

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA**

**POLICY#3**

<b>TOPIC: Firefighter Emergencies and Evacuations</b>			
<b>Revision Date</b> 7/12/08	<b>New</b>	<b>Approved By</b> <b>County Chiefs</b>	<b>Pages</b> 3
<b>DISPOSITION: Operational Area Policy Manual</b>			

**INTRODUCTION:**

When firefighters or incident personnel are faced with life threatening emergencies, they may call for help using a variety of verbiage. It is imperative that the Incident Commander (IC), Safety Officer and/or the RIC Supervisor monitor all radio traffic closely and follow a set procedure to mitigate any problem when an emergency involving on-scene personnel arises. This policy is intended to provide a standard operational procedure for firefighting personnel requiring rescue due to injury, entrapment, or being lost in a structure as well as provide a procedure for evacuation of personnel due to imminent hazards such as a structure collapse, being overrun by a wild land fire, flashover conditions or an immediate change of operation.

**PROCEDURE:**

**Emergency Traffic Activation**

Any emergency personnel on an incident that are suddenly in serious peril or who are aware of an emergency situation (firefighter down missing or trapped, imminent collapse, shelter deployment) shall immediately transmit "**EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**" on the assigned tactical channel. This request shall be met with **Radio Silence** with no exceptions allowing the person reporting the emergency to identify the type of emergency and give as much information as possible using clear text in a concise manner. This information should include at a minimum the following:

- **Who** they are or **Who** is down or trapped (i.e. name, identifier, group, etc)
- **Where** they are located (i.e. first floor, AD corner, Division Z, etc)
- **How** many personnel are involved
- **Why** are the personnel down or **Why** is there a problem (i.e. floor collapse, lost, low air, overrun, etc)
- **What** action is required (i.e. need to search, need lifting equipment, etc)
- **Warning** of conditions that will affect a rescue (i.e. imminent collapse, wind change, etc)

The Incident Commander shall then acknowledge and confirm that there is an emergency with the person who made the transmission. The IC or designated Supervisor shall then re-transmit

**“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC”** followed with a description of the emergency such as **“Firefighter Down”, “Firefighter Missing”, “Firefighter Trapped” or “Emergency Evacuation”**.

### **Emergency Rescue**

For any emergency involving rescuing a downed, missing or trapped firefighter, the IC shall follow through by completing the following;

- Have the person requesting help to **Remain On** the channel they are on and use that radio channel solely for obtaining information concerning the emergency and for transmissions critical to the rescue
- Move the suppression operations to another tactical channel
- Activate the RIC team operations or other resources as appropriate
- Appoint a RIC Supervisor and/or Safety Officer if not done already
- Notify the Dispatch Center of the emergency
- Request additional resources as required (i.e. single resources, additional alarms, ambulance, etc)
- Request the Safety Officer to conduct a PAR immediately on the new tactical channel
- The IC or designated Supervisor shall also request the Dispatch Center to transmit the **“Emergency Traffic”** tone (standard warble tone) on the main and designated tactical channels followed by a clear text verbal notification that identifies the type of emergency such as **“Firefighter Down”, “Shelter Deployment” or “Firefighter Trapped”**

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Whenever emergency personnel are in imminent danger of injury or death because of, but not limited to, structure collapse, increased fire behavior or burn over, extremely hazardous atmosphere or severe wind change, back draft or flashover condition, or immediate change of tactical conditions, and the situation requires an immediate evacuation of personnel, the IC or their designated Supervisor or Safety Officer shall announce **“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC”** on the tactical channel which shall be met with **Radio Silence** with no exceptions. They shall continue to broadcast critical scene information in clear text to emergency personnel operating in area requiring evacuation or retreat such as **“An Immediate Evacuation Is Necessary”, “All Companies Evacuate the Building” or “Retreat to the Safety Area”**.

The IC, or their designee shall also designate a specific apparatus to sound the **Evacuation Signal** using their air horn in conjunction with the verbal announcement. The **Evacuation Signal** will consist of repeated short blasts of the air horn for approximately 10 seconds, followed by 10 seconds of silence. This sequence of air horn blasts for 10 seconds followed by a 10 second period of silence will be done three times; total air horn evacuation signal including periods of silence that will last 50 seconds.

The IC, or their designee shall also request the Dispatch Center to transmit the **“Emergency Traffic”** tone (standard warble tone) on the main and designated tactical channels followed by a clear text verbal notification that identifies the incident and states **“An Immediate Evacuation Is Necessary”, “All Companies Evacuate the Building” or “Retreat to the Safety Area”**.

The IC their designee shall then request the Safety Officer to conduct a PAR immediately and ensure that everyone has evacuated and/or retreated and that all personnel are accounted for.

### **Conclusion of the Emergency**

At the conclusion of the "**EMERGENCY TRAFFIC**" situation, the Incident Commander shall transmit "**ALL CLEAR, RESUME RADIO TRAFFIC**" to put an end to the emergency situation, and ensure that the Dispatch Center is notified.

The IC shall insure that a Post Incident Review is conducted as soon as possible to determine why the emergency occurred and what steps might be taken to avoid it in the future.