

## Fire Ground Accountability

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### PURPOSE:

This procedure identifies a system of incident site firefighter accountability. The purpose is to account for all firefighters that are within the "hazard zone" of an incident. Use of the system will provide enhanced personnel safety for the individual firefighter, and will provide the incident command staff an improved means to track and account for all personnel working in the hazard zone.

The hazard 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, etc.

### SCOPE:

This procedure shall be utilized by all operational personnel working at a scene at which there is an established "hot zone" or where there is a real or potential IDLH atmosphere.

### OVERVIEW:

The Personnel Accountability Safety System (PASS) is a system of unit and personnel identifiers as well as status boards, etc. used to maintain strict accountability of personnel operating on the scene of an emergency incident. Unit identifiers are called PASSPORTS and are 2"X4" plastic cards with the crew members' names affixed to them via Velcro. Crew members' rank should be indicated in the following manner:

- White – Chief Officers
- Red – Captains
- Black – Engineers
- Yellow – Firefighters
- Green – Safety Officers

If already in use, other colors may be utilized as individual jurisdictions deem necessary, however, each organization should strive to achieve this list of standard colors for rank designations.

Each Engine or Truck company should be equipped with an 8 1/2" X 11" status board affixed to the inside of the engineer's door. This board should be used any time there is a multi-unit response to the scene of an incident requiring the use of the accountability system (defined below). As a general rule, the first-in engineer should assume the role of accountability officer and should maintain that responsibility until such time as an accountability officer is assigned. Any member may be assigned as the accountability

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officer provided they have adequate knowledge of the system and are otherwise capable to manage incident accountability. To ensure that incident accountability is given the appropriate level of attention, Incident Commanders and assigned Safety Officers should not take on accountability as an additional assignment unless absolutely necessary.

### PROCEDURE:

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

- Command will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of where resources are committed at an incident.
- Command will always be responsible for including accountability as a major element in strategy and attack planning, and must consider and react to any barriers to effective accountability.
- Group/Division Officers will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews assigned to them. This will require the Group/Division Officer to be in his/her assigned area and to maintain close supervision of crews assigned to them.
- All crews will work for Command or Group/Division - no free-lancing.
- Crews arriving on scene shall remain intact. A crew shall consist of at least two members properly equipped with a portable radio.
- All crews will go in together, stay together, and come out together. Reduced visibility and increased risk will require positive physical contact. The Company Officer must have communication with each crew member at all times.
- If an SCBA alarm bell activates the entire crew shall exit hazard zone, notify command and report to rehab.
- If a radio fails while in the hazard zone, the crew will exit unless there is another working radio with the crew.

### PASSPORTS

To enhance accountability and to improve tracking of firefighters in the hazard zone, the "PASSPORT" system will be used. PASSPORTS are plastic cards with the crewmembers' names affixed that are turned into an Accountability Officer. The Accountability Officer may

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be a pump engineer, a Group/Division Officer, or a designated Accountability Officer, depending on the nature, type, and complexity of the incident.

### PASSPORT EQUIPMENT

The PASSPORT system equipment includes a 2" x 4" plastic card with the company's ID etched on it. The PASSPORT should contain the names of all personnel presently assigned to that company.

The PASSPORT will be carried on the dash of the apparatus at the Company Officer position or passenger side. A Velcro strip will allow the PASSPORT to be affixed on the dash and easily removed.

Each firefighter will be issued individual nametags. These will be affixed to Velcro strips on the underside of their helmet.

All engines and ladders will be equipped with an <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" X 11" status board. This will be used for accountability and will always be located on the inside door of the Engineer's/driver's position. The status board will be attached with Velcro to permit easy removal.

The Company Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the PASSPORT always reflects only currently assigned personnel. When entering a hazard zone with a partial crew (i.e., engineer remains at the engine to pump lines), the Company Officer must remove nametags of those members not entering the hazard zone. The nametags of these members may be returned to the member or placed on the spare dash Velcro.

If a member of the crew rides into the hospital he/she shall be taken off of the PASSPORT to indicate he/she is out of service.

### SHIFT CHANGE

Crewmembers arriving for duty will be responsible for immediately updating the company PASSPORT.

Arriving crewmembers will remove the nametag from the PASSPORT of the crewmember they are replacing.

Before the crewmember leaves from duty, the nametag should be placed on Velcro strip of their helmet on the underside of the rear brim.

Passports must reflect only those members presently assigned to the company.

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PASSPORT implementation should consider the following basic rules:

- PASSPORTS never enter the hazard zone
- PASSPORTS must be maintained at the point of entry to the hazard zone
- PASSPORTS must reflect only those personnel presently in the hazard zone
- Crews must turn in their PASSPORTS upon entering and crews must retrieve their PASSPORTS upon exit from the hazard zone

### **PASSPORT IMPLEMENTATION – AT THE INCIDENT**

Implementation of the PASSPORT system will occur at any incident that requires the use of an SCBA and/or at any incident at which a real or potential IDLH atmosphere exists.

The objective of the PASSPORT system is always to have the crew PASSPORTS at the point of entry and that they be accurate, reflecting only those members entering the hazard zone.

**For single company incidents**, the PASSPORT remains on the apparatus dash. The engineer will assume Accountability Officer responsibilities.

**For multi-company incidents**, these procedures apply:

- ◆ The first engine to each geographic side of the incident will serve as the initial accountability location. This engineer will serve as the Accountability Officer.
- ◆ All crews entering the incident will deliver their PASSPORTS to the accountability location closest to their "point of entry" prior to entering the hazard zone.
- ◆ If the engineer is unable to receive the PASSPORTS, the crew supervisor shall place his/her PASSPORT on the status board located on driver's door.
- ◆ The officer of a crew must give his/her passport to the engineer who has accountability responsibilities.
- ◆ As the incident escalates, and Group/Division Officers and/or Accountability Officers are assigned, all PASSPORTS will be delivered to these officers prior to entry into the hazard zone.
- ◆ Group/Division Supervisors will manage PASSPORTS only if they are not entering the hazard zone (i.e., defensive operation).
- ◆ Where the Group/Division Officer is operating within the hazard zone, PASSPORTS must remain outside the zone with a designated Accountability Officer, e.g. engineer.
- ◆ Command must maintain an awareness of which engine companies are serving as accountability location, and provide this information to companies being assigned to each geographic side of the incident.
- ◆ Command must remain aware at all times of the location and status of companies assigned to the incident by maintaining a command worksheet and/or status board. It is

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not necessary for command to track individuals, only crews. The location and status of companies will be updated when making assignments and when calling for PAR's.

- ◆ The Rehab Officer will also maintain a status board and is responsible to maintain accountability on all resources assigned to Rehab.

### POINT OF ENTRY CONTROL

PASSPORTS will remain with the designated Accountability Officer at the "Point of Entry" to the hazard zone. Upon entry, crews will turn in their PASSPORT. Upon exit, the crew must retrieve their PASSPORTS. The accountability status board will contain only the PASSPORTS of those crews in the hazard zone.

Crews should always exit through the point of entry. If they cannot, the crew exiting at a different location, must immediately notify their Group/Division Officer and/or Accountability Officer. The PASSPORT must be retrieved prior to a new assignment.

### TERMINATING THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

PASSPORT accountability will be maintained until no hazards are present. Once command has determined this, a PAR for all crews must be obtained. Command will determine at the time, based on the situation and risk, as to whether to continue with PASSPORT system.

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

### TACTICAL BENCHMARKS

Several accountability benchmarks are included in tactical operations. The Personnel Accountability Report (or "PAR") involves a roll call of personnel assigned. For the company Officer, a "PAR" is a confirmation that members assigned to his/her crew are accounted for. For the Group/Division Officer, a "PAR" is an accounting for all crewmembers of all companies assigned to his/her Group/Division.

Example:

"Division Bravo from Engine 211, I have PAR" (all members accounted for).

A personnel accountability report will be required for the following situations:

- Any report of a missing or trapped firefighter (**Command initiates a PAR of all crews on the scene**)

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- Any change from offensive to defensive mode (**Command initiates a PAR of all crews on the scene**)
- Any sudden hazardous event at the incident - flash over, back draft, collapse, etc. (**a PAR is initiated by Command**)
- By all crew(s) reporting an "all clear" (**Company Officers of crews responsible for search and rescue will ensure they have a PAR for their crews at the time they reported on all clear**)
- At 20 minute elapsed time (**a PAR is initiated by Command**)
- At a report of fire under control (**a PAR is initiated by Command**)

A Personnel accountability report to Alarm will be required for the following situations:

- All clear in the fire building
- A report of fire under control
- At 20 minute elapsed time (if a PAR has not been transmitted to Alarm at 20 minutes, Alarm will ask Command for this report).
- Loss Stopped in the fire building

### ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICERS

Accountability Officers may be engineers, Group/Division Officers, or personnel specifically assigned to serve as Accountability Officers.

At incidents with a critical need for Accountability Officers to assist Group/Division Officers, command may choose to split up a company and distribute the crewmembers to different Groups/Divisions to act as Accountability Officers for those Groups/Divisions.

### ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP

As the incident escalates to a size in which multiple Accountability Officers are assigned, command should implement an Accountability Group to coordinate the accountability function.

The Accountability Group Officer will report to Command and will operate on the assigned radio channel. The Accountability Group Officer may be located at the Command Post.

The Accountability Group Officers responsibilities include:

1. Develop and implement a plan to track and account for all personnel working in the Hazard Zone.
2. Ensure that Accountability Officers are assigned in each Group/Division as necessary.
3. Request and manage Group/Division resources as needed.

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4. Provide progress reports to command.
5. Initiate PAR's upon benchmarks or as needed.