

**MONTERERY COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
FIRE OPERATIONS MANUAL
SECTION 17**

Identification and Management of Life Hazard Zones

1. **Purpose:** This policy/procedure provides guidelines to maximize safety of all personnel while operating at the scene of an emergency, provide a means for the identification and notification of Life Hazards and the required isolation measures. The approved method shall include the use of a minimum of three (3) horizontal strands of any barrier tape. Red and white striped barrier or chevron tape that states “**Do Not Enter**” is preferred. The minimum barrier tape width will be 1” with 3” being optimum. The barrier tape shall be securely fixed to stationary supports, and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard.
2. **Use:** This policy/procedure applies to all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency.
3. **Definitions & Guidelines:**
 - A. **Definitions:**
 - I. **Life Hazard:** The existence of a process or conditions(s) that would likely cause serious injury or death to exposed persons.
 - II. **Life Hazard Control Zones:** A system of barriers surrounding designated areas at the emergency incident scene that are intended to STOP people from entering a potentially life threatening or hazardous area.
 - III. **Life Hazard Lookout:** A person trained in Life Hazard Control Zones in a location that can safely observe a life hazard, watch resources in the area, and communicate with resources keeping them a safe distance away. With Life Hazard Control Zones, the lookout will also isolate and deny entry to any responders or resources until the life hazard is mitigated and the Incident Commander approves the release of the Life Hazard Zone. The Incident Commander may allow entry into the Life Hazard Zone to assist or support emergency operations.

B. Information and Guidelines:

This guideline applies to all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency.

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- I. Conditions found on the emergency scene requiring isolation in a Life Hazard Control Zone may involved, but are not limited to:
 - a. Downed power lines
 - b. Energized electrical equipment
 - c. Collapse zones
 - d. Large unprotected holes (swimming pools, trenches, etc.)
 - e. Ruptured gas line
 - f. Ammunition
 - g. Hazardous Materials

- II. Whenever a person first recognizes a life hazard is present and an immediate threat at an incident, he/she shall immediately contact the Incident Commander (IC) using the phrase “**PRIORITY TRAFFIC/LIFE HAZARD ALERT**”, to advise them of the situation. The following items shall be included in the alert:
 - a. Type/Nature
 - b. Specific Location
 - c. Resource needs
 - d. Actions taken

4. Procedure: The following procedure(s) shall be initiated for each life hazard identified on an incident to ensure all personnel are made aware and acknowledge receipt of the information.

A. Identification of Life Hazards:

- I. Upon notification of a known or suspected life safety hazard, the Incident Commander shall request an alert tone from Fire Comm to transmit the location, nature, extent of the hazard, and identify the **Life Hazard Control Zone**.

- II. Fire Comm shall acknowledge the broadcast on the command channel being used on the incident and incident travel frequencies.

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- III. Fire Comm shall perform a roll call of units en route to the incident. Each unit shall acknowledge the hazard by repeating the message back. Note must be made of any units not acknowledging the message and relayed to the IC.
- IV. It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to ensure ALL on scene resources acknowledge the receipt of the message and relay that information to Fire Comm.
- V. Fire Comm will include the Life Hazard Information on all subsequent dispatch notifications to additional resources.

B Life Hazard Control Zones:

- I. Recognition of Hazard.
 - a. The person that first recognizes that a life hazard is present and an immediate threat shall establish a **Life Hazard Control Zone**.
 - b. He/She is responsible to isolate and deny entry until a **Life Hazard Lookout(s)** has been assigned. Sufficient resources shall be requested and assigned through the Incident Commander.
- II. Establishing a **Life Hazard Control Zone**.
 - a. RED AND WHITE BARRIER TAPE SHALL BE PREFERRED FOR LIFE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION.
 - b. When available deploy red and white striped or chevron barrier tape that states "Do Not Enter", in three horizontal strands approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fix to stationary supports to establish the **LIFE HAZARD ZONE**. When red and white striped or chevron barrier tape is not available, any barricade tape in three horizontal lines shall suffice. Personnel should consider horizontal lines at the level equal to the knees, waist and shoulder heights.
 - i. The establishment of the Life Hazard Control Zone shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation and distance from the hazard.

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- ii. Supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.
 - c. The use of illumination to further identify the **Life Hazard Control Zone** (i.e., orange cones with each cone having a flashing strobe light on the ground, or glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape) is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility.
 - d. Maintain the **Life Hazard Control Zone** throughout the duration of the incident unless the Life Hazard is abated. Removal of the **Life Hazard Control Zone** shall be by approval of the Incident commander ONLY.
 - e. The **Life Hazard Control Zone** identification measures are intended to provide a visual cue to all persons. The **Life Hazard Lookout(s)** shall provide the physical barrier between personnel and the **Life Hazard Control Zone** through effective communication and notification.
- III. Safety Considerations Related to **Life Hazard Control Zones**.
- a. Personnel shall not breach, alter or remove **Life Hazard Control Zone** identification measures until the hazard has been abated and at the direction of the Incident Commander. Only the Incident Commander may authorize entering into the Life Hazard Control Zone. When the **Life Hazard Control Zone** is no longer needed, the IC will have the identification measures removed.
 - b. Personnel on scene have a personal responsibility to be aware of Life Hazard Control Zones as well as the safety of others.
 - c. Consider appointing an Assistant Safety Officer to oversee the **Life Hazard Control Zone** and reassign the **Life Hazard Lookout** to the Safety Officer.
 - d. Yellow and Black “Caution” or “Fire Line Do Not Cross” tape shall then be used to establish a “Public Exclusion Zone” at a reasonable distance to prevent public contact with the hazard and any other emergency operations.

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- e. Remember the slogan: ***THREE STRIPES, YOU'RE OUT!***

C. Life Hazard Lookouts:

- I. The **Life Hazard Lookout(s)** shall report to the Incident Safety Officer or Incident Commander if a Safety Officer has not been established.
- II. The **Life Hazard Lookout(s)** shall not be used for, or engaged in, any other fire ground activities. Personnel who assume this function should have sufficient training and authority to carry out the duties as outlined. **Life Hazard Lookout(s)** shall be exclusively responsible for the following responsibilities:
 - a. Provide verbal notification to approaching personnel.
 - b. Isolate and deny entry to all personnel except those authorized by the Incident Commander.
 - c. Request additional resources, as needed, through the Incident Safety Officer or Incident Commander if a Safety Officer is not assigned.
 - d. Notify the Incident Safety Officer or Incident Commander if the Incident Safety Officer has not been assigned of any changes in the hazard or **Life Hazard Control Zone** and make recommendations to mitigate changes.
 - e. Maintain **Life Hazard Control Zone** identification measurers (i.e. barrier tape, supports, additional lighting, etc.).
 - f. Allow entry into the area only with the approval of the Incident Commander using the chain of command.