

Emergency Operations

Book:	3 - Emergency Operations
Chapter	II - Fire Company Operations
Subject	Rapid Intervention Team Procedure
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1.01 Purpose

To establish standard guidelines and procedures that will serve to provide a safe working environment for all employees and to reduce the risk of injury or death as a result of department operations at emergency incidents. This policy will serve to comply with the 2-In, 2-Out provisions in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Final Rule (29 CFR Part 1910).

1.02 Policy

To operate as safely and effectively on emergency scenes as possible, Jersey Village Emergency Services has established the following procedures, which shall be adhered to by all personnel.

1.03 Definitions

IDLH Atmosphere (Immediate Danger to Life or Health): An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiant substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

Initial Rapid Intervention Team (I-RIT): A specifically designated team (minimum two members) designed to provide personnel for the rescue of emergency service members operating at emergency incidents if the need arises.

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT): A specifically designated team (minimum four members) designed to provide personnel for the rescue of emergency service members operating at emergency incidents if the need arises.

Incipient Fire: A fire in the initial or beginning stage, which can be controlled or extinguished by portable fire extinguishers. However, it is the policy of Jersey Village Emergency Services to deploy an 1 ¾" hand line any time there is a fire inside of a structure. Though the incipient fire

may actually be controlled by a smaller line or portable extinguisher, an 1 ¾" handline shall be used in most cases.

PAR: Personnel Accountability Report as defined in Jersey Village Emergency Services SOP on Personnel Accountability

1.04 Procedure

A. The first arriving company shall determine if the incident involves an "IDLH atmosphere". At no time shall individuals enter an IDLH atmosphere independently. Teams of at least two (2) SCBA equipped personnel shall be required for entry into such an atmosphere at all times.

B. In fire situations, it will be necessary for the incident commander to determine if the fire is in the incipient stage. A team of two qualified firefighters may take action according to standard operating procedures to extinguish an incipient fire without the establishment of an Initial Rapid Intervention Team (I-RIT).

C. If the presence of an "IDLH atmosphere" has been determined, and there are less than 5 qualified firefighters on the scene, the companies shall wait until at least 5 qualified firefighters are assembled on the scene before initiating operations within the IDLH atmosphere. Two qualified firefighters may begin operating within the IDLH atmosphere as long as two additional qualified firefighters (properly equipped) are outside the IDLH atmosphere to serve as the Initial Rapid Intervention Team (I-RIT), and one person maintains the operation of the pump. One of the two initial I-RIT members may be responsible for establishing the on-scene accountability system. The second I-RIT member may be assigned other tasks and/or functions so long as these tasks and/or functions can be abandoned, without placing any personnel at additional risk, if rescue or assistance is needed.

D. Members operating in IDLH atmospheres must use SCBA and work in teams of two or more. They must also maintain voice or visual contact with each other at all times. Portable radios and/or safety rope tethering are not acceptable as replacements for voice or visual contact. Radios can (and should) be used for fireground communications, including communications between interior and exterior teams. They cannot, however, be the sole tool for accounting for one's partner during interior operations. Team members must be in close proximity to each other to provide assistance in case of an emergency.

E. Until five firefighters are assembled, operations outside of the IDLH atmosphere shall commence immediately in accordance with standard operating procedures. Such operations include, but are not limited to: establishment of water supply; exterior fire attack; establishment of a hot

zone; utility control; ventilation; placement of ladders; forcible entry; exposure protection; and any other exterior operations deemed appropriate by the incident commander.

F. As the incident progresses to the point of more than one interior team, an identified and dedicated Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) shall be established and positioned immediately outside the IDLH atmosphere. This team shall be fully outfitted with protective clothing and SCBA with the air mask in a ready position to don, a portable radio, and other required rescue equipment. All team members will be dedicated to perform rescue and shall not be assigned other duties (except for incident accountability) unless a replacement team member is assigned. A charged hose line shall be dedicated to this team.

G. If the incident is in a high or mid-rise structure, large area facility, or other areas with multiple IDLH atmospheres, the incident commander shall establish the necessary number of rapid intervention teams so that rescue can be accomplished without a deployment delay. A team should be considered for each remote access point on any large facility. The incident commander will be responsible for determining the number of teams needed based on the specifics of the incident.

H. If a firefighter(s) becomes trapped, disabled, or otherwise in need of assistance by the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), the incident commander shall announce this action to the Communications Dispatcher via radio. In turn, the Dispatcher shall simulcast the emergency message signal and announce that a rescue is in progress. All radio traffic not directly related to the firefighter(s) rescue shall cease immediately to facilitate the rescue. An immediate personnel accountability report (PAR) shall be conducted. The incident commander shall then assign personnel to assist in the rescue and to assist the rapid intervention team as deemed appropriate. The RIT shall continue to inform the incident commander of their progress and actions taken during the rescue.

I. Should the incident commander order a building evacuation, a PAR shall be conducted immediately after the building has been evacuated. The RIT shall remain in place for immediate activation should a team fail to report during the PAR.

1.05 Exceptions

A. If upon arrival at a fire emergency, members find a fire in its incipient stage, extinguishment of such a fire shall be permitted with less than five persons on the scene. Extinguishment of outside fires such as dumpster, brush, or automobiles, shall be permitted with less than five persons, even if SCBA are being worn.

B. If upon arrival at the scene, members find an imminent life-threatening situation or probable life threatening situation where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action shall be permitted with less than five persons on the scene when the probability of a rescue is made in accordance with normal size-up indicators and fireground evaluation factors. (Examples: report of persons inside, signs of persons inside, etc.)

The incident commander shall evaluate the situation, considering the occupancy, time of day, day of week, reports from persons on the scene, signs that persons may be inside the structure, etc. Entry may be considered if signs indicate a probable victim rescue. In the absence of clear signs or a report from a responsible person on the scene that people are in the structure, it is to be assumed that no life hazard exists and interior attack shall not be initiated until the minimum five (5) persons arrive on the scene.

C. If members are going to initiate actions that would involve entering an "IDLH atmosphere" because of a probable or imminent life-threatening situation where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, and personnel are not on the scene to establish an Initial Rapid Intervention Team (I-RIT), the members should carefully evaluate the level of risk that they would be exposed to by taking such actions. In all cases a minimum of two (2) people shall form the entry team.

D. If it is determined that the situation warrants immediate intervention and five people are not on the scene, the incident commander shall notify Communications Dispatcher of the intent to enter the "IDLH atmosphere" prior to the availability of a Initial Rapid Intervention Team (I-RIT). The Communications Dispatcher shall then notify all responding companies of this action and receive acknowledgment from each company that the transmission was received.

E. Should the incident commander on the scene deviate from this guideline, the actions taken shall be documented on the fire incident report and forwarded through the chain of command to the fire chief. The narrative of this report shall be by the incident commander and outline the reasons, rationale, justification, and end result of the deviation from the standard operating procedure. All information in the report shall be of enough depth so as to provide a comprehensive understanding of the actions taken.