

<b>Franklin County Fire Chiefs Standard Operating Guideline</b>		
<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2015	<b>SOG Category &amp; Identification Number:</b> <b>Operations - 002</b>	<b>Revision:</b>
<b>SOG Title:</b> <b>Lost or Trapped Firefighter – Survival Actions</b>		
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Re-evaluation Date:</b> January 1, 2018	<b>Number of Pages:</b> 5

**PURPOSE:**

The nature of firefighting places the firefighter at risk of becoming lost or trapped. The toxic environment provides only a narrow window of survivability. Survival depends on a mix of predictable self-survival actions by the lost firefighter and the Incident Commander.

**SCOPE:**

This procedure will apply to all department members and will be used at all emergencies to which Franklin County Fire Departments respond. Specifically the use of these command actions will be the foundation for operations involving a situation where a firefighter has become lost or trapped.

**PROCEDURES:**

During emergency operations, personnel must:

- Have a portable radio and personal rescue tools;
- Operate in groups or crews of at least two and crews must stay intact;
- Have an assignment and work under the supervision of a Division/Group Supervisor;
- Follow air management guidelines.

The following are basic guidelines for firefighters to follow if they become lost or trapped.

**Call for help immediately**

Firefighters who find themselves lost/trapped must immediately use “**MAYDAY**” to announce their situation while they continue to attempt to find a way out.

**EXPECT COMMAND TO CLEAR THE CHANNEL OF ALL OTHER RADIO**

**COMMUNICATIONS** Firefighters shall not delay notification of distress.

Notifications must occur as soon as the firefighter **THINKS** he or she is in trouble.

The acronym **LIPS** is used to provide information that will assist in rescuing the firefighter:

- L- Location -** Advise command of your location
- I- Identification -** Give your Name & Department
- P- Problem -** Low on air, lost, trapped, entangled etc.
- S- Survival -** Start self rescue and survival skills (**ACTIVATE PASS**)

**Other radio channel**

If a lost firefighter cannot contact command, Safety, or other units on the assigned simplex tactical channel, the firefighter should transition to an appropriate repeated, simulcast frequency to attempt contact and declare an emergency. While the primary radio channel is preferred, it is important to find any channel that works.

**Activate PASS Device**

As soon as a firefighter recognizes he/she is lost, trapped, or injured, the **PASS** device must be manually activated to sound the audible tone. The device must remain on until rescued. If the device interferes with the lost firefighter(s) communicating critical radio messages to the incident commander or rescuers, the device may be turned off temporarily. Once messages are completed, the device must again be manually activated.

**Crew stays together**

Members that separate from each other make it difficult for rescuers to find all firefighters. Crews that stay intact enhance the chances for **ALL** to be rescued and allows for easier, more efficient extrication.

**Follow the hoseline or lifeline out**

Crew members should stay with a hose line (or lifeline) and follow it out whenever possible. The hose line should always be treated as a safety line to the outside. Where a lifeline ropes are in use, follow the lifeline to the exterior.

**Search for an exit**

A lost firefighter should always attempt to get out of the building by whatever means possible. Where doors, windows, or other egress is not available, firefighters should next attempt to reach an exterior wall. Once at the wall he/she will be able to search for doorways, windows, and hallways which generally lead to the outside. Rescuers will first search hallways, around walls and around windows and doors, before sweeping large interior areas. For this reason, firefighters must avoid large open spaces. Getting to one of these areas; exterior wall, by windows, or doors increase the chances of being rescued early. These actions also provide predictable activities that will aid rescuers.

**Retreat to a safe refuge**

Where the firefighter cannot find a way out, but there is a safe refuge (protective room or floor) away from the fire that the firefighter can retreat to, he/she should take advantage of this location. The rescuers should be advised of the location by whatever means possible.

**Stay calm and conserve air**

A conscious effort must be made by the lost, trapped or injured firefighter to control breathing. Unnecessary talking or physical activity must be ceased, unless absolutely needed. Firefighters must control and pace their physical exertion activities in order to extend their SCBA air supply.

**Horizontal position**

If a firefighter cannot get out, he/she should assume a horizontal position on the floor that maximizes the audible effects of the pass device. The firefighter should attempt to take this position at an exterior wall, doorway or hallway that maximizes quick discovery by rescue crews.

**Flashlights/tapping noise**

If assuming a position to await rescuers, the firefighter should attempt to position his/her flashlight toward the ceiling. This will enhance the rescuer's ability to see the light and locate the downed firefighter. If able, the firefighter should attempt tapping noises to assist rescuers in locating him/her (i.e., hitting a tool against a metal roll-up door).

**Company or Division/Group Supervisors**

Company officers or Division/Group Supervisors who are unable to locate a crew of firefighters assigned to them, shall immediately use **MAYDAY** to notify the Incident Commander and all personnel operating on the fireground. When possible the company officer or Division/Group Supervisor should include who is missing, last known location, and actions being taken. Firefighting positions must not be abandoned during the rescue effort and freelancing must always be controlled by the company officers and Division/Group Supervisors while the Incident Commander initiates a rescue effort.