

**MONTERERY COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION  
FIRE OPERATIONS MANUAL  
SECTION 8**

**Firefighter Lost/Trapped/Disoriented Policy**

**1. Purpose**

- A. The purpose of this policy is to establish a standard for all Monterey County firefighting personnel to follow for activation of the firefighter down emergency button on portable radios.

**2. Background**

- A. The ability for a firefighter to rapidly notify other personnel on the emergency scene that he or she is in need of assistance is crucial. Depending on the severity of the situation, the only chance the firefighter may have is the ability to push a button. It is with this issue in mind that radio manufacturers have incorporated one-touch “firefighter emergency” buttons on portable radios. These buttons have been in use throughout the firefighting industry for many years and have proven very successful. Their success hinges on consistent application of policies regarding programming, use, and response to a firefighter emergency activation. This document was created to ensure that consistency throughout Monterey County.

**3. Policy**

- A. Firefighter
  - I. Firefighting personnel who discover themselves lost, trapped, disoriented, or in other peril that requires immediate assistance shall use the term “Mayday” and or activate the Emergency Fire Fighter Down Button to secure the radio frequency to report the emergency. **FIREFIGHTERS SHALL NOT DELAY THE RADIO REPORT.**
  - II. Firefighting personnel who are not able to access and Push To Talk button on their radio or lapel microphone shall activate their Emergency Fire Fighter firefighter Down Button. Once the alert has sounded and the radio carrier is open, the firefighter shall use the term “Mayday”.
  - III. After acknowledgement, the firefighter shall provide a report that includes their Name, Unit identifier including location and assignment, Conditions, Actions and Needs, air supply,

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and resources/rescue that is needed. Additional information including any actions being taken to self-extricate should also be included.

IV. MOST IMPORTANTLY, the firefighter needs to remain calm, conserve air, and clearly communicate with fellow rescuers and command.

B. Firefighters finding themselves lost or disoriented shall take the following actions:

I. Maintain radio communications with rescuers and command;

II. Activate PASS device (if the device compromises radio traffic, it may be disabled temporarily to effect radio communication);

III. Follow hose lines or lifelines out;

IV. Search for a way out by whatever means possible;

V. If escape is not possible, retreat to a safe area and communicate these actions to command and rescuers;

VI. Stay calm and conserve air;

VII. Assume a horizontal position that allows for maximum audible effect of PASS device;

VIII. Use flashlight/tapping noises to attract attention of rescuers.

**4. Company Officer/Crew Member/Division Supervisor**

A. Company officers/crew members/Division supervisors who determine that a firefighter is unaccounted for or discovers a firefighter that is trapped or injured, shall use the term "Mayday" over the radio. Once acknowledged by Command, a report on conditions including the Name, Unit identifier, including location and assignment, air supply, and resources/rescue that are needed shall be communicated.

B. Crews operating in the general area should take any and all action necessary to assist or remove the firefighter from the hazardous

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environment upon approval of the Incident Commander or Operations Chief (if staffed).