

MAYDAY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Definition: *MAYDAY* Radio Use

Use of the word *MAYDAY* will indicate that a firefighter/fire officer has become lost, trapped, seriously injured, or exhausted his or her breathing air at the scene of an emergency incident. Specifically, a firefighter is in need of **immediate help**.

***MAYDAY* Parameters**

This is a critical part of an operational procedure, most notably a procedure that outlines how to confront time-pressure changing conditions. It is critical when developing a parameter list that the list stay true to the outlined definition. It is also important to eliminate the documented difficulties and consequences of interpreting time, channeled attention, and loss of situational awareness commonly associated with the *MAYDAY*.

A firefighter/fire officer will transmit a *MAYDAY* if any of the following conditions exist:

- You become lost or trapped or have sustained a serious or life-threatening injury.
- A serious or life-threatening injury has occurred to another member.
- You discover a lost, trapped, seriously injured, or unconscious firefighter.
- You become entangled, pinned, and unable to free yourself after the first attempt.
- Your low-air alarm is activated, and you are unable to find an exit.
- There is zero visibility, and you have no contact with a hose line or a search rope and you do not know where the exit is.
- Your primary exit is blocked by fire or collapse and you cannot locate an immediate secondary exit.
- You fall through a floor, roof, or staircase or down a shaft.
- You are caught in a flashover.
- Other situation(s) that fit the definition of a *MAYDAY*.

MAYDAY Radio Procedure

1. Activate the EIB (emergency identifier button) on your portable radio, if available.
2. Use and follow the *MAYDAY* procedure as outlined in this document. In an attempt to send out as much useful information as possible in the shortest time, remember the acronym “M-WWW” as a retention guide.

Example:

M – *MAYDAY* (to be announced three times)

Who – Identify your radio designation (Ladder 10 Alpha, Engine 20)

What – Give your situation (lost, trapped, injured, and so on)

Where – Give your location [floor, side, other (3rd floor, Side C)]

Example: *MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!*

Ladder Co. 10 Alpha.

I'm trapped under a ceiling collapse.

3rd floor, Side C

3. The member transmitting the *MAYDAY* must pause after each message and then repeat the message until the incident commander (IC) acknowledges it.
4. The Fire Department Fire Dispatch Center must relay any *MAYDAY* messages not immediately acknowledged by the IC.
5. Members are also required to activate their PASS device in between each message and after it is acknowledged. **IMPORTANT:** If the PASS device remains activated during the transmission of the *MAYDAY* message, it will cause significant background noise, making the message unreadable.

MAYDAY Radio Acknowledgement

1. It is critical that all members at the scene of an emergency understand that *MAYDAY* transmissions take priority over all other transmissions, including *URGENT* messages. **NO** exceptions!
2. When a *MAYDAY* transmission has occurred, the IC must clear the air of all other radio traffic and establish contact with the lost, trapped, or injured member(s). Once contact is established, the IC should attempt to obtain more specific information that may assist in the rescue attempt, if it proves necessary.

Example: *Command to all units, clear the radio for a MAYDAY message.*

Command to Ladder 10 Alpha, go with your MAYDAY.

Ladder 10 Alpha, could you provide us with any other information?

3. The requesting of other or more specific information will be determined by the amount of information originally transmitted in the *MAYDAY*, the square footage and layout of the building, and the needs of the IC and rapid intervention crew. Information requests could include but would not be limited to the following:
 - Can you tell us the best/closest access route to you?
 - Can you hear a hose stream or saw operating nearby?
 - Are you near a stairway, shaftway, wall, or other building feature?
 - What is the condition of the injured member(s)?
 - What tools and equipment are needed?
 - Can you give us any other useful information?

Managing a *MAYDAY*

1. *Mayday* events that involve a lost, trapped, or injured firefighter or fire officer will tax the resources and management of any incident. Incident management could be further taxed when multiple *Maydays* are transmitted and the incident is still evolving. ICs must maintain control and continuity of the incident by any means available to them. Options available to all commanders include but are not limited to the following:
 - Use of multiple rapid intervention crews for deployment and replacement.
 - Transmitting an additional alarm. This is an option for the IC at anytime during the incident but is an advisable option when the fire is still NOT under control and no additional units are in reserve or staging.
 - Designate a separate radio frequency for the rescue “or” fire operations.
 - Conduct a Personnel Accountability Roll Call (PAR) to determine who and how many are missing.
 - Collect accountability tags and riding lists to determine who and how many are missing.
 - Review tactical worksheets and command boards to identify the company/members’ last assigned locations.
 - Establish and support a Rescue Group/Operation within your incident management.
 - Verify that fire suppression operations are continuing.
 - Remove all nonessential personnel.
 - Eliminate freelancing and establish control.
 - Request any additional resources and equipment that may be needed.

***URGENT* STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

***URGENT* Radio Guideline Defined**

To further clarify the use of the *URGENT* reference, the enclosed guideline identifies its use when a situation at an emergency scene produces a life-threatening situation. Although situations will vary with each incident, some of the more common occurrences that may fit this category include a potential collapse involving a wall or a roof or the total building failure, a loss of water on the fire floor with firefighters working above, or the release of a pressure relief valve on a pressurized tank involved or exposed to fire. In either case, the objective of this guideline is to prevent an injury or a death.

The use of the word *URGENT* applies to a life-threatening situation that has developed that could affect firefighter safety.

***URGENT* Transmission Parameters**

1. A firefighter/fire officer will transmit an *URGENT* message if any of the following conditions exist:
 - A serious/deteriorating change in fire conditions.
 - An interior attack is going to be discontinued and an exterior attack is being prepared.
 - Discovery of a structural problem indicating a potential or imminent collapse.
 - A fire has entered an exposure building to a degree that any delay may considerably enlarge the fire problem.
 - A loss of water, which would endanger members.
 - An excessive wind condition on the fire floor that could rapidly extend the fire, endangering members.
 - A downed electrical wire on the fireground or on a fire apparatus.
 - An unconscious, trapped, or disoriented civilian is located.
 - A message that warrants priority because of potential injury or death.
 - A life-threatening situation or event that has occurred or is developing.

URGENT Radio Transmission Procedure

1. Members are to use and follow the *URGENT* radio guidelines as outlined below. In an attempt to send out as much useful information as possible in the shortest time, remember the acronym U-WWW as a retention guide.

Example:

U – URGENT (to be announced three times)

Who – Identify your radio designation (Engine 20, Ladder 10 Alpha)

What – Give your situation (be specific)

Where – Give your location [floor, side, other (3rd floor, Side C)]

Example: *URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!*

Engine 20 to Command.

We have lost water on the fire floor.

2. The member transmitting the *URGENT* message must pause after each message and then repeat the message until the IC acknowledges it.

URGENT Acknowledgement

1. It is critical that all members at the scene of an emergency understand that *URGENT* radio transmissions take priority over all other transmissions, with the exception of a *MAYDAY* message(s).
2. When an *URGENT* transmission has occurred, the IC must clear the air of all other radio traffic and establish contact with the member transmitting the *URGENT* message. Once contact is established, the IC should attempt to obtain more specific information about the situation, if it proves necessary.

Example: *Command to all units, clear the radio for an URGENT message.*

Command to Engine 20, go with your URGENT message.

Engine 20, could you provide us with any additional information?

OR

Engine 20, Do you need any assistance?

3. The requesting of other or more specific information will be determined by the amount of information originally transmitted in the *URGENT* message. Information requests could include but are not limited to the following:
 - If there is a serious/deteriorating change in fire conditions, obtain information about the location and affected areas.
 - If a structural problem indicating an *imminent collapse* is discovered, *immediately* evacuate the building and follow your department's evacuation procedure.
 - If a structural problem indicating an eventual collapse concern is discovered, obtain information about the location and the potentially affected areas

