

The Woodlands Fire Department Operational Guidelines

F-03 - PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an effective method of tracking for all Fire Department personnel in an identified Hazard Zone on an emergency scene, and
- 1.2 To improve the command, control and management of emergency incidents.

2.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

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

- 2.1 Accountability Officer (AO): Individual designated by the IC for the specific purpose of tracking crews and personnel operating inside the identified hazard zone. The AO will report to the IC.
- 2.2 Personnel Resource Area (PRA): A designated location for crews reporting to the scene, as well as crews completing incident rehab, to assemble and await assignment. This area will be identified by the IC or AO, generally near the first-in apparatus.
- 2.3 The IC will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of where resources are committed at an incident.
- 2.4 The IC 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.
- 2.5 Division/Group Supervisors will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews assigned to them. This will require the Division/Group Supervisor to be in their assigned area and maintain close supervision of the crews assigned to them.
- 2.6 All crews will work with the IC or a Division/Group Supervisor - **NO FREELANCING.**
- 2.7 Crews arriving on the scene will remain intact for all intent and purpose. A minimum crew size will be two radio-equipped personnel. Personnel arriving in POV's will report to the PRA and assemble crews there.

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- 2.8 All crews entering a Hazard Zone must be supervised by a Company Officer or an assigned Person-in-Charge.
- 2.9 All TWFD personnel operating in a Hazard Zone will be equipped with a handheld radio. If a radio fails while in a Hazard Zone, the crew will ensure that at least one radio remains in operation, otherwise the crew will exit the Hazard Zone immediately.
- 3.0 PASSPORT SYSTEM
- 3.1 To enhance accountability and to improve tracking of firefighters in the Hazard Zone, the "PASSPORT" system will be used. *PASSPORTS* involve a plastic card with the crew members name affixed by Velcro that is turned into the AO. The AO may be the Driver/Operator of the second-in TWFD apparatus, a Division/Group Supervisor, or a designated Accountability Officer, depending on the nature, type, and complexity of the incident.
- 3.2 PASSPORT EQUIPMENT
- A. The *PASSPORT* system equipment involves a plastic card with the company's ID tag attached. The *PASSPORT* will contain the names of personnel presently assigned to that company.
- B. The *PASSPORT* will always be located in the apparatus cab, readily accessible to the Driver/Operator and Company Officer.
- C. Each firefighter will have two (2) individual name tags. These will be affixed to the underside of their helmet.
- D. All engines and staff vehicles will be equipped with an 8"x11" status board folder located in the cab. This will be used by the designated AO to track crews entering the Hazard Zone. Inside the status board folder will be an Accountability Officer's vest that any personnel assigned to the Accountability Officer's role will wear.
- E. The Company Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the *PASSPORT* always reflects only currently assigned personnel. Driver/Operator tags will be affixed to the *PASSPORT* only if the Driver/Operator is assigned to enter the Hazard Zone with the rest of the crew.

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- F. When entering the Hazard Zone with only a partial crew, the Company Officer will remove the name tags of those members not entering the Hazard Zone. The name tags of these members will be returned to the member, or held by the Company Officer.
- G. All *PASSPORTS* and equipment will be considered safety equipment and will be inspected weekly as other safety equipment and will be repaired or replaced as soon as possible upon request. Requests will be sent in writing by the Company Officer to the Battalion Chief, who will submit the request to the Deputy Chief – Support Services.

3.3 SHIFT CHANGE, OR STATION REASSIGNMENT

- A. Arriving crew members will be responsible for immediately updating the company *PASSPORT* as they arrive on duty, including shift exchange, station transfer, or new apparatus assignments.
- B. Off-going crew members will ensure their name tags are removed from the *PASSPORT*.

3.4 FOUR BASIC RULES OF THUMB:

- A. *PASSPORTS* never enter the Hazard Zone.
- B. *PASSPORTS* must be maintained at the point of entry to the Hazard Zone.
- C. *PASSPORTS* must reflect only those personnel presently in the Hazard Zone.
- D. Crews must turn in their *PASSPORTS* to the AO upon entering and must retrieve their *PASSPORTS* from the AO upon exiting the Hazard Zone.

4.0 ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICERS

- 4.1 The second-in TWFD apparatus Driver/Operator will assume the role of Accountability Officer. Other personnel may later be assigned to the function of AO. Additional personnel may be assigned to serve as AO for a specific Division/Group. If the second arriving apparatus D/O can not

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assume the role of AO any reason (i.e., must pump the apparatus, set up aerial device, etc.), responsibility for assuming the role of AO will automatically transfer to the third arriving apparatus D/O. This transfer must be clearly communicated among those involved.

- 4.2 Division/Group Supervisors are responsible for accountability within their respective Division/Group unless an AO for that Division/Group is designated.

5.0 LEVEL I ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1 Level I accountability is the tracking of personnel in the designated Hazard Zone by a single AO utilizing a single Hazard Zone point of entry.
- 5.2 A personnel resource area will be established at the first-in apparatus or at an area designated by the IC or AO. Personnel arriving in personal vehicles (i.e., off-duty personnel) will assemble at the Personnel Resource Area. When possible, personnel in the Personnel Resource Area will be managed by a Resource Unit Leader designated by Command or the AO.
- 5.3 As crews are developed, *PASSPORTS* will be formed. Assignments will be made on a crew basis. As an assignment is given, the crew leader will give the *PASSPORT* to the AO who will track the crew on the Accountability Status Board.

6.0 LEVEL II ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 Level II Accountability is the system of tracking crews within multiple entry point Hazard Zones (i.e., large commercial structures, high rise incidents).
- 6.2 The first apparatus to each geographical side of the incident may 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" prior to entering the Hazard Zone. As Divisions/Groups are implemented, Division/Group Supervisors will manage *PASSPORTS* only if they are not entering the Hazard Zone (i.e., defensive operation). Where a Division/Group Supervisor must enter the Hazard Zone, *PASSPORTS* will remain at a fixed location outside the Hazard Zone until a formal AO can be designated.

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- 6.3 In some cases, multiple Accountability Officers may be appropriate. Upon the call for Level II Accountability, the AO's will collect the Accountability *PASSPORTS* for their area of responsibility. Assignment of Accountability Officers will be at the discretion of the IC or the Division/Group Supervisor.
- 7.0 POINT OF ENTRY CONTROL
- 7.1 *PASSPORTS* will remain with the designated AO at the "point of entry" to the Hazard Zone. Upon entry, crews will turn in their *PASSPORT*. Upon exit, the crew must retrieve their *PASSPORT*. The Accountability Status Board will contain only the *PASSPORTS* of those crews in the Hazard Zone.
- 7.2 Crews exiting at a different location than the original point of entry, must immediately notify their Division/Group Supervisor and/or AO. The *PASSPORT* must be retrieved.
- 7.3 Where physical distance/barrier prevent easy retrieval of the *PASSPORT*, and where the crew being assigned to another Division/Group, a "secondary" *PASSPORT* will be assembled. Crew members will provide the new Division/Group Supervisor another name tag. Where another "secondary" *PASSPORT* is not available, the individual name tags will be placed on the Accountability Status Board.
- 7.4 The original Division/Group Supervisor and/or AO must be made aware of the change and *PASSPORT(S)* removed from his/her Accountability Board.
- 8.0 PERSONNEL RESOURCE AREA (PRA)
- 8.1 The IC will establish a Personnel Resource Area at the first-in apparatus or other convenient location. The location of the PRA will be announced over the radio. For an accountability system to function, it is imperative that all personnel report to the PRA upon their arrival. Those arriving on apparatus report via formation of the apparatus *PASSPORTS*. Those arriving in personal/staff vehicles will report to the PRA before beginning any operations. Crews and *PASSPORTS* will be formed, and assignments will be delivered at the PRA. Crews will operate as a team upon receiving an assignment. Large incidents may have more than one PRA. In prolonged incidents, personnel report back to the PRA upon rotation through Rehab.

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When possible, personnel in the PRA will be managed by a Resource Unit Leader designated by Command or the AO.

- 8.2 On incidents with a Level II staging area, initial reporting will be conducted and assignments delivered at the Staging Area. The crew *PASSPORT* will then be delivered to the AO at the division/group for which that crew is assigned.
- 9.0 PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS (PAR)
- 9.1 The Personnel Accountability Report (or "PAR") involves a roll call of personnel assigned in the Hazard Zone. For the Company Officer, a "PAR" is a confirmation that members assigned to their crew are accounted for. For the Division/Group Supervisor, a "PAR" is an accounting for all crew members of all companies assigned to their Division/Group.
- Example: "Engine-102 to Division C, I have a PAR"
- A PAR will be initiated by the IC for the following situations:
- A. Any report of missing or trapped firefighters;
 - B. Any change from offensive to defensive mode of attack;
 - C. Any significant event at the incident - flashover, backdraft, collapse, etc.;
 - D. At the 20 minutes elapsed time from establishment of Command; and every 20 minutes thereafter until discontinued.
- 9.2 A "No PAR" declaration will be made if all personnel cannot be accounted for within a reasonable time frame.
- 9.3 "NO PAR" DECLARATIONS -- If a "No PAR" is declared, the following sequence of events should take place:
- A. The IC will request from Fire Com an Alert tone on all tactical frequencies being utilized in order to clear the air;
 - B. If radio contact with crew has been lost, one final attempt to establish contact will be made.

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- C. An emergency evacuation of the structure will be called for by sounding a solid blast of the air horns of the apparatus in the area of the building for minimum of 20 seconds.
- D. If after the evacuation, the personnel are still not accounted for, the IC will initiate the Mayday Procedure. Radio contact attempts will continue thereafter.
- E. Once all personnel have been accounted for, normal operations may be re-established.

9.4 TERMINATING ACCOUNTABILITY

- A. *PASSPORT* accountability will be maintained through a report of "Signal 7-1." The IC will determine at that time, based on the situation and risk, as to whether to continue with the *PASSPORT* system. If visibility is still impaired or a hazardous condition still exists, the IC may choose to extend the *PASSPORT* system further.
- B. Upon termination and release from the incident, Company Officers and crew members will ensure that the *PASSPORT* is returned to the dash of their apparatus and that the *PASSPORT* is up-to-date.

10.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

- 10.1 **FIREFIGHTER** - All personnel responsible for staying with their crew at all times and ensuring that their name tag is on the *PASSPORT* at all times.
- 10.2 **DRIVER/OPERATOR** - The Driver/Operator of the second arriving TWFD apparatus will assume AO responsibilities until otherwise relieved. The Driver/Operator must collect the *PASSPORTS* from the crews operating on their side of the incident (Division/Group) and manage accountability until relieved by another AO as designated by the IC. If the second arriving apparatus D/O can not assume the role of AO for any reason (i.e., must pump the apparatus, set up aerial device, etc.), responsibility for assuming the role of AO will automatically transfer to the third arriving apparatus D/O. This transfer must be clearly communicated among those involved.
- 10.3 **COMPANY OFFICER** - Responsible for keeping their crew intact at all times and that the *PASSPORT* is current and accurate. The *PASSPORT* must reflect only those personnel entering the Hazard Zone. The

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PASSPORT must be turned in to the AO at the point of entry and retrieved from the AO upon exit.

- 10.4 DIVISION/GROUP SUPERVISOR - Responsible for accounting for all crews in their assigned Division/Group, maintaining an awareness of their location, and maintaining accurate *PASSPORTS* of those in the Hazard Zone. In those situations where the Division/Group Supervisor must enter the Hazard Zone, *PASSPORTS* will be assigned to an available firefighter from the Resource Area or AO the responsible for accountability in that Division/Group.
- 10.5 DIVISION/GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER - Responsible for teaming up with the assigned Division/Group Supervisor and to manage all accountability for that Division/Group. The Division AO must collect all *PASSPORTS* from Driver/Operators, apparatus, or Division/Group Supervisors assigned to their specific Division/Group. The AO assigned to a specific Division must maintain a close coordination with other Division/Group AO's.