

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA POLICY

POLICY#2

TOPIC: Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)			
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DISPOSITION: Operational Area Policy Manual			

INTRODUCTION:

Firefighters, who are lost, trapped, or missing, may have only minutes to receive help before their chances for survival drop dramatically. The failure to pre-plan and pre-position personnel and equipment prior to a fireground emergency may delay or prevent a successful outcome.

A Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) is a resource immediately available to the Incident Commander (IC) for the primary purpose of firefighter rescue. The establishment of a RIC is a critical step toward increasing the survivability of a firefighter who becomes lost, trapped, or incapacitated.

The purpose of this policy is to identify the role, responsibilities, and requirements for the establishment and use of a Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) by County fire service agencies.

POLICY:

A. Establishing a Rapid Intervention Crew

1. A RIC shall be established whenever personnel are operating in a hazardous area, an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmosphere, or anytime the Incident Commander deems it appropriate.
2. The IC shall be responsible for establishing a RIC.
3. On incidents where a Two-Out Team is established, the IC or designee shall transition from the Two-Out Team to a RIC as soon as possible and practical.
4. When adequate resources are available and conditions warrant the assignment, a RIC should be established immediately, and this will satisfy the requirement for "Two-in/Two-out".

5. The factors that determine when multiple RIC's are assigned or deployed are incident-driven. As the incident expands in size or complexity, the IC may opt to assign multiple companies to rapid intervention by establishing a RIC Group.
6. Once a company has been assigned as a RIC, the IC should avoid reassigning them to other tasks that restrict their ability to respond to a fireground emergency.
7. The IC should avoid transferring the assignment of RIC from the initially assigned company to other companies whenever possible to avoid any loss of critical safety information.
8. The RIC function shall continue until the incident has concluded or the IC determines, that based on a hazard assessment, the RIC is no longer needed. Consideration shall be given to keeping the RIC operational in cases where active fire suppression operations have ceased, yet overhaul operations or other activities are being conducted in areas with potential hazards.

B. Rapid Intervention Crew Operations

1. The RIC shall don full protective equipment with SCBA, handlights, and portable radios.
2. The RIC Officer shall report to the IC or designated supervisor for a briefing on the incident. The briefing should include;
 - Incident objectives, strategy, and tactics
 - Current assignment of crews and their probable location
 - Building information
 - Known hazards
 - Designation of the initial RIC staging area
3. If a Two-Out Team has been established prior to the RIC, the RIC Officer shall contact the Two-Out Team for a briefing and transfer of responsibilities.
4. The RIC shall conduct a size-up of the structure/incident, to identify construction features and potential hazards. Immediate or subsequent actions may include:
 - Requesting additional resources
 - Providing ladders needed for emergency egress from windows, and/or roof
 - Coordinating the opening of doors and windows, security bars/devices
 - Illuminating entrances and exits.

5. The size-up shall include consulting with firefighters, occupants, and property owners to determine what is occurring at the incident. The RIC shall attempt to identify:
 - Areas of involvement and fire conditions
 - Specific hazards
 - Location of personnel
 - Other pertinent information
6. To clearly identify the RIC staging area and prevent use by other firefighters, the RIC shall deploy their equipment on a readily identifiable “RIC Tarp”.
7. The following equipment (at a minimum) should be assembled and ready for immediate use by the RIC:
 - Flathead axe
 - Halligan tool
 - Bolt cutters
 - 10 lb. sledgehammer
 - Trauma scissors
 - Wire cutters
 - Chain saw
 - 100' 3/8 inch RIC rope bag
 - Thermal imaging camera and spare battery (if available)
 - RIC Bag (or spare SCBA, facepiece, and regulator)
 - (4) Door chocks
 - Any other equipment deemed necessary
8. The RIC size-up should include an evaluation of whether or not deploying a charged or uncharged hoseline for RIC operations is appropriate for the situation.
9. Following the RIC size-up, initial rescue concerns should be identified and an incident specific rapid intervention plan shall be developed. Additional and/or specialized equipment shall be considered based on information gathered; the list of tools is limited only by your situational needs.
10. The primary objective of the RIC is to standby as a team in a state of constant readiness, maintaining situational awareness, ready to react to any firefighter emergencies. Stay focused on the assignment – the most important one on the fireground.

C. Accountability

1. All RIC members shall have a portable radio and will carefully monitor the assigned tactical channel(s) and dispatch channel.
2. At least one member of the RIC shall be responsible for maintaining a constant awareness of the Entry Teams operating in an IDLH atmosphere or hazard area, their location, and function.

D. Activation of the RIC

1. The IC or designee should clear the tactical channel by announcing “Emergency Traffic”.
2. The IC or designee and the RIC Officer shall obtain as much information as possible about the fireground emergency, including the location, type of problem, and number of firefighters involved.
3. The IC shall request an additional tactical channel(s) from the Communications Center and move the incident operations to the new channel.
4. The RIC shall utilize the original tactical channel to conduct rapid intervention operations and communicate with personnel needing rescue.
5. The IC shall ensure that a PAR is conducted as soon as possible after moving the operations to the new tactical channel.
6. The IC will ensure that all tactical channels utilized at the incident are monitored at the Incident Command Post.
7. The IC shall evaluate the need for additional resources to mitigate both the fireground emergency and the initial incident. Consideration should be given to requesting (1) ALS ambulance for each firefighter who is lost, trapped, or missing.
8. Additional RIC(s) should be established to assemble necessary tools and equipment to support the operation and to relieve the initial RIC as needed. These additional RIC(s) may be assigned to initiate rescue operations from a secondary access point.

E. Incident Review and Documentation

1. All circumstances related to RIC assignments shall be documented.
2. The Incident Commander shall conduct a post incident analysis with personnel involved when a RIC is activated.

F. Definitions

1. **“Emergency Traffic”** – A term used to clear the designated radio channel(s) used at an incident to make way for critical radio traffic. It is used for Firefighter Emergencies, Imminent Hazard Notification, and Operational Retreat procedures. It is standard terminology used by the fire service in the State of California.
2. **Entry Team** – A team of two or more firefighters who enter an IDLH environment to conduct firefighting operations.

3. **IDLH (Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health) Environment** – An atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. Any structural fire beyond the incipient stage is considered by OSHA to be an IDLH atmosphere.
4. **Incipient Fire** – The initial or beginning stage of a fire which can be controlled by portable fire extinguishers, Class II standpipe, or small hose systems without the need for protective clothing or SCBA.
5. **PAR** – A roll call procedure initiated by Command to confirm that all personnel assigned to an emergency incident are physically accounted for.
6. **Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC)** – A dedicated company of three or more firefighters who are assigned for rapid deployment to rescue firefighters.
7. **Two-Out Team (Two-Out)** – A team of two firefighters present outside the IDLH atmosphere in the initial stage of a structural fire attack; required to be established prior to interior operations by the Entry Team in an IDLH atmosphere. The Two-Out Team shall be properly equipped to initiate rescue.