

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA

FIRE GROUND OPERATIONS POLICY #20-003

TOPIC: Rapid Intervention Crew			
Revision Date January 15, 2016	Replaces CCC Op Area Policy #2 October 2013	Approved By County Chiefs	Pages 5
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 Rapid Intervention Crew(s) (RIC) are designed to be immediately available to the Incident Commander (IC) for the sole purpose of firefighter rescue. The establishment of a RIC is a critical step in an attempt to increase the likelihood of survivability of a firefighter who becomes lost, trapped, or is incapacitated. For these reasons the RIC is one of the most important fire ground assignments. RIC operations require a coordinated plan of action.

BACKGROUND:

History shows that when firefighters are in trouble at an emergency, there is a tendency for everyone to want to assist. Failure to pre-plan critical information, and pre-position personnel and equipment prior to a fire ground emergency may delay or prevent a successful outcome. The result is a non-coordinated rescue effort with communication difficulties.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Entry Team-** A team of two or more firefighters who enter an IDLH environment to conduct firefighting operations.
2. **Emergency Traffic-** Communications from a firefighter indicating he/she is lost, trapped, injured, or that an immediate hazard exists.
3. **IDLH Environment** - (Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health). 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 to be an IDLH atmosphere by OSHA.
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** – Personnel Accountability Report involves a roll call of firefighters and companies assigned to an incident.
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 properly equipped to initiate a rescue, 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.

POLICY:

A RIC shall be established whenever firefighters will be operating in a hazardous area and/or an area that could be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH), or any other time the Incident Commander deems necessary

PROCEDURE:

A. Establishing a Rapid Intervention Crew

1. The IC shall be responsible for establishing a RIC when adequate resources are available and conditions warrant the assignment and this will satisfy the requirement for “Two-in/Two-out”.
2. On incidents where a Two-Out Team has been established, the IC or designee shall transition from the Two-Out Team to a RIC as soon as possible and practical. The radio designator shall be “RIC”; the IC shall transmit this over the radio on both dispatch and tactical channels. (E.g. “Con Fire, E-13 is the RIC”, “Martinez IC to all units, E-13 is the RIC”) E-13 would then assume the radio designator “RIC”.
3. Additional Rapid Intervention Crews may be added due to the size of the building or complexity of the incident. When this occurs a “RIC Group Supervisor” should be established.
4. The RIC designator may also reflect a geographic location or function if multiple RIC’s are formed. (E.g. “Division Bravo RIC”, “Division 1 RIC” or “RIC Group”)
5. Once a company has been assigned as the RIC, the IC should avoid reassigning them to other tasks that restrict their ability to immediately respond to a fire ground emergency.
6. 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.
7. The RIC function shall continue until the incident has concluded or the IC determines that a RIC is no longer needed based on a hazard assessment. 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 Company Operations

1. The RIC shall don full protective equipment with SCBA, hand lights, 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 priorities, objectives, strategy, and tactics
 - Current assignment of crews and their location of operation
 - Building information
 - Known hazards
 - Location of the 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 should 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:
 - Deployed hose line (size equivalent to or greater than the attack line and preferably charged)
 - 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
 - Spare SCBA, facepiece, and regulator (RIC BAG if available)
 - 4 Door chocks (sprinkler wedges)
 - Any other equipment deemed necessary
8. 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 situation.
9. The single objective of the RIC is to standby as a team in a state of constant readiness, maintaining situational awareness, until launched on a rescue mission. Stay focused on the assignment – the most important one on the fire ground.

C. Accountability

1. All RIC members shall have a portable radio and will carefully monitor the assigned Incident Talk Group (TG)/ Tactical Channel(s). The Firefighter Position on the RIC Team shall primary select and monitor the Emergency Channel at all times (no scan), based on Agency Policy.
2. At least one member of the RIC shall be responsible for maintaining a constant awareness of the Entry Team(s) and Crews operating in the IDLH atmosphere or hazard area, their location, function and time of entry.
3. A PAR shall be initiated anytime the IC requests it as well as for the following:
 - A change from offensive to defensive attack.
 - Any sudden hazardous event at the scene (e.g. flashover, collapse).
 - Report of missing, lost or trapped firefighters.
 - At 20 minute elapsed time intervals beginning with the initial on scene condition report.
 - At the time Search and Rescue teams report assignments complete (only take a roll call and condition of the Search and Rescue teams).
 - At the time the IC reports the fire or situation under control.

D. Activation of the RIC

1. The IC or designee should clear the Incident TG/Tactical Channel by announcing “Emergency Traffic”. (An “Emergency Traffic” message declares a fire ground emergency).
2. The IC or designee with the RIC Officer shall obtain information as soon as possible on the fire ground emergency, location, and number of firefighters involved before the RIC is activated.
3. The RIC shall utilize the radio TG/Channel being used by the Firefighter(s) declaring the fire ground emergency to communicate directly. An additional TG/ Tactical Channel(s) should be obtained through the Communications Center, for other fire ground operations. The IC will ensure that all TG’s/Tactical Channels utilized at the incident are being monitored.

4. The IC shall evaluate the need for additional resources based on the needs to mitigate both the fire ground emergency and initial incident. Consideration should be given to requesting one ALS ambulance for each firefighter who is lost, missing, or trapped.
5. A PAR shall be conducted as soon as possible.
6. Additional RIC(s) shall be established to assemble necessary tools and equipment, and ready to relieve the initial RIC as their SCBA'S are depleted. These additional RIC(s) may initiate rescue operations from a secondary means of access/egress.

E. Incident Review and Documentation

1. All circumstances related to RIC assignments and deployments shall be documented.
2. The Incident Commander of the scene shall conduct an after action review with all personnel involved when a RIC is activated