

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE - 4.6.3

TOPIC - SAFETY: RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT)

PROPOSE:

To identify operational considerations relating to the provision of Rapid Intervention Teams (RIT) whenever personnel are operating in environments which are "Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health" (IDLH).

GENERAL:

Fire service personnel are often required to operate in extremely hazardous conditions requiring safety measures that are equal to the hazards encountered. One simple fact that must be clearly understood, regarding the nature of extremely hazardous operations, is that our personnel may need to be rescued. It is the policy of the District to provide as safe an environment as possible for our personnel, and as such whenever personnel are operating in IDLH environments the incident commander shall designate a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).

GUIDELINE:

Basic Concept:

1. To have at least one dedicated back-up entry team available whenever personnel are operating in environments considered to be Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH). Additional RITs may be necessary due to the complexity and/or size of the building or incident.
2. A structure fire is the most common IDLH where we will be directly responsible to provide a RIT (SOG 4.5.1). There will be other incident types where the incident commander may identify the need for a RIT, or where we may provide support for an intervention team from another agency.
3. The RIT must be in a state of readiness capable of making a rapid entry to an environment providing rescue efforts to personnel who are injured, trapped, or missing.

The Team:

1. The RIT will be made up of no fewer than two (2) firefighters who are capable of operating without direct supervision.
2. The RIT will operate within the incident command structure and will be identified as a separate entity in the Passport Accountability system.
3. Personnel assigned to a RIT shall be equipped with full structural fire protective clothing including self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Each

team member must have their SCBA face piece with them at all times and it must be in a condition capable of being donned immediately. For incident types other than structure fires, the protective clothing and equipment will be appropriate for the hazards.

4. The Incident Commander will assign a team leader with a radio for each RIT.
5. The RIT will report directly to I.C. or a designated Division officer.

Responsibilities:

1. The Incident Commander will assign personnel to become the RIT simultaneously with assigning personnel to enter an environment considered IDLH.
2. The Incident Commander will brief the RIT on the chosen strategy of the incident.
3. The RIT will need to perform a size-up related to their duties. The team should be looking for potential problems, avenues of escape, points of entry, building construction type, scene conditions, safety hazards, and ought to gain any other information that may contribute to a successful outcome.
4. Specifically designated RIT equipment will be stored on an engine in an outside compartment. This compartment will be identified with the letters **RIT** in blue reflective material, each letter is to be six (6) inches tall.
5. The RIT will need to assemble essential equipment at a designated location. This equipment must not be used for any other purpose than to be in a state of readiness for the RIT. The following is a minimum list of the equipment to be assembled:
 - RIT air supply bag containing: Complete SCBA setup including mask, but without the harness.
 - Extra SCBA bottles
 - Charged hoseline
 - Portable radio for the victim
 - Portable hand lanterns
 - Flat head axe and Halligan tool
 - Rope for hoisting or as a guide
 - Blue plastic tarp as the assembly point for tools and equipment

The RIT will need to assess the need for specialized equipment to be included in the cache. Consider distributor and piercing nozzles as effective tools in entrapment conditions.

6. The RIT must be primarily reserved for immediate deployment to meet the needs

of life threatening situations of other firefighters. However, secondary fire ground activities may be assigned provided that those activities can be aborted without compromising safety. During secondary activities the RIT must maintain status as a unit.

7. Whenever a RIT is activated for its primary purpose of firefighter rescue, the I.C. must assemble another team. That new RIT must then be briefed, perform a size-up, and develop an equipment cache.

Activation of the RIT:

1. Whenever a firefighter, or firefighters, operating in an IDLH, are injured, trapped, unaccounted for, or are in any other life threatening situation the Incident Commander must be notified. Notification shall occur through the use of Emergency Traffic procedures.

Note: An absent member of any crew will be automatically assumed lost or trapped until other wise determined to be safe.

2. Upon such notification the IC shall call for the next greater alarm, up to and including a mutual aid request, and initiate an accountability roll call (SOG 4.1.2).
3. The RIT will be sent to that last working area of the crew or firefighter.
4. When activated the RIT shall operate on a separate radio frequency to be determined by the IC.
5. The RIT will operate using the "AWARE" principle. The AWARE acronym represents critical needs associated with firefighter rescue. The first two letters of the acronym are the most important initial components, **A** = air and **W** = water. Provide a redundant **Air** supply and create a defensible space with **Water** using hoselines. Meeting these two basic requirements will buy valuable time for extrication. The next two letters stand for **A Radio**. Getting a radio to the victim will allow you to assess the condition of the firefighter and to know if they were able to self extricate. Finally, **E** = extrication. Extrication may take only a few minutes or several hours.
6. Call for additional resources early in the rescue process. As soon as you are in the area and can make a reasonable assessment of the conditions get help and any specialty equipment coming. Remember the initial RIT may consist of only two firefighters.
7. Extrication must be performed as rapidly as possible with a primary focus on the safety of those to be rescued and those doing the rescue tasks. Team

members must be adequately trained in a variety of rescue and extrication techniques to ensure success.