



# Allegany County Emergency Services Board Policies and Standards

**Subject: Accountability**

**Approved:**

Approved: W. M. L. 2/20/24, Emergency Services Board Chair

## A. Policy

To ensure personnel and unit safety, it is the policy of the county that all personnel and units will be accounted for on the scene of an emergency incident. The personnel accountability system is intended to meet the requirements of NFPA 1500 & 1561 and will operational an all fire/rescue & EMS incidents to include training exercises. There are three objectives of the personnel accountability system:

1. Identify WHO is at the scene and WHAT qualifications they have;
2. Determine WHERE personnel are located or assigned;
3. Identify WHEN personnel arrived on scene, were assigned, and left the scene.

It is the responsibility of each member of the department to read and fully understand the policy and procedures for personnel accountability.

## B. System Overview

The system is based on the traditional dog tag/collector ring accountability system. The dog tag identifies the firefighter by name. The collector rings identify the apparatus by county ID number. This system was provided to the companies by Allegany County Emergency Service Board and is to be utilized by all departments.

## C. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the personnel accountability system and provides standard operating procedures (SOPs) for implementing the system. The SOPs for the traditional dog tag/collector ring system are presented first.

## D. Definitions

### 1. System Elements – Dog Tag/Collector Ring

- a. Personnel will be issued one personnel accountability tag. When responding to an incident, the tag will be placed on the unit collector ring and should be readily accessible.
- b. Collector Ring: A ring attached to a hard plastic tag with the unit number on it. It is mounted on a quick release clip in the cab on all fire and rescue units. It is

the device that all PAS tags are clipped onto for personnel who are assigned to that unit.

- c. Collection Board: A board to which unit / apparatus collector rings can be attached during accountability.
- d. First Due Board: A compact version of the collection board that can be used by first responding units to attach collector rings. Once command is established and accountability is in place, the collector rings will typically be moved to the collection board at the command post.

## **2. Command Structure**

- a. Command Post: The facility, vehicle, or position where the incident commander and command post are located and where all incident operations are managed.
- b. Division / Group: A division of an emergency operation, either geographical or functional, as determined by the incident commander.
- c. Unit: Personnel from any Engine, Truck, Rescue, EMS, or Special functioning unit such as Haz-Mat, Collapse, etc. who work together as a team to perform a function at the scene.
- d. Incident Commander: The senior or designated officer in charge of an incident, responsible for the strategic decisions and the assignment of other officers and supervisory personnel necessary to control an incident per the incident management standard.
- e. Safety Officer: A officer of the department responsible for the overall safety of personnel on scene. The safety officer has the authority to designate hazard zones and declare an emergency evacuation.
- f. Accountability Officer: Person designated by the incident commander to manage the personnel accountability system during an incident. They collect the unit collector rings and tracks them at the command post.
- g. Division / Group Supervisor: Person responsible for the supervision of those companies operating within a division/group and the coordination of those operations with the incident commander. When in charge of a hazard zone, the division / group officer may act as the entry control officer.
- h. Entry Control Officer: Person designated by the incident commander to closely monitor all personnel entering a hazard zone or other entry-controlled zone.
- i. Unit Officer: Person responsible for the operation of a unit and the personnel who are assigned to that unit.

j. Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A unit of fire / rescue personnel with two-way radio, full protective clothing, SCBA's and pass devices, staged ready to respond with emergency intervention to a unit or units who are in need of rescue. They may respond to locate a unit who has not responded to a personnel accountability report (PAR). (Note: The department's command structure will depend on the number of personnel available to the department in general and during an incident. Department may combine functions as required. For instance, the safety officer can also function as the accountability officer and division / group supervisor cab function as entry control officer.)

## **E. SOPs – Manual System (Dog Tag/Collector Ring)**

**Accountability:** Occurs for all fire & rescue responses and training. PAS Tags are attached to the collector ring of the unit personnel are assigned to. First responding units can also use the First Due Board to attach collector rings.

### **1. Level I Accountability: PAS Tags remain with the unit / apparatus**

a. Personnel who are responding to an incident must attach their PAS Tag to the collector ring typically located in the cab of their assigned apparatus or in another location specified by the department.

b. Individuals that respond directly to the scene in their own vehicle must report to the command post to be tagged in and assigned to a unit. If that unit has already been deployed, then the incident commander or accountability officer may add their PAS Tag to the collector ring for that unit. Freelancing is strictly prohibited.

c. A first responding unit may deploy a First Due Board to attach collector rings to.

**2. Level II Accountability:** Occurs when command has been established. The collector rings off the units / apparatus are collected and placed on an accountability board to track the location and status of all fire rescue companies and support personnel working at the scene of an incident.

**3. Level III Accountability:** Occurs when a hazard zone has been established and a person has been assigned to monitor the entry & status of all personnel in the hazard zone.

**4. PARs:** It is the responsibility of the incident commander to conduct PAR checks every 20 minutes for fire-rescue incidents and every 10 minutes for emergency medical services (EMS) incidents. Each unit shall be called and the unit respond with the number of personnel and their assignment. The response will be verified against the accountability board and command board at the command post. Any discrepancies shall be immediately reconciled. The incident commander or accountability officer may conduct a PAR at any time, or any significant change in the incident. (Mayday, switching

to defensive operation, collapse of floor, etc.) The 911 Joint Communication's Center will prompt the incident commander for conducting PAR checks every 20 minutes for fire-rescue incidents and 10 minutes for EMS.

**5. Rapid Intervention:** When the accountability officer has verified that a unit or member of a crew is trapped or missing, the incident commander will be notified immediately. The division / group where the unit was assigned will be called to pinpoint where the unit was last assigned. The incident commander will deploy the RIT to the last known location of the missing / trapped unit.

**6. Emergency Evacuation:** When the incident commander or Safety Officer has determined that the building, fire conditions or hazardous conditions are too dangerous for continued operations, they will declare an emergency evacuation. An evacuation alert will be sounded by a steady blast of the unit's air horns for 15 seconds and the evacuation tone over the operation channel. The alert advises units to leave the hazard zone immediately. Division / group officers shall ensure that all personnel have left the hazard zone. After evacuation is complete, the accountability officer shall immediately conduct a PAR. While in defensive operations, the units will be staged outside the hazard perimeter and will remain intact at all times to ensure accountability and safety. There will be no freelancing in the hazard zone. The evacuation tone used by the 911 Joint Communications Center will be unique and not used for any other purpose. This tone will be tested over the Main channel each day to all Fire and EMS personnel.

**7. Unit Accountability:** Unit officers shall maintain supervision and control over all personnel on their unit.

- a. The unit officer shall ensure that personnel place their PAS tag on the collector ring for the unit.
- b. Unit officers shall ensure that personnel under their supervision operate in crews of 2 or more with a radio, full protective clothing and SCBA.
- c. Division / Group will maintain close proximity to the units under their command. At all times they will know what units have been assigned to them and where they are located.
- d. No one person will operate in the hazard zone without a radio to communicate with command.

**8. Policy and Procedural Review:** The Allegany County Emergency Services Board shall have this policy reviewed annually by the Fire-EMS Service Committee.