

# Washington Township Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure

Division 200: Emergency Operations  
Section 203: Fire Suppression  
Subject 203.01: Emergency Evacuations, MAYDAY, and  
Use and Issuance of Emergency Radio Traffic  
Supersedes: Procedure 203.01 – 2/12/03



Approved By:   
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## PURPOSE:

This procedure establishes the process for emergency evacuation and MAYDAY signals for fire and/or EMS personnel, and the use and issuance of emergency radio traffic. These procedures stipulate that 1) an evacuation from an environment is instigated, or 2) notify other members that a member(s) may be in need of immediate assistance to be evacuated from an environment. It is implied that since personnel are on a "working" situation the incident has been moved from the Primary talk group to one of the Fire Ground, EMS or Operations talk groups.

## RESPONSIBILITY:

All members must become familiar with this procedure and be able to take action consistent with the procedures. The information is especially relevant for Incident Commanders and Fire Alarm Operators. Members must continually refresh and re-educate themselves on these procedures.

## PROCEDURES:

### DEFINITIONS

#### *Emergency Evacuation*

Indicates an urgent need to evacuate a structure, including the immediate area, due to impending danger to persons working in or near the structure or environment.

#### *Emergency Radio Traffic*

Indicates an immediate dangerous emergency condition, such as the evidence of imminent collapse, fire condition change, i.e., flashover, or another sudden event such as the failure of a major electrical line that may significantly affect the emergency scene personnel.

#### *LUNARS* (acronym)

Location – where members think or know where they are

Unit designation – i.e., "Rescue 43," "Engine 41," etc.

Name(s) or Unit Number(s) – member(s) in trouble

Assignment – what was the person/crew assignment

Resources – what may be needed to resolve situation

Situation – i.e., trapped, disoriented, low air, etc.

Example: "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY. This is Firefighter Smith with Engine 46. I am on the third floor, "C" side, assigned to check for fire extension, and the roof collapsed. I have air, but am pinned by the structure. I am radio and PASS equipped. I am activating my PASS."

#### *MAYDAY*

An issued signal, indication or spoken word to report a member is in trouble and needs rescue.

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### ***URGENT***

Indicates priority radio traffic to transmit information not related to immediate danger to life. Examples are a change in conditions, the immediate need for a tool, or a change of tactics. Urgent could also indicate a risk to personnel if not quickly resolved.

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

When *emergency evacuation* is required, the Incident Commander must:

- Announce on the radio talk group assigned to the incident “*Emergency – all units in and around the structure evacuate.*”
- Contact the Fire Alarm Operator (FAO) on the Primary radio talk group and request that the evacuation alert tone and announcement be executed.

Following receipt of a request to activate the evacuation alert tone, the FAO will immediately transmit the evacuation alert tone on the Primary radio talk group.

Upon receiving the evacuation alert tone and/or radio communication, all personnel must evacuate immediately. Incident Command will conduct a Personal Accountability Report (PAR) pursuant to procedure 301.01 – *Personnel Accountability System*. This will assure that each crew’s status and location are determined.

### **MAYDAY**

Declare MAYDAY over an available radio when either you or another firefighter:

- Becomes entangled, pinned, stuck, unable to free oneself after two attempts, or has an SCBA low air alarm activated.
- Falls through a roof or floor.
- Is caught in a flashover, backdraft, or threat of being burned.
- Is disoriented and has no contact with the hose or search line and no knowledge in which direction the exit is located.
- Has primary exit blocked by fire or collapse and cannot be at the secondary exit in 30 seconds.
- Has an SCBA malfunction affecting breathing or low air alarm activates and egress is delayed or impeded.
- Is disoriented and not able to immediately locate a means of egress.
- Suffers a medical emergency that impedes his/her immediate egress from the structure
- Confronts an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) environment
- Requires the assistance of another firefighter(s) to affect his/her egress.

The circumstances listed above are not the only ones that warrant broadcasting a MAYDAY event. Anytime you feel your life or the life of another is at significant risk, call a MAYDAY.

If a member cannot be located through a PAR, or if a member is reported missing, any member on the emergency scene may announce a MAYDAY. The term MAYDAY will indicate a lost or down firefighter. Report of a MAYDAY will receive priority radio traffic.

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Incident Command will respond to a MAYDAY by implementing a rescue for the firefighter as part of the overall incident action plan.

If you are calling the MAYDAY to receive assistance, follow these steps:

- Announce “MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY” over any available radio.
- Utilize the acronym LUNARS - The acronym is strictly a reminder. As long as all information is transmitted, the order is not important.
- Manually activate Personal Alert System (PASS) alarm and Radio Emergency Button (if portable radio is so equipped).
- Lay low for increased visibility to locate potential exits or landmarks.
- Attempt to find an exit or cover.
- Find door, window or breach a wall.
- Attempt to extricate with hand tools.
- Attempt to disentangle by cutting wires and perform SCBA low profile maneuvers.
- Use tools to make noise.
- Turn on all flashlights.

All personnel operating at the scene need to be alerted that a critical situation exists when a firefighter(s) is lost, trapped or missing. This notification could allow interior firefighters or crew to realize that they are in close proximity with the “MAYDAY” crew and allow them to assist immediately.

If a MAYDAY situation is quickly resolved - finding a door or window, disentangling, or being found by another crewmember, it is imperative that the MAYDAY is cancelled. This cancellation can abort a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) deployment. If possible and practical, the person calling the MAYDAY should cancel the MAYDAY. Call the Incident Commander giving name/unit number, company and location, and announce, “MAYDAY is cancelled. MAYDAY is cancelled. MAYDAY is cancelled.” and await confirmation.

### EMERGENCY RADIO TRAFFIC

The unit with *emergency radio traffic* must identify themselves and state “Emergency Radio Traffic.” The Incident Commander must acknowledge the unit, determine the nature of the emergency situation and take appropriate action. All listening crews will affect radio silence upon hearing the transmission of “Emergency Radio Traffic.”

The FAO may be unable to monitor the radio talk group to which the incident has been assigned. Therefore, any request(s) from the Incident Commander to the FAO must be made on the Primary radio talk group.

When a “MAYDAY” is sounded, the Incident Commander will take steps to have all personnel operating at the incident change radio talk groups to a newly designated Operations Channel except the “MAYDAY” person(s) involved, the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Command Officer, and the RIT crew.