergency incidents if the need arises.
- B. The RIT shall be implemented at all high hazard incidents, including but not limited to: structure fires, hazardous materials incidents and technical rescues.
- C. There shall be two levels of RIT. The initial rapid intervention team (IRIT) and a RIT.
- D. A RIT shall be deployed when there has been a "MAYDAY, MAYDAY" distress signal, unaccounted for firefighters or at the request of the Incident Commander. At this time the IC shall implement PAR. PAR shall be at the 20-minute time limit and again every 10 minutes thereafter. PAR shall constitute a roll call of all personnel on the fireground by the IC, Accountability Officer or the RIT Officer.

Fireground Operations:

- A. There shall be at least four members on the fireground before conducting interior fire operations. All interior operations are presumed to be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) to include all interior structure firefighting operations which require the use of SCBA or protective clothing to protect the wearer from immediate threats to their life and/or health. The only exceptions to this is for incipient fires as defined in 29 CFR 1910.155 ©(26), as a fire which is in the initial or beginning stage and which can be extinguished without the need for protective clothing or breathing apparatus.
- B. When there are less than four members present at the fireground, exterior attack operations or other necessary exterior operations are permitted. The only exception when violating this requirement will be to save another human life. This is for known rescue situations only. The victim must have been seen, heard or someone has verified entrapment of a person(s).
- C. The three-member crew shall request assistance prior to making entry into the IDLH atmosphere for the rescue attempt.
- D. When less than four members have made an interior rescue operation, the incident shall be investigated and a complete report of the activities that occurred.
- E. The report shall include detailed investigation findings, details of the rescue, safety procedures in place at the time of the rescue and the status of the person(s) rescued.

Interior Firefighting:

- A. Members operating in (IDLH) atmospheres must operate in teams of two or more.
- B. A team is defined as two or more firefighters who operate in a buddy system. A team must stay in contact with each other by one of three means:
 - 1. Direct contact
 - 2. Voice (excluding radios)
 - 3. Visual contact

Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT):

- A. Before any member can make entry into an IDLH atmosphere there must be a least two or more members at a standby position on the outside of the structure. These members shall be the initial rapid intervention team (IRIT).
- B. The IRIT can be made up of any two or more people who are properly trained, equipped and positioned outside the IDLH atmosphere.
- C. Outside, the IRIT members shall have radio communications and full protective clothing, including SCBA, that is readily available to don.

- D. The outside IRIT accounts for the interior team(s) and remains capable of rapid rescue of the interior team.
- E. The outside IRIT must at all times be available to assist or rescue members of an interior team. Any task that the outside IRIT performs while in the standby rescue mode must not interfere in any way with the primary responsibility of accounting for the interior team(s) in the hazard area. Any task, evolution, duty or function being performed by the standby IRIT must be such that the work can be abandoned without placing any firefighter at additional risk if rescue or other assistance is needed.
- F. One outside IRIT member shall be responsible for the accountability of the interior team(s). One outside IRIT member shall monitor the safety and progress of the interior team(s). The outside IRIT must maintain communication with the interior team by one of three ways:
 - 1. Visual
 - 2. Voice
 - 3. Radio

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT):

- A. A RIT will be established when more personnel arrive at an incident and can be dedicated for the sole purpose of firefighter rescue.
- B. A RIT shall be implemented with personnel on the fireground if possible, or from a mutual aid company. The IC must determine if the number of companies and personnel at the scene or responding are capable of making a RIT. If not, then the IC shall request a mutual aid response for a RIT. The members or companies assigned to a RIT shall be informed of their function as a RIT only.
- C. A RIT shall be made up of no fewer than three personnel, ideally four. It shall consist of a RIT officer and RIT members. Any incident requiring a RIT shall also require (1) BLS ambulance to be on the scene.
- D. The IC may assign more than one RIT at larger incidents or buildings. If more than one RIT has been assigned they shall be placed in strategic locations dealing with the incident and identified by RIT1 and RIT2 or other means to identify more than one team.
- E. All personnel making up a RIT shall have completed the Boone County RIT training program or demonstrate their ability in firefighter rescue to a senior RIT certified member (this should apply to personnel who take Firefighter/Safety and Survival outside of the Boone County training program).

Operations:

- A. When RIT has been established they shall report to the IC and remain in visual or voice contact with him/her at all times until deployment or termination.

- B. The RIT shall not be given an assignment that will affect the status of the RIT. The assignment given shall only be that which will improve the conditions for the means of egress, eliminate potential hazards and to assist or rescue firefighters in distress.
- C. The RIT shall have a tool resource pool in which they may get the needed tools for the operations. These tools are dedicated only for the RIT and shall not be used for any other assignment. This area shall be identified by a RIT tarp and may have various locations at the incident. The RIT shall identify where they are to get the needed air, hoselines, ladders and any other tool that is dictated by the incident and personnel.
- D. If the IC anticipates additional resources needed for the RIT then he/she shall request the appropriate resources.
- E. The RIT officer shall start obtaining vital information from the IC dealing with the incident to assist him/her with their operations if need be.
- F. A RIT member shall do a walk around of the structure to gain knowledge about the building and hazards associated with it. This information shall be brought back to the RIT and communicated with the RIT members.
- G. If the structure is greater than one floor and no ladders have been placed to the upper floors, RIT members shall position ladders as to aid in emergency egress from those floors. It is recommended that at least one ladder be placed on opposite sides of the structure for each floor.
- H. The RIT shall open any means of egress that may restrict or not allow personnel to evacuate the structure in the event of an emergency. Caution should be taken when making openings that may effect ventilation or unwanted fire spread that may trap personnel or victims.
- I. The RIT shall monitor all fireground frequencies for the incident and be on standby for an assignment.
- J. A RIT member shall conduct a periodic walk-around of the structure to monitor the building and the conditions. This information is communicated with all RIT members.
- K. If a RIT has been deployed for rescue, the RIT radios shall be turned to the designated MAYDAY channel. All other radio traffic shall be taken to another channel. Only the IC, RIT, and persons needing assistance shall remain on the original fireground channel. The RIT officer shall then communicate with the persons needing assistance and develop the action plan to accomplish this task.
- L. If a RIT has been deployed, the IC should evaluate the situation and determine whether another RIT needs to be formalized. The IC may need to call additional resources to fill this assignment or other assignments when a RIT has been utilized.
- M. Once all RIT members have completed the rescue, the RIT shall report to rehab for medical evaluation.
- N. The IC at the end of the incident shall terminate the RIT when all hazards have been eliminated to all personnel.