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PERSONNEL AND UNIT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS- AMENDED

Issued by: Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission
Authority: Montgomery County Code Section 21-4B(e)

Effective Date: January 1, 1998

Supersedes Personnel and Unit Accountability Systems, dated 2/1/94

SUMMARY: This policy amends the previous safety procedure enabling an Incident Commander to account for the presence, location, and assigned activities of individual fire and rescue personnel and each crew operating on the scene of a fire or other emergency incident under his/her command. The new procedure requires the Emergency Communications Center to sound Incident Duration Reminders at set intervals to prompt an accountability roll call, to ensure the safety of operational personnel on the scene of emergency incidents.

DEADLINES: Montgomery County Fire Board Review: April 15, 1997
Dept. of Fire and Rescue Services Review: April 15, 1997
Fire and Rescue Corporations Review: April 15, 1997

ADDRESS: Send all comments pertaining to the proposed amendment to George Giebel, Chairman, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850

STAFF: For additional information, you may contact Beth Feldman, Administrative Specialist, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission, on 217-2461.

BACKGROUND: To ensure personnel safety and prevent injury and loss of life during emergency operations, each responding unit must report to its assigned location according to the applicable Standard Operating Procedure. Unit officers must inform the sector officer or Incident Commander of the



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status of their operations, when their assignment is complete, or whenever their location has changed.

Sec. 1. Purpose: To enhance the coordinated system of personnel and unit accountability enabling the Incident Commander to identify, locate, and account for the function of all fire, rescue, and emergency medical services personnel operating on the scene of an emergency incident.

Sec. 2. Applicability. This amended procedure applies to all fire and rescue personnel operating at the scene of an emergency incident.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

- a. **Accountability.** Personnel accountability system used during emergency responses for more serious or extensive emergency incidents.
- b. **Accountability Status Binder.** A binder to which primary collector rings and unit identifiers can be attached.
- c. **Corporation.** A fire or rescue corporation established in the County, authorized to provide fire, rescue, or emergency medical services.
- d. **Crew.** Personnel responding to an incident, staffing a specific apparatus unit.
- e. **Department.** Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS).
- f. **Entry Control Officer.** Officer who may be assigned to monitor the entry and status of all personnel in the operational area.
- g. **Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH).** Atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiant substance that poses an immediate threat to life, or would interfere with an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.



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- h. **Incident Commander.** The senior or designated officer in charge of an incident responsible for the strategic decisions and the assignment of other primary supervisory functional positions necessary to control an incident.
- i. **Incident Duration Reminder (IDR).** A single extended alert tone and announcement by the Emergency Communications Center to advise the duration of the incident 20 minutes after the arrival of the first **primary units** on incidents requiring three or more **primary units**, and at 15 minute intervals thereafter.
- j. **Personnel.** All on-duty fire, rescue, and emergency medical services personnel, both career and volunteer.
- k. **Personnel Accountability Tag.** A 3" X 4" laminated or hard plastic tag with an attachment device (shower hook, snap ring, etc.), displaying at a minimum the individual's name and ID number. At the Corporation's or Department's choice, it could also display the appropriate logo, the Corporation's name/DFRS/specialty team information, etc.
- l. **Primary Collector Ring.** A device mounted in the unit's cab with the unit identification tag, used to secure secondary collector rings and/or individual personnel accountability tags.
- m. **Primary Unit.** Engines, ladder trucks, rescue squads and extrication units that have been dispatched, or are available to be dispatched to an emergency incident.
- n. **Secondary Collector Ring.** A device mounted in a fire/rescue unit on which personnel can secure their individual personnel accountability tags.
- o. **Sector.** A division of an emergency operation, either geographical or functional, as determined by the **Incident Commander**.
- p. **Sector Officer.** The officer responsible for supervising those units operating within a sector and for coordinating the sector's operations with the **Incident Commander**.



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- q. **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).** Procedures adopted by the Fire and Rescue Commission for use during emergency operations.
- r. **Unit.** Specific apparatus staffed by a crew responding to an emergency incident.
- s. **Unit Identification Tag.** A laminated or hard plastic tag with the **unit** identification, which can be attached to the **primary collector ring**. At a minimum, the information should display the **Corporation** name, the **unit** number, and optionally, "Montgomery County."
- t. **Unit Officer.** An individual certified as a Firefighter/Rescuer III or above, who is responsible for the operation of a **unit** and the crew assigned to that **unit**.

Sec. 4. **Policy.** To ensure **personnel** and **unit** safety during emergency operations, all **personnel** and **units** must be identified, located, and accounted for at all times on the scene of an emergency incident.

Sec. 5.A. **Procedure for Personnel Accountability.**

- a. To ensure the safety of operational personnel, the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) will sound **Incident Duration Reminders (IDRs)** 20 minutes after the arrival of the first **primary unit** on incidents requiring three or more **primary units**, and at 15 minute intervals thereafter.
- b. Upon receipt of each **IDR**, the **Incident Commander** will provide an update and then direct the **unit officers** to report on the welfare of all **personnel** under their command. The accountability roll call should begin with the **units** working in the hazardous area and proceed through the remaining **units**.
- c. **Personnel** who respond to an emergency incident on a fire/rescue **unit** must place their **personnel accountability tag** on either the **secondary** or **primary collector ring**. A **unit identification tag** must be attached to all **primary collector rings**.



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1. When **personnel** exit the **unit** on arrival at the incident, the driver will collect their **personnel accountability tags** and place them on the **primary collector ring** in the vehicle's cab.
2. **Personnel accountability tags** may be added to or removed from the **primary collector ring** only with the approval of the **Incident Commander**.
- d. **Personnel** who respond directly to the scene without **personnel accountability tags** must report to the command post to obtain temporary **personnel accountability tags**.
 1. Each mobile command unit will carry a supply of blank **personnel accountability tags**, grease pens, and attachment devices to create temporary **tags**. As these **tags** are issued, the **Incident Commander** or designee will record the information, including the **unit** assignment, and notify the **unit officer**.
 2. The temporary **personnel accountability tags** will be placed on the **primary collector ring** of the **unit** to which the individual has been assigned.
- e. **Personnel** who report for duty without a **personnel accountability tag** must obtain a temporary **tag**. Their name, organization, and ID will be entered on the temporary **personnel accountability tag** and a log book entry made. The temporary **tag** will be returned at the end of the duty tour and an appropriate log entry made.
- f. **Personnel** who have their **personnel accountability tags** when they respond directly to the scene must report to the command post for assignment. The **Incident Commander** or designee will place their **personnel accountability tag** on the **primary collector ring** of the **unit** to which the individual has been assigned.
- g. All visitors must be issued temporary **personnel accountability tags**.
- h. As soon as possible after establishing command, the **Incident Commander** will have



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the **primary collector rings** collected and assembled at the Command Post to monitor **personnel and unit accountability**.

- i. The **Incident Commander** will conduct an **accountability and location check** during the incident, or if the evacuation signal has been sounded. When this signal is sounded, all **personnel** must leave the hazardous area and report to their officer/unit for an **accountability check**.
 1. Each **unit** will be called and a positive check of the number of crew members and their working location will be verified.
 2. The **Incident Commander** may also direct an **accountability check** to be performed if he/she determines that **personnel** may be trapped or missing, or if conditions unexpectedly deteriorate.
- j. The **Incident Commander** may initiate **personnel and unit accountability** at his/her discretion on incidents involving fewer than three **primary units**, if conditions warrant. The **Incident Commander** can also discontinue **personnel and unit accountability** if **personnel** are not operating in an **IDLH** environment and there are no hazards that would warrant using the **accountability** system.

Sec. 5.B. Procedure for Unit Accountability

- a. **Unit officers** must follow the applicable **SOPs**, except:
 1. when given a different assignment by the **Incident Commander** or sector officer; or
 2. when conditions prohibit **personnel** from following the **SOP**.
- b. **Unit officers** should maintain constant supervision and control over all **personnel** assigned to their **units**.



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- c. **Unit officers** must ensure that **personnel** under their supervision operate in teams of at least two whenever entering a hazardous area.
- d. The **unit officers** must ensure that the **Incident Commander** or **sector officer** is aware of the information below before entering a hazardous area:
 - 1. **Unit identification;**
 - 2. **Number of personnel;**
 - 3. **Location of entry; and**
 - 4. **Reason for entry.**
- e. If one member of a team must exit the hazardous area, all members of that team will exit together. The **unit officer** must coordinate this activity through the **sector officer** or **Incident Commander**.
- f. The **unit officer** must notify the **sector officer** or **Incident Commander** of any changes in the status or location of his/her **unit** and crew.
- g. When the crew's assignment is completed, the **unit officer** must report to the **sector officer** or to the **Incident Commander**, either in person or by radio, that the crew is ready for reassignment. If the crew needs to change SCBA cylinders, the **unit officer** must notify the **Incident Commander**. Rehabilitation requests should be made either to the **sector officer**, or to the **Incident Commander**.
- h. The **Incident Commander** will coordinate the assignment and location of all **units** and **crews** operating on the scene of an emergency. **Sector officers** will continuously update the **Incident Commander** on the status of those crews within each sector.



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Sec. 6. Responsibility- General. All fire and rescue officers and personnel must follow established procedures regarding personnel and unit accountability, fireground SOPs, and fireground safety.

- a. **Corporations/Department.** Each Corporation and the Department must issue personnel accountability tags to all of their operational personnel and any other personnel who may operate on emergency incidents.
- b. **Incident Commander.** The Incident Commander will designate an individual to collect the primary collector rings and place them on the accountability status binder. Appropriate information regarding each unit operating at the incident will be noted on the accountability status binder adjacent to that unit's primary collector ring.
- c. **Crews.** Unless specifically instructed, all crews responding to or at the scene of an emergency must position their units and report to their assigned location with required equipment, as outlined in applicable SOPs. Once a crew has successfully completed its assigned task, it must remain in its assigned location until the unit officer has coordinated further actions through either the sector officer or the Incident Commander.
- d. **Unit Officers.** Unit officers must ensure that all personnel who ride that unit have personnel accountability tags and that the tags are placed in the designated location on the unit at the time of an emergency response. The unit officer will return the personnel accountability tags when the unit returns to the station.
 1. Unless an emergency requires immediate action to avoid harm, unit officers must first coordinate their crew's actions with either the sector officer or the Incident Commander before changing the crew's or unit's location or function.
 2. If an emergency requires evacuating an area of operation, each unit officer must account for all personnel assigned to his/her unit and report that unit's



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and crew's situation and status to the sector officer or Incident Commander.

- e. **Drivers/Operators.** These personnel must place the secondary collector rings and/or individual personnel accountability tags on the primary collector ring in their vehicle's cab.
- f. **Entry Control Officer.** This officer may be designated by the Incident Commander to closely monitor all personnel entering an exceptionally hazardous operational area and collect entry data.
 - 1. Minimum information to be collected includes name, company, duty assignment, length of air supply, and time of entry. During an emergency, this entry control data can be returned to the command post to account for all personnel.
 - 2. Personnel who leave that operational area must be cleared through the entry control officer.
- g. Personnel must report lost, misplaced or damaged personnel accountability tags to their Corporation or Department personnel accountability tag coordinator.
 - 1. A temporary personnel accountability tag will be given to these individuals until a permanent tag can be issued.
 - 2. All personnel must safeguard their personnel accountability tag and store it on the "D" ring of their helmet between responses.

Sec. 7. Enforcement. The Chief is the enforcement authority for Corporation personnel; the Director is the enforcement authority for Department employees. Random gear inspections may be conducted to ensure compliance with this procedure.



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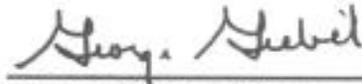
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Sec. 8. **Effective Date.** This policy is effective on January 1, 1998.

Attest:



George Giebel, Chairman
Fire and Rescue Commission



Date

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