

Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

DATE IMPLEMENTED: December 7, 2006

SUBJECT: RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT)

I. PURPOSE

This Operational Guideline:

- A. Establishes policies and procedures for Rapid Intervention Team (RIT),
- B. Outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Rapid Intervention Firefighters when assigned as a Rapid Intervention Team.

II. POLICY

- A. In an effort to ensure the safety of its members, the NVFD establishes this guideline, a rapid intervention program that will provide manpower on scene for the possible rescue or assistance to its members who are lost, trapped or missing. The RIT will consist of one additional officer and one additional engine company at all working fires, building collapse, Haz- Mat incidents, etc.
- B. The RIT will provide the resources on the scene of a working fire or emergency incident for the exclusive purpose of rescue or assistance for the members of NVFD

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A Leader and engine company that is in position and ready to provide assistance should a member or members become lost, trapped or missing.
- B. RIT Leader: The Leader will be in charge of the RIT operations on the fireground. The RIT Leader's responsibilities will be separate from that of the incident commander's.
- C. RIT Officer: The captain, lieutenant, or member acting in that capacity, who will be in charge of the RIT Team.
- D. Incident Commander: The chief officer who will be in charge of all operations at the scene of the incident.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. ASSIGNMENT

1. One Leader will be assigned to a working fire and will be in charge of all RIT operations. This Leader will report directly to the incident commander.
2. One additional engine company should be dispatched to all working fires. This engine company will be staged and properly equipped to go to work in the event that a "Mayday" is transmitted.
3. In the event that the RIT is deployed at an incident, the incident commander must request an additional RIT and chief to cover the RIT assignment.

4. If the size or scope of the incident necessitates the need for more than one RIT, the incident commander will not delay in requesting the response of additional Rapid intervention teams.
5. If the incident commander feels that a RIT is not necessary due to the size or scope of the incident, the RIT response will be terminated or the RIT can be utilized for other activities.
6. In the event that the RIT is deployed at an incident for a Mayday, the incident commander will request a Mayday response which will consist of the following:
 - a. Escalation of the incident by the incident commander to a rescue scenario one additional RIT, for a total of two Rapid intervention teams.
 - b. Two ambulances.
 - c. Air cascade unit if available.

B. INCIDENT COMMANDER

1. Be available in the command post to brief the RIT Leader of the conditions at the fire or incident.
2. Establish a staging area for the RIT as close as possible to the command post.
3. Order deployment of the RIT upon transmission of a "Mayday" or upon information that a firefighter is lost, trapped, missing and/or in distress.
4. Request a "Mayday" response for a firefighter that is lost, trapped, missing and/or in distress.
5. Determine the nature of the "Mayday" and any other information (location in the building, number of firefighters involved in the "Mayday", etc.) that will assist the RIT.
6. Determine the availability of EMS personnel (ambulance, ALS/BLS) and their location.
7. If prior to the arrival of the RIT a "Mayday" is transmitted or the incident commander determines that a firefighter may need assistance, the incident commander shall deploy a second company or any company standing by to function as a RIT company.
8. In an extreme instance (rescue of civilians, attack of fast spreading fire, etc.) when the RIT company is used by the incident commander for some task other than rapid intervention operations, the incident commander shall immediately request an additional RIT company.

C. RIT Leader

1. Report to the incident commander and obtain a briefing of the incident.
2. Confirm staging area for the RIT after conferring with the incident commander. RIT should stage close to fire building. In the event the situation is a high-rise building (4 stories or higher), RIT should stage one floor below the fire floor.
3. Assemble the RIT Company.
4. Conduct a size-up (walk-around the building, incident, etc.) with the RIT officer and report any findings (construction features, forcible entry problems, special

- hazards, fire location, etc.) to the members of the RIT Company and the incident commander.
5. Ensure that all members of the RIT Company portable radios are in the scan position and on a ***Fire ground Frequency***. Members of the RIT shall monitor their radios for the duration of the incident.
 6. Determine what actions have been taken.
 7. Determine what needs to be done for RIT operations should a “Mayday” be transmitted (additional ground ladders, removal of barriers that could impede firefighter egress, etc.).
 8. Formulate a secondary plan of action (i.e., alternate means and location of ingress and egress).
 9. Determine which companies are on the scene and where they are operating.
 10. Acknowledge the “Mayday” with the incident commander and confirm the nature of the “Mayday” (lost, trapped, missing and/or in distress), location in the building, number of firefighters involved in the “Mayday”, etc.
 11. Meet face to face with the RIT Company and explain the situation at hand, location, number of firefighters involved, plan of action to be taken, etc.
 12. Ensure that all members of the RIT Company understand the situation and their assignment before deployment.
 13. Notify the incident commander when your company has been deployed and in which area.
 14. Monitor and inform the RIT Company every five minutes of their air consumption and interior/exterior fire and smoke conditions.
 15. Relay any pertinent information to the incident commander via the command van with regards to the operation and progress of the RIT Company.
 16. Conduct a roll call of the RIT Company after they exit the building, incident, hot zone, etc.
 17. The RIT Leader will be directly responsible for the accountability of the RIT company at all times.
 18. If the RIT Leader needs to deploy with the RIT Company for interior operations, the RIT Leader will then request an additional RIT Leader from the incident commander to supervise exterior operations.

D. RIT OFFICER

1. Ensure that your apparatus is positioned in close proximity to the fire/incident. Do not block the street for additional apparatus that might respond if additional alarms are requested.
2. Report your arrival to the RIT Leader or incident commander.
3. Report to the RIT staging area with proper tools and equipment for the incident at hand.
4. Ensure that all your members are wearing the proper personal protective equipment.
5. Conduct a size-up (walk-around the building, incident, etc.) with the RIT chief and report any findings (construction features, forcible entry problems, special hazards, fire location, etc.) to the members of your company.

6. Ensure that all members of your company have their handie-talkies in the "On" position and tuned to PFF. If a company is assigned as a RIT, the officer can get additional portable radios. The officer will then assign these to his/her firefighters on the RIT for deployment as a rapid intervention company.
7. Determine what needs to be done for RIT operations should a "Mayday" be transmitted (additional ground ladders, removal of barriers that could impede firefighters' egress, etc.) after conferring with the RIT chief.
8. Direct your company to take whatever preliminary action is ordered by the RIT Leader or incident commander and immediately return your company to the RIT staging area after such action.
9. Ensure that all members of your company understand the situation, the plan of action to be taken and their assignment before deployment.
10. Assess nearby apparatus for availability of additional tools and equipment (ground ladders, hand lines, etc.).
11. Ensure that your company remains together as a team ready to deploy.
12. Determine which companies are on the scene and where they are operating.
13. Monitor radio communications while standing by in the RIT staging area.
14. When deployed, notify your RIT Leader of the following:
 - a. Conditions encountered (smoke, heat, fire, structural stability, etc.)
 - b. When you have located the lost, trapped and/or missing firefighter,
 - c. When you start to remove the firefighter,
 - d. Where you are removing the firefighter from the building.
 - e. The need for any additional or special equipment,
 - f. The need for an additional RIT company to deploy.
 - g. Any additional information that could assist in the rescue of the lost, trapped and/or missing firefighter.
 - h. If your company remains in RIT staging, be sure the members stay hydrated.
15. Once your company exits the building, incident, hot zone, etc., immediately conduct a roll call and report the results of that roll call to your RIT Leader. If necessary, have your company change air bottles on their SCBA. You may be required to deploy again or your company may be used as a back up to another RIT company.
16. The RIT company officer will be directly responsible for the accountability of RIT members at all times.

E. RIT FIREFIGHTERS

1. Position your apparatus in close proximity to the fire/incident. Do not block the street for additional apparatus that might respond if an additional alarm is requested.
2. Assemble the proper tools and equipment for the incident on hand. The minimum tools required when assigned as a RIT company are:

- a. Proper personal protective equipment (SCBA, hood, hand-light, webbing, etc.).
 - b. Forcible entry and forcible exit tools (axe, halligan, sledge, bolt cutters, Closet hooks, pike poles, etc.)
 - c. Search ropes
 - d. Tool Bag (if available)
 - e. RIT Pack (if available)
 - f. Stokes Basket, AED, O2 and First aid bag.
 - g. 10' attic ladder or little giant ladder
 - h. Cribbing, shoring equipment.
 - i. Spare Buddy Breathing SCBA Unit and Face piece
 - j. Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC)
 - k. Power Saws Chain and Circular with assortment of blades.
3. Remain together as a team constantly monitoring PFF while your officer is conducting a size-up with the RIT Leader.
 4. Gather any additional tools and equipment that would be required as a result of the information obtained during the size-up.
 5. Ensure that your portable radio is in the "On" position.
 6. Determine which companies are on the scene and where they are operating.
 7. Access nearby apparatus for availability of additional tools and equipment (ground ladders, hand-lines, etc.)
 8. Understand the situation at hand, the plan of action to be taken and your assignment before deployment as a RIT.
 9. Stay together as a team once deployed as a RIT.
 10. After you have exited the building, report directly to your RIT officer. If necessary, change the air bottle on your SCBA. You may be required to deploy again or your company may be used as a back up to another RIT company.

V. COMMUNICATIONS AND RADIO PROCEDURES

- A. IC will designate the RIT Leader and the RIT Company that have been designated as the RIT for that incident.
- B. When you are assigned as the RIT Leader, you will add the word "RIT" before your company signature (i.e., "RIT Leader"). You will keep that signature for the duration of the incident to which you are assigned. For multi-RIT teams, signature designation will be that of your sector. (i.e., sector, RIT A, RIT B, etc.)
- C. When you are assigned as the RIT Company, you will add the word "RIT" before your company signature (i.e., RIT Team). You will keep that signature for the duration of the incident to which you are assigned.
- D. When a "Mayday" is transmitted, all radio communications will remain on the Fire ground frequency unless otherwise indicated to switch to another frequency.**
- E. When a company requests a "Mayday", provide as much information (i.e., name of lost, trapped, or missing firefighter, probable location or last known location of the firefighter, type of problems, etc.) as soon as possible to assist the RIT.**

- F. The RIT leader will only communicate with command once on the scene. It is imperative that the RIT leader remains on Fire ground frequency for the duration of the incident.***
- G. When the incident commander wishes to communicate with the RIT leader the incident commander will do so on the fire ground frequency.***
- H. Operations will monitor Dispatch frequency once a “Mayday” has been transmitted and assist Command as directed.***
- I. The EMS chief will monitor Operations Frequency once a “Mayday” has been transmitted.***
- J. It is imperative that radio discipline is practiced at all times and especially during a “Mayday” incident. All unnecessary radio traffic must stop at once.***

VI. RESTRICTIONS

- A. The RIT should not be used for routine firefighting. It may be used for relief purposes, with the replacement of an additional RIT.
- B. In extreme circumstances (rescue of civilians, attack of fast spreading fire, etc.) the incident commander may use the RIT Company for a task other than RIT operations. The incident commander shall immediately request an additional RIT Company.
- C. The incident commander should be mindful of when all companies are committed and working at the incident/fire. The incident commander should consider escalating the alarm when all companies are committed.

