

# Hurricane Fire & Rescue Hurricane, WV

## Operation Guidelines

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Accountability
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**Purpose:** This guideline identifies a system of personnel accountability. The purpose is to account for all personnel, at any given time, within a small geographic area, within the "hot zone" of an incident. Use of the system will provide enhanced personnel safety for the individual, and will provide the incident command organizational staff an improved means to track and account for all personnel working in the hot zone.

**Scope:** Personnel operating at the scene of an incident.

**Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of all department personnel operating at the scene of an incident to adhere to this guideline.

The hot zone will be defined as any area that requires a SCBA or in which a firefighter is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment or structure. This would include but may not be limited to entering a structure reported to be on fire, operating in close proximity to the structure during exterior operations. Division, groups, or sectors are interchangeable terms.

### **Accountability:**

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

- Command will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of where resources are committed at an incident.
- Command will always be responsible for including accountability as a major element in strategy and incident planning, and must consider and react to any barriers to effective accountability.
- Sector/Group Officers will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews assigned to them. This will require the Sector/Group

Officer to be in his/her assigned area and maintaining **close** supervision of crews assigned to them.

- **All crews will work for Command or Sectors - NO FREE-LANCING.**
- Crews arriving on the scene should remain intact for all intents and purposes. A minimum crew size will be considered two or more members and a radio will be required.
- All crews entering a hot zone must be supervised by an officer or other designated individual
- All crews will enter together, stay together, and come out together. Reduced visibility and increased risk will require **very tight togetherness.**
- If a radio fails while in the hot zone, the crew will exit unless there is another working radio with the crew. An attempt for a replacement radio should be made.

### **Helmet Identification Designation**

White – Command Officers

Red – Lieutenants

Yellow – Fire Fighters

Yellow w/green diamond – Provisional Members (Members not meeting State requirements/Juniors)

### **Tactical Benchmarks:**

Several accountability benchmarks are included in tactical operations. The Personnel Accountability Report (or "PAR") involves a roll call of personnel assigned. For the Company Officer, a "PAR" is a confirmation that members assigned to his/her crew are accounted for. For the Sector Officer, a "PAR" is an accounting for all crewmembers of all companies assigned to his/her sector. Reports of PAR's should be conducted face-to-face within the company or with the sector whenever possible.

Example:

Sector A to Estero 330, "Do you have PAR?"

"Estero 330 to Sector A, I have PAR" (all members accounted for).

A personnel accountability report will be required for the following situations:

- Any report of a missing or trapped firefighter (Command initiates a PAR of crews on the scene).
- Any change from offensive to defensive (Command initiates a PAR of all crews on the scene).
- Any sudden hazardous event at the incident - flash over, back draft, collapse, etc. (a PAR is initiated by Command).
- By all crew(s) reporting an "all clear" or crews exiting hot zone (Company Officers of crews responsible for search and rescue will ensure they have a PAR for their crews at the time they report an all clear).
- At a report of fire under control.

### **Accountability Officers:**

Accountability Officers may be driver operator, Sector Officer, or personnel specifically assigned to sectors to serve as Accountability Officers for the Sector Officer.

The first engine to each geographic side of the incident will serve as the initial Accountability Location. All crews entering the incident will deliver their accountability tags to the accountability location closest to their "point of entry" prior to entering the hot zone. As sectors are implemented, Sector Officers will manage accountability tags only if he/she is not entering the hot zone (i.e., defensive operations). Where the Sector Officer must enter the hot zone, accountability will remain on the first engine or designated apparatus closest to the entry point (accountability location). As more officers arrive on the scene and stage, they may be assigned accountability responsibilities for given sectors. These officers will report to their assigned Sector Officer to manage accountability for that sector (i.e., main lobby sector).

As the incident escalates and officers fill accountability positions for each sector, these Accountability Officers will be assigned to a radio channel designated by Command. Depending on the situation, Accountability Officers will report to either Command or Logistics.

At incidents with a critical need for Accountability Officers to assist Sector Officers, Command may chose to split up a company and distribute the crew members to different sectors to act as Accountability Officers.

### **Accountability Sector:**

As the incident escalates to the level that Accountability Officers are assigned, Logistics should implement an Accountability Sector to coordinate Accountability Officers.

The Accountability Sector Officer will be assigned to Logistics and will operate on the assigned logistics radio channel. The Accountability Sector Officer may be located with Operations.

The Accountability Sector Officer responsibilities include:

- A. Appropriately apply the accountability plan to track and account for all personnel working in the hot zone.
- B. Ensure that an Accountability Officer is implemented in each sector as necessary.
- C. Request and manage sector resources as needed.
- D. Provide progress reports i.e. command, logistics, or operations.
- E. Initiate PAR's upon benchmarks or as needed.

### **Responding on Apparatus:**

Responding members are responsible for **immediately** providing the person riding in the officer's seat an accountability tag when they board the apparatus.

### **Rules of Thumb:**

**Accountability Tag** implementation should consider the following basic rules of thumb:

- **Accountability Tags** never enter the hot zone.
- **Accountability Tags** must be maintained at the point of entry to a hot zone.
- **Accountability Tags** must reflect only those personnel **presently** in the hot zone. (except engine driver/operator)
- Only when the driver operator remains directly working with the company.
- Crews must turn in their **Accountability Tags** when entering and must retrieve their **Accountability Tags** upon exit from the hot zone, rehab, and staging. Crews that exit from a different point than where they entered will radio a PAR to that Sector Officer and will immediately go and retrieve their **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG**.

### **Accountability Tag Implementation - The Incident:**

Implementation of the **Accountability Tag** system will occur at any incident with two or more units on the scene that require the use of SCBA or if firefighter is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment or structure.

The objective of the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** system is always to have the crew **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** at the point of entry and that they be accurate, reflecting only those members entering the hot zone. For those situations where it is not clear - cut as to when and where to turn in **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS**, crews should consider the above-cited objective for their decision.

For single company incidents, the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** remains on the officer's apparatus dash. The driver operator will assume accountability sector responsibilities.

For multi-unit assignments and greater, the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** system will function as follows;

- The first engine to each geographic side of the incident becomes the initial accountability location for all later arriving companies to that side of the incident.
- The **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** of the first engine to each geographic side of the incident will be moved to the sector board.
- The driver operator becomes the initial Accountability Officer until relieved by an accountability officer for that sector.
- The driver operator of the first engine (accountability location) will collect the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** from the additional companies and mount them on the sector board at the accountability location.
- All crews must deliver their **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** to the accountability engine and place the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** on the sector board. The sector board will always be located on the inside panel of the company officer's door or someplace accessible on that side.
- Any truck company assigned to a sector will deliver the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** to the Sector Officer, or a designated Accountability Officer (designated by the Sector Officer or Command.)
- As the incident escalates, and Sector Officers and/or Accountability Officers are assigned, all **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** will be delivered to these officers prior to entry into the hot zone.

- Where the Sector Officer is operating within the hot zone, **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** must remain **outside** the zone with a designated Accountability Officer (i.e., initial engineer or officer) serving as an Accountability Officer. A solely designated Accountability Officer should serve no other duties during this time.
- Command should maintain an awareness of which engine companies are serving as accountability locations, and provide this information to companies being assigned to each geographic side of the incident (sector).

### **Terminating the ACCOUNTABILITY TAG System:**

**ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** accountability will be maintained through the demobilization of units. Upon termination and release for the incident, Company Officers and crewmembers will ensure that the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** is returned to the dash from the sector board of their apparatus and that the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG** is up-to-date.

### **Lost/Missing Firefighter:**

An absent member of any crew will automatically be assumed lost or trapped in the hot zone until otherwise determined safe. Officers must immediately report any absent members to Sector Officers or Command. Command must next initiate an immediate roll call (PAR) of all companies assigned to duty in the hot zone. Command must direct the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to the last reported working area of the lost firefighter to begin a search. Simultaneously with these actions, Command must adjust on-scene strategies to a priority search and rescue effort. Command must request additional resources as appropriate to meet the changing priorities.

### **Summary of Accountability Responsibilities:**

Accountability will work only with a strong personal commitment to the safety system. This commitment involves the following responsibilities:

**FIREFIGHTER** - Responsible for staying with his/her crew at all times and ensuring that his/her name tag is on the **ACCOUNTABILITY TAG BOARD** at all times.

**DRIVER/OPERATOR** - The driver operator of the first engine to each geographic side of the incident becomes the initial Accountability Officer.

The driver operator must collect **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** from crews and apparatus assigned to his/her side of the incident (sector) and manage accountability until relieved by a Sector Officer or Accountability Officer.

**SECTOR OFFICER** - Responsible for accounting for all crews in his/her assigned sector, maintaining an awareness of their exact location, and maintaining accurate **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** of those crews in the hot zone.

In those situations where the Sector Officer must enter the hot zone, **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** on a sector board will continue to be managed by the driver operator of the first engine to each side of the incident or a designated Accountability Officer for his/her sector.

**ACCOUNTABILITY SECTOR OFFICER** - Responsible for teaming up with the assigned Sector Officer and to manage all accountability for that sector. The Accountability Sector Officer must collect all **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** from driver operators, apparatus, or the Sector Officer. The Accountability Sector Officer must maintain close coordination with the Accountability Officer.

**ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER** - Responsible for managing Accountability Officers and system. Causes PAR's to be initiated at tactical benchmarks or as needed.

**COMMAND** - Responsible for tracking the location of all crews. Must advise later assigned crews of which engine is serving as the accountability location for **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** if applicable or that the Sector or Accountability Officer will be accepting **ACCOUNTABILITY TAGS** at the point of entry.

- Assigns sector/accountability officers
- Confirms all members are present
- Inquires as to completion of assignment
- Directs companies to rehab and other assignments
- Advise the receiving sector of the company's status