

Washington Township Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Division 300: Occupational Safety & Health
Section 301: Incident Management
Subject 301.01: Personnel Accountability System
Supersedes: General Order 96-1 (4/5/99)



Approved By:

Date: December 31, 2005

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PURPOSE:

To establish the policy for the operation of a Passport Accountability System (Accountability System).

RESPONSIBILITY:

All members shall become familiar with and adhere to the provisions of this policy, and remain refreshed and familiar in the correct use and application thereof.

DEFINITIONS:

Accountability Board – a metal board, with Velcro strips, on each apparatus with helmet identifications and passports

Company Officer – an officer in charge of an engine company, ladder company, crew or team

Crew – a group of two or more persons assigned to work together and responsible for one another's safety

Crew Leader – usually a Company Officer, or may be a member assigned as the leader of a crew

Emergency Incident – a situation in which the fire department responds to deliver emergency services including, but not limited to, fire suppression, medical treatment, and other forms of hazard control and mitigation

Emergency Incident Perimeter – an area, designated by emergency services, where the public is not allowed access

Helmet Identification – a Velcro-backed shield that attaches to the front of a member's helmet that have a combination of letters and/or numbers to identify the wearer's apparatus or title

Incident Termination – an event to signify the conclusion of emergency services operations at an incident scene

Make-up Kit – a kit of materials used to provide Make-up Passports

Name Tag – a plastic, Velcro backed tag with at least a member's name and unit number

Passport – a 2" x 4" Velcro and plastic card that identifies and accounts for members and crews through the application of individual nametags to a unique apparatus assigned card

Make-up Passport – green, blank plastic Passport used as a temporary Passport for instances when a crew does not have either a Primary or Reserve Passport

Primary/Secondary Passport – white, pre-printed plastic Passports

Reserve Passport – green, pre-printed plastic Passports used as a temporary replacement for lost primary Passports

Passport Accountability System – components and procedures that track the assignment and location of members while at an incident location

Roll Call – a poll conducted at an incident scene to account for all crews and their members

Status Board – a large, portable, hard plastic board with Velcro strips upon which commanders hold Passports of assigned crews

Velcro – a brand name used to identify a "hooks and loops" fabric that work as a male/female system to join pieces of fabric together

PROCEDURES:

301.01 Pers.Acct.

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General Provisions

The fire department shall track and otherwise account for all members operating within an Emergency Incident Perimeter at an incident scene. The accounting will identify individual members of a crew and their assignment. This work will be accomplished by using a Personnel Accountability System (Accountability System), of which the fire department hereby adopts the recommended Accountability System promulgated by the Montgomery County Fire Chief's Association.

The Accountability System shall be expanded and contracted to accommodate all persons, members, vehicles and assignments deployed at an incident scene, and under the control and responsibility of the Incident Commander.

All persons operating under the scope of the Accountability System shall maintain an awareness of one another's physical condition, and shall use nationally recognized standards and policy to request relief, assistance and/or re-assignment. Further, the persons described herein are accountable for the safety of themselves and other members of their crew. Crewmembers will stay together as a crew when in an Emergency Incident Perimeter, and will not deviate unless otherwise directed by policy (e.g. members re-assigned to a different crew in Rehab). Crewmembers shall maintain a constant awareness of the position and function of all members working with them. Crewmembers shall always be in contact with each other through at least one of the following methods:

- Voice (not radio; however, radio or telephone contact is permissible for apparatus operators, chief officers and commanders and lobby control crews where the location of such personnel is constant and is known by the remainder of the crew)
- Visual
- Touch

Distribution and use of portable radios shall strictly follow procedure and established policy.

During the course of an incident, and continuing until declared under control, the F.A.O. shall issue time markers, via radio announcement on the primary dispatch channel, every 30 minutes after the arrival of the first apparatus or officer. Command and accountability persons shall use these radio announcements as reminders to focus upon accountability and operations status.

If a crewmember is in trouble, the other member(s) of the crew shall take appropriate steps to:

- Provide direct help
- Call for help
- Go get help

(for additional information on MAYDAY procedures, see Directive 601.05 – Portable Radio Distribution & Utilization)

At an incident, members will be operating in one of the following modes:

- Working an assignment
- At Rehab(ilitation)
- At Manpower

Contained on each Passport within the Accountability System is:

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- Department name
- Company designator (engine, ladder, etc.)
- Crew designator (e.g. "Engine 41", "Engine 41A", etc.)
- Velcro area to accept application of name tags

White colored Passports represent 'primary' and 'secondary' Passports, while green colored Passports represent 'reserve' and 'make-up' Passports. Should any Passport become misplaced or lost, its immediate replacement shall be requested through the chain of command.

It is absolutely imperative and essential that any Passports reflect an exact listing of the members working on that crew. Should any discrepancies be discovered, commanders, officers and leaders shall take all necessary steps to rectify and clarify any errors.

It is the member's responsibility to maintain and have available for immediate use the same quantity of nametags as was originally issued or declared to be the minimum.

Use of System Components

Incident scene personnel will be identified and tracked (accounted for) by their name, apparatus and assignment at an incident scene. At the beginning of each work shift and/or upon reporting to an assigned fire station or incident scene, members shall:

1. Place the correct Helmet Identification on their helmet.
 - Red colored Helmet Identification shall be used by Officers and crew leaders.
 - Yellow colored Helmet Identification shall be used by all other members.
2. Place their nametags on the correct primary and secondary Passports.
 - The nametag of the Officer or crew leader will be placed in the first position on the Passport.
 - The nametag of the driver/operator shall be placed upside down (if staying with the apparatus) on the Passport in the second position.
3. Assure that both primary and secondary Passports read the same.
4. Immediately report to the Officer or crew leader the absence of either Passport.

Within the framework of Incident Command, a person(s) will be assigned the responsibility for tracking personnel within the Emergency Incident Perimeter. The tracking will consist of using name tags, Helmet Identification, primary Passports, reserve Passports and Status Boards to organize the various components and their proper use and function. Command, Section, Branch, Division and Group Leaders shall remain cognizant of operational times for persons that are under their direct control. Also, these Leaders will communicate with one another's areas/assignments to send and receive crews so that each crew, and ultimately each individual's, location and assignment is accounted for during the incident.

When Command is established, the primary Passport will be given over to Incident Command upon the apparatus arrival at the incident. The secondary Passport shall be held at the apparatus unless or until directed otherwise by Command. Should Command be mobile or not established upon an apparatus' arrival, it shall remain the apparatus Officer's or crew leader's responsibility to have their respective Passports delivered to Command.

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Due to assignments to Staging, Rehab or Manpower, a crew will give their Passport to the person in charge of that area/assignment. When leaving such an assignment, the crew shall retrieve their Passport so it can be conveyed to the leader of the next assigned area.

When a single apparatus is the only assigned unit at an incident, all Passports will be held at the apparatus.

Officers and crew leaders are responsible for members under their direct control. Crews will remain together unless split away from an Officer or crew leader to a different Officer/commander. Upon that split (re-assignment), the receiving/accepting Officer/commander is then accountable for that crew or member. It is understood and recognized that periodically throughout an incident members may not always be in exact and direct contact with other crewmembers. Instances such as this may exist because a member has been sent to retrieve additional tools, or some similar circumstance.

When staffing allows for two or more crews to be established from the same apparatus, then Officers and crew leaders will assign members to different, identifiable crews (e.g. Crew #1 could be assigned as "LADDER 41", and Crew #2 could be assigned as "LADDER 41A"). When a member arrives at an incident, not part of a crew nor on apparatus, the member shall report to Manpower, or Command if Manpower has not been established, for entry into the Accountability System and assignment.

At the conclusion of each incident and training event, apparatus assigned components shall be inspected to assure they are present and ready for use. At a minimum, each apparatus shall have an Accountability Board, two primary Passports on the Accountability Board, two "second crew" ("A") primary Passports, and eight Helmet Identifications (split between crew designations) on the Accountability Board. Should one of the white Passports become misplaced or lost, then both green reserve Passports shall be used, not a combination of one white and one green. Additional crew designation Helmet Identifications, reserve Passports and other crew Passports shall be stored all together in one easily accessible location on the apparatus.

Make-up & Temporary System Components

Blank (not engraved with designators), green Passports are carried in Make-up Kits located on Ladder 41, Rescue 43, Air 42 and each command vehicle. When properly completed, Make-up Passports will be used to list names, identify and track companies and units operating within the emergency incident perimeter that have arrived without any Passport, accountability component or otherwise needing identification and tracking.

When a member arrives at an incident, not part of a crew nor on apparatus, the member shall report to Manpower, or Command if Manpower has not been established, for entry into the Accountability System and assignment.

Roll Call at an Incident

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An Incident Roll Call will be accurately and rapidly conducted when the following conditions or circumstances exist:

1. When there is a catastrophic change in the incident such as a building collapse, explosion, back draft, sudden flooding, or release of vapor cloud. The Emergency Evacuation Procedure shall also be instituted at this time (for additional information and definition see Directive 203.01, Fire Scene Emergency Radio Traffic & Emergency Evacuation).
2. Before there is a change from an offensive to a defensive mode of operation, Command will conduct a Roll Call of the incident to confirm the status of any un-accounted member(s) and their last known assignment location.
3. Upon notification of a member being trapped or missing, Command will conduct a Roll Call of the incident to clearly establish and confirm the status of any missing or un-accounted member(s) and their last known assignment location.

Maintenance of System Components

Members shall maintain a sufficient number of nametags in their possession to properly operate and comply with the provisions of this policy. Members finding any elements or components of the Accountability System to be missing or in need of repair shall immediately report same, in writing, through the chain of command. Materials and supplies for the ongoing support and operation of the Accountability System are completed through the department Quartermaster.

References:

Montgomery County Fire Chiefs Association
Passport Accountability System

National Fire Protection Association

Standard 1500 – Fire Department Occupational Safety & Health Program (Section 8.3)

Standard 1561 – Emergency Services Incident Management System (Sections 4.7, 5.12.3, B.4 and C.2.1)

Standard 1584 – Rehabilitation of Members Operating at Incident Scene Operations and Training Exercises (Sections 1.2, 6.4.1, 6.10 and Annex B)

Washington Township Fire Department

Directive 203.01 – Fire Scene Emergency Radio Traffic & Emergency Evacuation

Directive 601.05 – Portable Radio Distribution & Utilization