Fireground Accountability

302.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to increase firefighter safety by establishing accountability systems for keeping track of all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency incident.

302.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) - A roll call of all operations members assigned to an incident at specified times; a PAR is designed to account for each member's location and activity and to verify his/her safety.

302.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department that supervisors periodically account for members working under their direction at emergency incidents and that all members participate in accountability systems.

302.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

A personnel accountability system shall be established and implemented using thorough training procedures. This system should constantly monitor the status of all emergency personnel, both of department members and personnel from assisting agencies, during emergency incidents from their arrival until their official release from the incident.

A personnel accountability system should be used primarily to track personnel, not resources. However, on small incidents one individual may be responsible for tracking both personnel and resources.

A formal personnel accountability system, such as the Incident Command System (ICSs) Form ICS-201 for Incident Commanders (IC) or some similar process, should be used and a status board should be maintained. Individual crew names shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the cab of department vehicles, such as Par Tags on a Passport, which can be delivered to the IC or Accountability Officer.

Supervisors are responsible for participation in the accountability system by tracking all personnel under their direction on emergency incidents. Personnel should be accounted for from the time of dispatch to the time of demobilization.

Supervisors should implement sufficient tracking methods for personnel at the individual, company, division, group and unit levels to account for personnel during all phases and at all locations of an incident, including travel between locations and assignments.

The IC should designate an accountability officer to monitor who is in charge of each area, what crews are assigned to each area, where each area is located and the area assignment.

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Division or group supervisors should be assigned to keep track of all crews under their supervision. Captains or designated company officers should know the location and assignment of each firefighter in their crew.

All members are responsible for participating in the accountability system, including checking in at approved locations. This includes members who arrive on-scene individually or in privately owned vehicles.

302.4 REPORTING

Ongoing, routine strategic and tactical accountability at all emergency incidents, including wildland fires, should be accomplished through periodic reporting or visual observation. This can be accomplished through concise reports that include conditions, actions and needs, also called a CAAN (Conditions, Air, Actions, Needs) report. Members should also make the following reports:

- Emergency situations
- Inability to meet objective with revised timeline and/or resource requests
- Notification of completed actions
- Change in strategy
- Change in fire conditions, such as crossing planned control lines, extension of fire, or rapid fire growth.

302.4.1 PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (PAR)

For structure fires, a PAR should be conducted within the first 20 minutes of an incident and every 20 minutes thereafter for personnel at the scene, or as designated by the Incident Commander. In addition, PARs should be conducted after any change in conditions that may alter or affect firefighter safety, such as an increase in fire conditions, fire crossing planned control lines or trigger points, a change in strategy from offensive to defensive or after ordering an emergency evacuation, or operational retreat from an area.

A PAR should be conducted for each division, group and organizational element where operations personnel are working. If any person involved in the operation is unaccounted for, emergency procedures, including notification to the IC, should be initiated.

The IC may discontinue regular PARs when incident stabilization is achieved and hazards are sufficiently reduced.

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