



# Allegany County Emergency Services Board Policies and Standards



Subject: Mayday

Approved: August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Approved:                   , Emergency Services Board Chair

**SUMMARY:** This policy directs all personnel of the actions to take when declaring a MAYDAY.

**PURPOSE:** To establish a uniform policy and procedure to ensure that all fire rescue personnel are familiar with declaring a MAYDAY, can recognize when a MAYDAY should be declared, and when a member can declare a MAYDAY for any personnel that needs assistance.

**APPLICABILITY:** This policy applies to all fire and rescue personnel operating on the scene of an incident when the Incident Command System has been declared.

**POLICY EFFECTIVE:**

**POLICY STATEMENT:** It is the policy of the Allegany County Emergency Services to ensure all fire and EMS personnel use safe and efficient procedures on all emergency incidents. A Mayday will be a shock to the incident. It will be a drain on the mental, emotional, and physical incident resources. These additional strains will impact the ability of personnel to plan and execute the rescue effort.

Fire service history shows that firefighter emergencies are most quickly resolved by the individual having the emergency with the assistance of nearby crews. This fact highlights the need for all personnel to remain in close contact with their respective crews and to maintain a high level of awareness about what is happening around them. Pause, Listen, Look, Light is a framework for thinking through the initial moments of the Mayday. When the Mayday is sounded personnel must first pause. This pause is a short pause in work that accomplishes two things: a. It reduces ambient noise, allowing nearby crews to listen and look for indications of the downed firefighter's location. b. It allows crews a few moments to gather their thoughts, formulate plans and situate themselves within the emergency. The light part of the framework speaks to the need to provide visual cues to the downed firefighter with regards to the location of exit points. By placing lights, even small hand lights, into window, door, and other openings, personnel increase the chance that the downed firefighter can orient to an exit point.

**PROCEDURE:** 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 SOP describes:

- I. Conditions that warrant a MAYDAY
- II. Procedures for declaring a MAYDAY
- III. Incident Commander (IC) actions during a MAYDAY.
- IV. ECC duties during a MAYDAY declaration

**AT NO TIME WILL ANY PORTABLE RADIO BE SWITCHED TO AN ALTERNATE CHANNEL DURING ANY MAYDAY EVENT.**

**I. Conditions that warrant a MAYDAY**

All personnel must be able to recognize situations when 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 following conditions:

- a. A crew member has fallen through a roof or floor.
- b. A crew member has been caught in a catastrophic event such as a flashover, explosion, backdraft or collapse
- c. A crew member has become entangled, trapped, pinned, stuck, or separated from their crew in an IDLH atmosphere.
- d. A crew member who may be disoriented, missing, lost, or off a hose line or tag line in a large/open area with limited visibility.
- e. A crew member's primary exit is blocked by fire or structural collapse and an alternate exit is not immediately available.
- f. A crew member's low air alert activates, and an immediate exit is not available.
- g. Any other situation when the life safety of a crew or a crew member may be at immediate risk.
- h. The Incident Commander can declare a MAYDAY when crews are operating in an IDLH and after 3 times the unit officer, division or group officer fails to respond on the radio. Example: Command is declaring a MAYDAY for the Engine 1 on division 1, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY.

- i. Any person on the incident scene that observes a firefighter in trouble and that firefighter is incapacitated at a point where he/she cannot declare a MAYDAY for their self should without hesitation declare a MAYDAY for the incapacitated firefighter.

## **II. Procedures for calling a MAYDAY**

Initial MAYDAY transmission should include the following three phrases stated by the firefighter in distress:

- a. State "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY."
- b. State the unit number three times, (eng.201, eng.201, eng. 201).
- c. Finish stating, "Command acknowledge".

Once a MAYDAY is acknowledged by command, the following information should be transmitted by the firefighter in distress:

- e. Who, Where, What/LUNAR
- f. Position and name (e.g. "Firefighter Smith").
- g. Location (e.g. "I am on division 2, quadrant C-Charlie").
- h. Nature of emergency (e.g. "we are cut off by a collapse, one member is missing, our current air supply is 1500psi").
- i. Finish by stating, "Command Acknowledge."

**If command does not acknowledge the MAYDAY firefighter, the down firefighter will:**

- a. Activate the Emergency Activation Button (EB) on portable radio.
- b. Activate the PASS device and briefly key your portable radio to get the attention of other firefighters, command or ECC. Deactivate the PASS when communicating via radio and reactivate once completed.
- c. State, "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY".
- d. State unit number 3 times (e.g. eng.201, eng.201, eng.201).
- e. State location ("We are on division 2, quadrant C-Charlie").
- f. State nature of emergency (e.g. "We have been cut off by collapse, one member is missing, our current air supply is 1500psi").
- g. State, "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY".
- h. Finish by stating, "Command acknowledge".
- i. Once the MAYDAY transmissions are complete the distressed firefighter should

manually activate their PASS device to make the location known to crews operating nearby.

j. If a distressed firefighter is in a large open area and believe that you are lost, attempt to move to the closest wall. If you are conducting a search off of a wall, look for the nearest window.

**Notes:** If the MAYDAY firefighter is attempting self-extrication, they will relay information to command when they are moving throughout the structure and making note of their findings to assist in the extrication process.

When the E.B. button is activated with no MAYDAY voice transmission, ECC must notify the Incident Commander of the EB activation immediately. A PAR will be conducted to identify the MAYDAY firefighter.

Any E.B. activation should be considered life threatening and with a sense of urgency. ECC will immediately call the I.C. of unit officer of an active E.B. and what unit is involved.

The I.C. must declare a MAYDAY for any crew or crew member not accounted for during a PAR check after 3 attempts to PAR the crew or firefighter.

Once the MAYDAY transmissions are complete the distressed firefighter should manually activate their PASS device to make the location known to crews operating nearby.

If you are in a large open area and believe that you are lost, attempt to move to the closest wall. If you are conducting a search off a wall, look for nearest window.

Any firefighter on the scene that observes a firefighter/crew in distress who is not able to declare a MAYDAY due to being trapped or incapacitated will transmit a MAYDAY for that crew. (e.g.

MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, this is firefighter Smith on side C, I see a crew trapped on the roof, need a 28' ladder and a crew to side C. MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY).

**DO NOT HESITATE TO DECLARE A MAYDAY.**

### **III. Command Actions during a MAYDAY**

- a. Upon receiving a MAYDAY, the Incident Commander must acknowledge the MAYDAY and then declare radio silence on all talk groups that are being utilized on the incident.
- b. All units must continue to conduct their tactical assignments until instructed otherwise by the Incident Commander, with due consideration for the presence of an active MAYDAY. Poll units working in the direct vicinity of the Mayday personnel to see if they can mitigate the Mayday.
- c. Unit officers must adhere to operational discipline and keep assigned personnel and/or units under control. Personnel and/or units must not freelance into the rescue effort.

- d. 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.
- e. The Incident Commander can direct the Two-Out Team and/or the RIT to intervene and conduct rescue operations or first, call the down firefighter and ask if he/she if they can self-rescue, 2) Contact the crew leader the down firefighter was assigned too to search

and rescue the down firefighter, 3) Direct the division or group leader to search and rescue the down firefighter and 4) deploy a RIT Team.

- f. The Incident Commander will make a fire ground announcement that a MAYDAY has been declared, units to maintain radio silence unless you have an emergency and have unit, group and/or division officers do a PAR of their crews and be ready for a PAR check.

All fire ground units **SHALL** stay on the assigned talk group. **DO NOT** change talk groups on the radio.

- g. The Incident Commander must ensure a PAR is rapidly conducted when a MAYDAY has been declared, beginning with the units in the greatest danger. A firefighter who is not accounted for in a PAR and who is known or suspected of operating in a hazard area will be considered a Mayday. Divisions/Groups that do not report after **3** attempts have been made to contact them will be considered a Mayday.
- h. When the MAYDAY situation has been stabilized and all operations return to normal, the Incident Commander must transmit a “MAYDAY ALL CLEAR” announcement.
- i. The Incident Commander must conduct a Post-Incident Analysis and document for the MAYDAY Incident.
- j. Personnel may take immediate action to resolve the Mayday if they are able to do so. By definition, any action that requires personnel to leave their assigned operational area is not immediate action.
- k. Personnel who take immediate action to resolve a Mayday must communicate any action taken as soon as possible.
- l. Personnel with any direct knowledge of the Mayday must report it to their immediate supervisor.
- m. In the event of a Mayday all personnel must continue to perform their assigned work with due consideration for the nature and location of the Mayday.
- n. The Incident Commander should give strong consideration for deploying nearby resources to provide initial rapid intervention assistance.

## **VI. Emergency Communications Center duties during a declared MAYDAY**

- a. A dispatcher will immediately contact the Incident Commander that a MAYDAY has been declared to ensure he/she heard the declaration. The dispatcher will then be assigned to (imbedded) in the event and pay close attention to the radio. Dispatchers will also notify any allied county or state ECC of a MAYDAY declaration if their units are operating on the scene.
- b. The dispatcher will sound a unique tone and announce on the ANNOUNCE CHANNEL that a MAYDAY has been declared and maintain radio silence. The dispatcher may relay information for the I.C. and provide updates critical to the MAYDAY.
- c. ECC will immediately identify the alias and advise I.C. of the portable/mobile identity.
- d. ECC will dispatch next alarm category utilizing the closest companies that have been transferred or on standby. In addition, two Advanced Life Support Units will be dispatched. (1 ALS units if one is on scene). At least 1 ALS unit will be assigned to the MAYDAY by the I.C. or ECC.
- e. ECC will update the I.C. with the staffing count of the original alarm and any other subsequent alarms dispatched. ECC will honor the requests of the I.C. to repeat messages over the talk groups so all receive the message.
- f. When a Mayday is declared ECC will start a 15-minute timer; at the end of 15 minutes ECC will declare "Command, you are 15 minutes into your Mayday." The expectation is that at 15 minutes, Command should be beginning to rotate rapid intervention personnel.
- g. All E.B. activations will be followed up immediately with a sense of urgency. When ECC receives an E.B. activation from a radio that is not committed on a call, ECC will hail that radio for a response. If no response ECC will page a company officer to follow up.

## **REFERENCES**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A