



Department of Emergency Response
And Communications
Cortland County 911
Public Safety Building; Suite 201
54 Greenbush Street
Cortland, New York 13045

300-002	Title- FIREFIGHTER MAYDAY GUIDELINE	
Effective Date March 26 th , 2008	References – December 11 th , 2013 revised to reflect orange emergency activation button on the UHF Digital Trunked Radio System	
Next Scheduled Review		
Modified Date December 11 th , 2013	CLASSIFICATION – STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE	Approved By -

PREFACE: This policy was adopted by the Cortland County Fire Chiefs Association on March 26, 2008 and updated on December 11, 2013. This policy is to be adhered to by all fire departments operating in Cortland County.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this guideline is to establish a method for firefighters to summon assistance at a fireground emergency.

METHOD: If a firefighter finds themselves trapped, missing, or in need of assistance, it is vital that the firefighter take the following steps to ensure that assistance is received immediately.

Fireground Emergency

1. If the firefighter is able to reach his Radio, he should transmit a "MAYDAY" signal across the Radio three (3) times, state his / her name, location, problem and resources that may be needed to assist. This transmission should occur on the assigned fire ground ops talk group.
2. The firefighter should then wait for the Incident Commander to acknowledge the "MAYDAY". Once a "MAYDAY" is transmitted the Incident Commander should advise all units on the fireground to maintain radio silence for a MAYDAY in progress.
3. In the event that the MAYDAY is not acknowledged the firefighter shall then press the Orange button on either the speaker mic or the top of the radio for three to five seconds. This will send an emergency alert to the Communications Center, and the Incident Commander if his/her radio is scanning, and any radio scanning the 911Priority talk group. **The Orange button press will take the firefighters radio to the 911 Priority Talk Group for direct communication with the Communications Center and the Incident Commander.**

a) The 911 Priority talk group is in Zone 1 Channel 16 in all Cortland County portable radios. If you are not in Zone 1 on your radio, and you are operating at a Cortland County incident, pressing the orange button will immediately turn your radio internally to the 911 Priority talk group.

b) If operating on Fire Direct, pressing the orange button will do nothing, the radio must be turned to an On-Network talk group to enable the orange button.

c) If operating outside of Cortland County the orange button will either do nothing or work in a different manner. That being said, orange button pushes outside of Cortland County should be a last resort at all cost.

4. After pressing the orange button the firefighter should transmit a "MAYDAY" signal across the Radio three (3) times, state his / her name, location, problem and resources that may be needed to assist.

a. Pressing the Orange button will transmit a beep to the Communications Center, and any radio scanning 911 Priority. It will also open the Mic, "Hot Mic," of the radio that pressed the Orange button for a period of 10 seconds.

1. The portable radios only have the hot mic feature. Pressing the orange button on a mobile will activate your emergency button and take the radio to 911 Priority but to transmit you must use the push to talk button on the mic.

DISPATCHER b. In the event of an emergency button activation the Communications Center Dispatcher will immediately attempt to make contact with the firefighter in distress and retrieve the following information utilizing "NUTS".

N- Name of the firefighter in distress.

U- Unit the firefighter is with.

T- Task the firefighter was assigned.

S- Situation/ Status of the firefighter and what may be needed to assist

The Dispatcher shall then immediately contact the incident commander and ensure that the Incident Commander received the MAYDAY transmission. If the Incident Commander did not hear the MAYDAY, the Dispatcher will provide them with all of the information.

Accidental c. In the event the orange button is accidentally pressed, the dispatcher will contact the firefighter and check his/her status. If the firefighter is not in a situation he/she shall reply with his/her location and status is CODE 9 to signify an accidental press or all clear situation. At that time the Dispatcher will instruct the firefighter to reset their radio, this is done by pressing and holding the orange button for three to five

seconds. Resetting of the radio shall only occur after the Dispatcher advises the user to reset the radio. Users are not to turn off their radios or change talk groups until the radio has been reset.

5. The Incident Commander will advise the FAST team that a MAYDAY has been transmitted. The Incident Commander shall also notify Fire Control of the MAYDAY if Fire Control did not receive the mayday call and request a subsequent FAST team deployment.

- a. Known FAST teams include:

Cortland County

Cortlandville

Cayuga County

Moravia

Owasco

Tompkins County

Dryden

Cayuga Heights

6. The Incident Commander in coordination with the Communications Center will then determine which talk group to conduct the MAYDAY operation on. In most cases the BEST scenario has the Incident Commander meeting the distressed firefighter(s) on 911 Priority talk group and keeping the main fire attack on the home Ops talk group. If the firefighter already has pressed the Orange button, their radio will already be on 911Priority and the Incident Commander simply needs to turn his portable radio channel select to the talk group 911 Priority.

- a. 911Priority is located as Zone 1 Channel 16 in all Cortland County radios.

- b. The Dispatcher will work to get the Mayday situation off of 911 Priority in order to free it up for any other potential incidents. This may be done by having each member involved in the Mayday rescue operation switch their radio to another talk group or by having the Dispatcher dynamically regroup a selected group of radios.

7. The firefighter should then provide the Incident Commander with the following information:

- a. Name of the individual or individuals who needs assistance

- b. Unit the individual or individuals responded on
 - c. Task the individual or individuals was assigned to
 - d. Status of the individual or individuals
 - 1) are you lost or trapped
8. The Incident Commander will repeat the information back to the Distressed Firefighter to ensure the message was received in full.
 9. The firefighter should then turn on their flashlight to assist the FAST Team in locating the Distressed Firefighter(s). The decision to activate the MAYDAY firefighters PASS alarm should be coordinated between the Incident Commander, the FAST Team Leader, and the FAST search team. Turning on your PASS alarm can cause excess confusion and noise; activation **MUST** be coordinated between all parties.
 10. The Incident Commander will provide the FAST Team with the information received by the Distressed Firefighter(s) and deploy the team.
 11. The Incident Commander will then request additional manpower to the scene and establish another FAST Team.
 12. It is Imperative that all firefighters stay focused on their current assignments unless directed otherwise by an officer. **A SUDDEN OUTBREAK OF FREELANCING COULD HAVE DISASTROUS RESULTS.**
 13. Upon completion of the MAYDAY situation, the Incident Commander shall advise all units operating at the incident and the Communications Center that the MAYDAY has been handled and radio traffic may resume normal operations.

Non Fireground Emergencies

PREFACE: Due to the nature of the calls we respond to the possibility of a firefighter and/or EMS provider emergency is inherent. These types of emergencies could be for example: a violent patient, an enraged spouse who has committed spousal abuse, or an active shooter situation.

METHOD: If a firefighter finds themselves trapped, missing, or in need of assistance, it is vital that the firefighter take the following steps to ensure that assistance is received immediately.

1. If possible the firefighter should attempt to contact the incident commander on the assigned fire department talk group.

- a. The Incident Commander would then determine what assistance is needed and make the subsequent requests through the Communications Center Dispatcher.
2. If the firefighter is not able to use the Push to Talk (PTT) on their radio, the firefighter shall then press and hold the Orange button for 3-5 seconds. Pressing the Orange button will transmit a beep to the Communications Center and any radio scanning 911 Priority. It will also open the Mic, "Hot Mic," of the radio that pressed the Orange button for a period of 10 seconds. During the " Hot Mic" period the Incident Commander (if scanning) and Dispatcher should listen to try and determine the extent of the situation the firefighter is in.
3. Radio users will need to know what portable number they have. Some users will have portables with assigned alias to designate them as specific user, ie Chiefs and Captains. A majority of the radios will have a generic number based on position of the radio from which it is located in the fire apparatus. Departments should make it clear as to every portable's number and make sure all users are aware of the numbering sequence utilized by his/her department.
- A. DISPATCHER: The Dispatcher shall inquire from the user of the radio that activated the emergency button by saying: "Fire Control to unit/user...location and status?" on the 911 Priority talk group. The unit number/user id used in the inquiry shall be designated by the radio alias displayed on the radio console.
- B. The Dispatcher shall make two additional attempts to contact the user that activated the emergency button if no answer is received on the first attempt. Attempts shall be made via the radio on the 911 priority talk group at 20 second intervals.
- C. The Dispatcher shall only knockdown an emergency button activation when the unit/user in question responds with the following specific phrase: "unit/user to Fire Control my location is _____ and my status is CODE-9.
- D. When the **location** of the fire or EMS user activating the emergency button **is known**, the following steps shall be followed:
 1. Unless it is immediately determined to be a fire only related emergency, ie. mayday call, the Dispatcher shall initiate a police response when no response or an improper acknowledgment is received on the 911 priority talk group from the user that activated their emergency button.
 2. The Dispatcher shall notify the fire and/or EMS user agency's Incident Commander of the emergency button activation. It shall then become the Incident Commander's responsibility to communicate with the user in need of assistance, unless the Incident Commander is the user requesting assistance.
 3. The Dispatcher shall not cancel a police response once it is initiated regardless of who tries to cancel the response. The Dispatcher shall only inform the responding police units with updated/additional information.

E. When the **location** of the fire or EMS user activating the emergency button **is unknown**, the following steps shall be followed:

1. The Dispatcher shall contact the user's emergency contact person. Once contact is made with the emergency contact, the Dispatcher shall inquire about the location of the radio and/or the name of the user. If the location is known, a police response shall be initiated.
2. If the location of the user remains unknown, any further actions taken by the Communication Center shall be done in coordination with the user's agency's emergency contact person.
 - a. The emergency contact person will be the highest ranking officer active at the incident, or if no officer is "on the air" any Chief or Officer will be paged.

Non Incident Activations

1. In the event that an orange button activation occurs and there is no known active event for the radio that has been activated any Chief or Officer of the department who operates the radio will be paged for.
2. In the event the Chief or Officer that answers up is able to locate the radio, the orange button activation will follow normal reset procedures.
3. In the event the Chief or Officer that answers up is unable to locate the radio, the Communications Center and Officer will work together to either locate the radio or the Dispatcher may remotely turn the radio off.

Michael Biviano - County Chiefs President

Scott Roman- Director DOERC