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Revision Date:

Bastrop County Emergency Services District No. 1

Standard Operating Procedures

Title: Accountability

Originator – Fire Chief (Signature/Date): _____

PURPOSE

This procedure identifies a system of incident site firefighter accountability. Use of the system will enhance the safety of the individual firefighter, and will provide Incident Command an improved means to track and account for all personnel working on the scene.

Special emphasis shall be placed on personnel working in the hot zone. The hot zone will be defined as any area that requires an SCBA, or in which a firefighter is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment or structure. This would include entering a structure reported to be on fire, operating in close proximity to the structure during exterior operations, confined space or trench rescue, haz-mat incident, live fire training, etc.

The PASSPORT system shall also be used for firefighter accountability outside the hot zone, to track personnel in rehab, staging, or other non-emergency assignments.

GENERAL

Accountability involves a personal commitment to work within the safety system at an incident.

Command will always maintain an accurate tracking of resources that are committed at an incident.

Command will be responsible for including accountability as a major element in strategy and attack planning. Command must react to any barriers to effective accountability.

Officers and Sector Commanders will maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crewmembers assigned to them. All crewmembers will have an assignment (no freelancing).

At times the Incident Commander will split up crews in order to fulfill other functional assignments or requests for additional resources. At this point the ranking/senior member of each newly formed crew will be that crew's leader (or Sector Commander) and is responsible for the accountability of the crew. The PASSPORT should be changed to reflect this event identifying the location/assignment of each crew. Crews arriving on the scene should remain intact until command indicates a need to split up personnel/resources and reassign them. A minimum crew will be two members with two portable radios. Crewmembers will go in together, stay together, and will come out together. Reduced visibility and increased risk will require diligence to stay together.

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

To enhance safety and to improve tracking of firefighters, the accountability system will be used. The first arriving company to each geographical side of the incident will serve as the initial accountability location. All crews entering the incident will deliver their PASSPORTS to the accountability location closest to their point of entry.

PASSPORT SYSTEM

The PASSPORT system equipment involves the following items:

PASSPORT – a white clip board with the company's radio ID#, department name, and apparatus type, (engine, tanker, brush, command, etc). Each apparatus will be assigned a PASSPORT.

PAT (Personal Accountability Tag) – a plastic or metal tag with the member's name & departmental ID# etched on it. Each member will be assigned two PAT's at a minimum. The PAT will be equipped with a quick clip on it that will be used to attach to the Hot Zone Accountability Marker.

Each company member will place a PAT on each apparatus PASSPORT that they are responding on prior to or while enroute to the incident. The company officer will be responsible for ensuring that the PASSPORT reflects only the personnel assigned to that unit. At an incident, each member will be responsible for moving their PAT anytime their assignment does change. Personnel must be diligent in ensuring that the location of their PAT accurately reflects their current location.

HOT ZONE ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to the PASSPORT system to track personnel, the first-in crew will place near the point of entry, at a location that is easily accessible to individuals, a Hot Zone Accountability Marker (HZAM). As individuals enter the Hot Zone they will place their PAT on the HZAM to indicate their presence in the Hot Zone. Crewmembers should be clipped together to indicate they are a crew. Members will remove their PAT when leaving the Hot Zone. Members will be diligent to reflect only current individuals in the Hot Zone. In the event of a collapse, forced evacuation, etc., the HZAM will be retrieved to assist in the Personnel Accountability Report (PAR). As the incident escalates, an Accountability Officer should augment the Hot Zone Accountability Marker.

TACTICAL BENCHMARKS

Several accountability benchmarks are included in tactical operations. The Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) involves a roll call of personnel assigned. For a Company Officer, a PAR is a confirmation that members assigned to his/her crew are visually accounted for. For the Sector Officer, a PAR is an accounting for all crewmembers of all companies assigned to that sector. Report's of PAR should be conducted face-to-face within the company or within the sector whenever possible. In the case of an evacuation signal all crews in the Hot Zone should report to the Hot Zone Accountability Marker to be accounted for.

Example: "Command to all units and sectors conduct a PAR." Each unit and sector is responsible to call Command and report his or her PAR status. A PAR will only be received from an engine when an Engineer is operating. (Example: Engine 107 has a PAR – one person).

Command initiates a PAR of crews on the scene for the following situations:

- Immediately following any report of missing or trapped firefighters

- Immediately following any change from offensive to defensive tactics/modes
- Immediately following any sudden hazardous event at the incident – flashover, back draft, collapse, etc.
- At every 20 minutes of elapsed time
- At a report of fire under control
- Any time an Officer deems it necessary

ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICERS

Dependent on the nature, type, and complexity of the incident, the Incident Commander should assign an Accountability Officer as an incident escalates. The Accountability Officer will report directly to Command. If the incident continues to escalate, additional Accountability Officers should be assigned. An Accountability Sector should then be established to coordinate the Accountability Officers.

ACCOUNTABILITY SECTOR

The Accountability Sector Officer is assigned to Command. The Accountability Sector Officer should be located at the Command Post.

The Accountability Sector Officer's responsibilities include:

1. Develop and implement a plan designed to track and account for all personnel working in the Hot Zone.
2. Ensure that Accountability Officers are implemented in each Sector/Division as necessary.
3. Request and manage assigned resources as needed.
4. Provide progress reports to Command.
5. Initiate PAR's upon benchmarks or as needed.

RULES OF THUMB

ACCOUNTABILITY implementation should consider the following basic rules.

- ✓ PASSPORTS never enter the Hot Zone
- ✓ PASSPORTS will be maintained by an Accountability Officer when one is assigned
- ✓ PASSPORTS must reflect only those personnel presently working together
- ✓ PASSPORTS shall also be used when reporting to rehab, staging, etc.

- ✓ The Hot Zone Accountability Marker must be placed in a good location that is easily accessible
 - ✓ Members must ensure that their Personal Accountability Tags are in place on the HZAM when entering the Hot Zone, and removed when leaving the Hot Zone
 - ✓ Additional arriving crews must deliver their PASSPORTS to the appropriate accountability location
 - ✓ As the incident escalates and Accountability Officers are assigned, all PASSPORTS will be delivered to these officers
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- ✓ Where the Sector Officer is operating within the Hot Zone, PASSPORTS must remain outside the zone with a designated person serving as an Accountability Officer. A Sector Officer operating within the Hot Zone will not have the PASSPORT accountability responsibilities
 - ✓ Command must maintain an awareness of which apparatus are serving as accountability locations, and provide this information to companies being assigned

POINT OF ENTRY CONTROL

Crews exiting at a different location than the original point of entry must immediately notify Command or the Accountability Officer. Their PATS must be retrieved at the time of exit.

MULTI-STORY/HIGH RISE

Multi-story or high-rise incidents present only a minor modification in the standard approach to accountability. The First Company establishes Lobby Control; they should have their PASSPORT and status board with them. Once lobby control is established, all crews reporting to the building will deliver their PASSPORTS to Lobby Control. Lobby Control will be responsible for collecting the PASSPORTS of the initial companies.

Once staging is established, usually two floors below the fire floor, the Staging Officer will collect the PATS of all crews assigned to fire combat positions. As the incident escalates and an Operations Sector is established, Accountability Officers will be assigned as necessary.

PASSPORTS for crews assigned to Lobby or any support functions within the building (non-hot zone crews) will be maintained by the appropriate Sector Officers.

TERMINATING THE PASSPORT SYSTEM

Accountability will remain through a report of "fire under control", at which time a PAR for all crews must be obtained. Command will determine at that time, based on the situation and risk, as to whether to continue with the Accountability system. If visibility is still impaired or a significant hazardous condition still exists, Command may choose to continue the Accountability system until the hazard dissipates.

Upon termination and release from the incident, Officers and crewmembers will ensure that their PASSPORT is returned to the status board of their apparatus and that the PASSPORT is up-to-date.

RAPID INTERVENTION TEAMS (RIT)

As the incident escalates, and/or crews are operating at a special hazard (i.e., confined space rescue), Command shall assign a "Rapid Intervention Team" (RIT) as necessary. These crews will follow the same guidelines for Accountability.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTABILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Accountability will work only with a strong personal commitment on the part of every employee/member to the safety system. This commitment involves the following responsibilities:

Firefighter – Responsible for staying with his/her crew at all times, Ensure that his/her PAT is on the appropriate PASSPORTS at all times. Ensure his/her PAT is on the Hot Zone Accountability Marker when entering the hot zone, and removed when leaving the hot zone.

Company Officer – Responsible for keeping his/her crew intact at all times, and that the PASSPORT is current and accurate. The PASSPORT must reflect only those personnel working at the incident. The PASSPORT must be turned into the acting Accountability Officer and retrieved upon exit.

Sector Officer – Responsible for accounting for all crews under his/her command and maintaining an awareness of their exact location.

In those situations where the Sector Commander must enter the hot zone, PASSPORTS will continue to be managed by the driver/engineer of the first apparatus or a designated Accountability Officer.

Accountability Officer – Responsible for maintaining PASSPORTS of personnel assigned to him/her. The Accountability Officer must maintain close coordination with other Accountability Officers.

Accountability Sector Officer – Responsible for managing Accountability Officers and system. Causes PAR's to be initiated at tactical benchmarks or as needed.

Command/Operations – Responsible for tracking the locations of all crews. Must advise later assigned crews of which apparatus is serving as the accountability location for PASSPORTS or that the Sector Officer or Accountability Officer will be accepting PASSPORTS at the point of entry.

Training of Personnel in Compliance with Accountability Policy

All personnel will annually attend a minimum of 2-hours of training on this Accountability policy to ensure that they are familiar with and understand their responsibilities and duties of the Accountability system.