



**ARCADIA FIRE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

**RAPID INTERVENTION CREW  
(RIC)**

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Michael E. Lang, Fire Chief

**PURPOSE**

The need for a RIC or RIC Group performing a firefighter rescue in a rapid timeframe cannot be overemphasized. As a member of a Rapid Intervention Crew, your duty to rescue a downed or missing firefighter will come without warning.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

It shall be the responsibility of the IC to establish a team of trained fire personnel for the purpose of firefighter rescue at all working structure fires or other emergency incidents where members will be operating in an atmosphere that is Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH).

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the Department to become familiar with and comply with this guideline at all working structure fires or other emergency incidents where members will be operating in an atmosphere that is IDLH.

The exception to this policy is if an incident requires fire personnel to enter an IDLH atmosphere where a life safety issue has presented itself prior to the arrival of additional resources.

**SCOPE**

This guideline will define the purpose and concepts of effective firefighter rescue. It will also set standard operating guidelines for personnel that are assigned to a Rapid Intervention Company (RIC) or a Rapid Intervention Group (RIG Group) at an emergency incident.

**PROCEDURE**

The factors that determine the degree to which Rapid Intervention Companies are formed and deployed are incident driven. While the "Two In/Two Out" requires a standby team of at least two members to be organized to back up the initial entry team before they enter into an IDLH atmosphere, the initial stages of an incident do not necessarily constitute a situation in which a Rapid Intervention Company or a Rapid Intervention Group must be designated. In the early stages of an incident, a company not working in an IDLH atmosphere and not assigned to a critical task, may be reassigned to perform the duties of a Rapid Intervention Company.

**As incidents grow in complexity, the IC shall designate a Rapid Intervention Group to stand by.**

The IC should consider two companies as a minimum for Rapid Intervention. The reasons for two companies as a minimum standard are: to provide the rescuers a team to assist with any firefighter rescue, as well as provide a Rapid Intervention Company for the rescuers should the need arise. The IC should consider adding a USAR company as part of the Rapid Intervention Group.

When a Rapid Intervention Group is created, the RIC Group Supervisor will often be filled by the initial company officer assigned to rapid intervention. After notifications have been made and chief officers begin to arrive on scene, the IC should appoint a chief officer to the position of RIC Group Supervisor. The RIC Group Supervisor should set up a status board in close proximity to the Incident Command Post. This will allow the IC and the RIC Group Supervisor to be in close contact should a rescue be required.

The responsibility of RIC or RIC Groups is separated into three mode categories:

**1.) STANDBY MODE** - This mode must be assumed by the first company that has been assigned to rapid intervention. This is the most frequent mode. The Standby Mode is meant to be simple and quick. The concept of this mode is to immediately place a minimum of one fully staffed engine or Truck Company in a “ready to react” position. The team members will be equipped with a RIC Kit and shall have been assigned a Rapid Intervention Tactical Channel. When the decision is made to rescue a firefighter, the Standby Mode will change to the Deployment Mode.

Before members are put into the Standby Mode, they should gather a cache of tools that will equip them should the need for a firefighter rescue present itself.

**2.) SUPPORT MODE** – This mode is assumed only after the Standby Mode has been assumed. The function of rapid intervention in this mode is to create conditions on the fireground in which firefighters will not need to be rescued, or to create conditions that would facilitate more effective firefighter rescues. The Support Mode will be assumed concurrently with the Standby Mode and will never replace the Standby Mode.

The concept of the Support Mode is to have additional rapid intervention members, who are not in the Standby Mode, accomplish the following:

- Set up the RIC Group Status Board (located in the BC Suburban)
- Gather vital incident information and begin to record that information on the RIC Group Status board.
- Create horizontal openings adjacent to firefighting activities for emergency egress. This must be accomplished with ventilation in mind. At no time should there be an opening created that would create an unfavorable condition due to an influx of air to the fire.
- Throw additional ladders for members operating above ground to have more options for egress.

**All measures that are taken during the Support Mode must be conducted in coordination with the operations at the incident so as not to interfere with the strategy and tactics of the incident.**

**3.) DEPLOYMENT MODE** – This mode is assumed when there is an immediate need to locate and rescue a downed firefighter. In the Deployment Mode, the time to reach the downed or missing firefighter(s) must be kept to a minimum to ensure their survival. When the Deployment Mode is assumed, the command structure must be maintained in the Rapid Intervention Group. Strict guidelines and accountability for each member of the RIC Group must be maintained to effectively rescue downed firefighters. The Deployment Mode will occur during the most intense time period on the fireground. While panic, anxiety and fear of the downed firefighter's survivability are the main concern for everyone on the fireground, all RIC members must remember that their ability to stay calm and react with decisiveness will be the difference in accomplishing a successful rescue.

In the event that a firefighter rescue presents itself, the IC must revise operations strategy and tactics to the new situation. The IC must apprise all divisions, groups, or companies of the new strategy and tactics. This update must include specific instructions to these companies and ensure that they understand their assignments. The need to use companies for continued fire control may be necessary.

**The RIC Group Supervisor must take command of the rescue operations and ensure that appropriate tactics are being used to affect the rescue of the down firefighter.** It is imperative that the RIC Group Supervisor quickly determine the effect that adjacent crews are having on the rescue and report this information to the IC immediately. Any adjacent companies that are not needed to support the rescue or contain the fire should be removed from the immediate area.

The IC should assign a Paramedic Rescue to stand by in the immediate area of the deployed RIC Team. The personnel assigned to the Paramedic Rescue should be ready to provide immediate medical treatment to the rescued member(s). For this reason, paramedics should not be reassigned to any other function during this time. In a high-rise incident, paramedics shall bring all necessary equipment to treat and transport firefighters to the Staging floor.

Company commanders or members in the immediate area of a firefighter rescue situation should take whatever action is necessary to safely assist the firefighter rescue. Companies working in the immediate area may have the best opportunity to accomplish a quick rescue. This does not condone independent action.

Firefighting efforts must intensify in the area that a member is believed to be down, missing, or trapped. Additional resources may need to be assigned to support fire suppression operations in addition to the RIC Group activities. Company commanders who feel that their company can affect the rescue must take into consideration the following:

- Your company's current position
- The time you and your company have been "on air"
- The location of the member requiring the rescue
- Accountability for your company's actions (must keep IC/Division informed)

**Rapid Intervention Group and ICS**

If an incident does not appear that it will be under control within the first 15 minutes after initial units have arrived, the IC should consider assigning a chief officer to the position of RIC Group Supervisor. Consideration should be given to assign the third arriving chief officer this position after the IC and Safety Officer positions have been filled.

Within the command structure on an incident, the Rapid Intervention Group will report directly to the Operations Section Chief. If the Operations Section Chief position is not filled, the Rapid Intervention Group will report directly to the IC.

The following is a diagram of the ICS with a Rapid Intervention Group in place:



## **Radios and Frequencies**

The effective use of radios and radio frequencies can be the deciding factor as to whether a RIC deployment will be successful or not. It is important to understand that most members operating on the fireground are using a portable radio. A portable radio does not have the wattage to communicate when there is a mobile radio transmitting on the same frequency at the same time. All personnel must maintain strict radio discipline and should remain off the radio during the Deployment Mode unless it is absolutely critical to the firefighter rescue.

The IC and the RIC Group Supervisor must establish a communication plan that will allow the proper frequencies to be used during an incident. Early provisions for this plan will eliminate confusion and will lend itself to a more efficient RIC Group. The following are radio channels that must be established at any incident where the need for rapid intervention is present:

- Incident Tactical Channel(s) – Red 2, Red 8, etc.
- Emergency Trigger Channel ICIS – Red 14 and 16
- RIG Tactical Channel – Red 9

When a RIG has assumed the **Standby Mode** the following radio channels should be monitored:

- RIG Tactical Channel
- Emergency Trigger Channel – Red 14 and 16
- Command Channel
- Incident Tactical Channel (see note)

*Note:* There may be a need to monitor the Incident Tactical Channel if this is the only means of communication by the affected member, during rescue operations.

## **Establishing The Rapid Intervention Group**

When the first company arrives to the incident and engages in activities that are inside of an atmosphere that is IDLH, the IC shall immediately consider establishing a Rapid Intervention Company. If the incident appears to be controlled and will continue to stay controlled by the initial units, the need to establish a Rapid Intervention Group may not be necessary. Simply establishing a Rapid Intervention Company may be sufficient to provide the needed resources for a safe working environment. However, if the incident appears to be dynamic and growing, the IC should consider establishing a Rapid Intervention Group.

The company that has been assigned to the Rapid Intervention Group must ensure the following steps are taken immediately: (Use the acronym RIC)

- **R** – Request additional companies to fill out the needs for the assignment. A minimum of two companies are required to effectively accomplish any firefighter rescue. It is the responsibility of the RIC Group Supervisor to ensure that the proper staffing level of the RIC Group has been provided.
- **I** – Implement a Rapid Intervention Company to assume the Standby Mode. The Standby Mode must be assumed as soon as possible to provide for potential firefighter rescue.
- **C** – Collect Information and set up the RIC Group Status Board. This is the point where the members who are not in the Standby Mode will begin a reconnaissance to determine the building layout as well as other building features. The RIC Group Supervisor should locate the RIC Group Status Board in close proximity to the Command Post.

### **The Rapid Intervention Group Status Board**

Tracking the activities of a RIC Group for a RIC Group Supervisor can be overwhelming. For this reason, the RIC Group Status Board has been designed to track and control resources assigned to the RIC Group. Initial incident information must be properly documented so that if a firefighter rescue is needed, the RIC Group will know exactly what to do in the fastest timeframe possible. Essentially, the RIC Group Status Board assists with incident accountability.

The following information must be included on the RIC Group Status Board:

- Layout of the building and ICS assignments. (Divisions, Groups, etc.)
- Radio frequency assignments (Command, Tactical, RIG, Emergency Trigger Channel)
- Timeline of incident
- Timeline of each deployed Rapid Intervention Company and sketch of their location

### **Location of Rapid Intervention Companies**

Selecting locations of individual RIC Teams in the Standby Mode is extremely important to ensure that the least amount of time is taken to accomplish a firefighter rescue. The IC or RIC Group Supervisor must ensure that as the geographic locations of members in the IDLH atmosphere change, the RIC Team locations must change as well. In high-rise fire incidents, RIC Teams should be located in staging. This will allow for a rapid deployment if the need for a firefighter rescue arises. If there are conditions that prohibit a RIC Team from deploying quickly to a firefighter rescue, it is best to add an additional RIC Team.

### **Rapid Intervention Tools and Equipment**

Equipment and tool considerations for RIC will not be the same for every incident. This is especially true when responding into a known rescue situation. Consideration should be given to the following factors when selecting equipment and tools:

- Building size and configuration (basement, multi-floor, etc.)
- Building construction (masonry, wood frame, etc.)
- Building collapse hazards during the rescue
- Personnel available to complete the rescue
- Accessibility and obstacles (barred windows, steel doors, etc.)
- Visibility (current and predicted)

Only the minimum tools necessary to complete a rescue should be taken by the RIC. Since incidents vary in scope and severity, there is no all-encompassing list of tools that can be used on every incident. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to the following items as a starting point:

- Thermal Imager(s)
- RIC Kit(s)
- Litter Basket or Skedco Sled
- Lightweight forcible entry tools. (Halligan, Axe, etc.)
- Rotary saw
- Chainsaw
- Chalk or crayon.
- Inside ladder (10', 12' or 14')
- Pike Pole and/or Rubbish Hook
- Additional lifeline rope bags
- Debris bag
- Cyalume© Light Sticks
- Lighting equipment (portable generator, lights, cords, etc.)
- Spare air bottles

The RIC Kit will consist of the following minimum requirements:

- Nylon bag
- 60 minute air bottle
- 1<sup>st</sup> stage pressure regulator w/ intermediate pressure hose and a Universal Air Connection
- 1 face piece (compatible with other components)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> stage regulator
- 100' of minimum 3/8" kern-mantle rope with knots tied every 50'
- Flashlight
- External 2" carabiner
- Medical shears (penny cutters)
- Heavy duty wire/cable cutters
- External PASS device
- Portable strobe light
- 2 – search slings