

Falmouth Fire-EMS Operating Guideline

Accountability

Objective:

To provide guidelines for personnel accountability on emergency scenes and at training events.

General Information:

The ability to track and account for all personnel on an emergency scene is critical to ensuring their safety and ability to complete their mission.

This procedure establishes a standard system for tracking personnel accountability at incident scenes and training functions through the use of Personnel Accountability Tags, Personnel Accountability Reports (PAR), and the use of Accountability Officers on scenes.

Accountability involves a personal commitment to work safely at an incident. The Incident Commander will maintain an accurate tracking and an awareness of where resources are committed at an incident. The IC will be responsible for including accountability as a major element in strategy and attack planning and must consider and react to any barriers that affect accountability. Company Officers, Crew Leaders, and individual firefighters are accountable for the safety of themselves and other members of their crew. Crew members shall maintain a constant awareness of the position and function of all members working with them. All crews will work for Command, Divisions, Branches or Groups.

THERE IS NO FREE LANCING.

Implementation of the passport system should occur at any incident that requires an SCBA, or in which a firefighter is at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured by the environment or structure. This would include entering a structure during interior operations, water rescue, wilderness search and rescue, MCI, HazMat emergencies, Wildland fires, etc.

Terminology:

Accountability Officer

The Incident Command may assign a person to become the Accountability Officer. The Accountability Officer will report to Command and have the following responsibilities:

- a) Develop and implement a plan designed to track and account for all personnel working in the hazard zone.
- b) Collect Accountability Tags for all members on the scene.
- c) Ensure that all personnel on scene are accounted for.
- d) Work with the Resource / Staging Area Manager to coordinate tracking of all crews on the emergency or training scene.
- e) Coordinate with the IC to initiate PAR checks as needed.

The Accountability Officer may begin collecting Accountability Tags at the entry point to the hazard area however may be reassigned to work side by side with Resource / Staging Area Manager for ease of tracking crews and assignments.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)

The PAR involves a roll call of the companies assigned to an emergency. For the company officer, a "PAR" is a confirmation that members of their crew are accounted for. For the Incident Commander a PAR is an accounting for all crew members of all companies assigned to the incident. For companies reporting PAR their personnel accounting should be conducted face to face whenever possible. The PAR response should include the unit and the number of personnel.

Example: "Engine 1 to Command, I have a "PAR" of 5" (5 crew members are accounted for). There are several accountability benchmarks included in the tactical operations of the personnel accounting system. A Personnel Accountability Report may be required for the following situations:

- a) Any report of a missing or trapped firefighter
- b) Any change from an offensive to a defensive situation
- c) When there is a catastrophic change in the incident such as building collapse, explosion, backdraft, sudden flooding, release of vapor clouds, etc.
- d) At 30 minute time intervals IC may initiate a PAR of all crews on scene
- e) At a report of "Fire under control"
- f) A PAR may also be called at any time that the Incident Commander deems necessary.

Individual Accountability Tags

All department personnel will be issued two (2) individual accountability name tags. The name tags will have a Velcro backing and the employee's number and name will be printed on the front of the tag. Name tags will be affixed to Velcro strips on the helmet for storage. These are the tags that will be used to track each member's actions on incidents scenes and at training to ensure accountability thorough an incident. Unit 1 has a spare tag of each active member of the department in the Tactron ICS Board.

Apparatus Passport

Each apparatus will have a Passport attached to the front dashboard area of the apparatus near the officers' seat. The passport is a 2" x 4" piece of Plastic, with the apparatus name printed at the top. The middle section is covered with Velcro where name tags are attached. The bottom section of the passport is blank where assignments or times can be recorded.

Officer Passports

Officer Passports are white with black letters/numbers and flexible construction. This passport shall be carried by the Officer until used as a passport for entrance into an emergency incident perimeter. Suggested location is under the helmet brim. The secondary passport is used when crews are split into multiple crews and more passports are needed to track the new crews.

Makeup Tags and Passport Kits

Blank passports and tags will be kept in Unit 1. A makeup kit contains: status board, marking pens, passports, and blank tags.

Status Boards

Status Boards are boards which the Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Accountability Officer, Division Supervisor, or Company Officer uses to hold the passports of incident resources. Each apparatus has a status board in the front cab.

Guidelines:

General Response:

1.) Use of Passports and Tags:

Individual accountability name tags of each person riding on an apparatus should be handed to the officer and attached to the Apparatus passport before the apparatus leaves the station. The top name attached is the Officer of the Apparatus. The bottom tag is the apparatus operator. In between are all of the other crew members on the apparatus. The passport should always contain the names of all personnel presently assigned to that company.

Once on scene, if the Apparatus Operator remains with the apparatus, his/her tag should be pulled off the Apparatus passport and be attached to the Velcro strip on the apparatus. If, later in the incident the apparatus operator leaves the apparatus, his/her tag should leave the apparatus and go to Accountability Officer / Staging Area Manager. Also, if other members that did not arrive on the apparatus are added to the company, their tags are added to the Apparatus Passport.

Upon arrival of the incident, the officer of the apparatus will provide the Incident Commander (Accountability Officer / Resource Officer if established) with the Apparatus Passport.

Some circumstances may arise where it is not practical to hand the Apparatus Passport to the IC, Accountability Officer, or Resource Officer. The Apparatus Passport may remain with the company officer when they are arriving at an incident before the establishment of a Command Post and must take initial actions other than command (Ex. Fire Attack) and have passed command,

OR

When the crew is directed to a remote side of an emergency incident away from the IC, Accountability Officer, or Resource Officer. As soon as practically possible, the Apparatus Passports should be handed to the IC, Accountability Officer, or Resource Officer.

Upon exit of a hazard area or upon completion of a task, the crew must report to the Accountability Officer, Resource Officer or IC to retrieve their passports. The accountability status board must be changed to show that the company has moved from the hazard area to another area, likely Rehab or Resource / Staging.

Falmouth Fire-EMS uses a process known as "Check-In / Check-Out" (also called "Tag In / Tag Out"). Companies "Check-in" for assignments and when completed they return to Resource and Accountability to "Check-Out". This assures that they are accurately accounted for.

Any member who is reporting to Rehab from an assigned group / division shall advise his / her assigned group officer. The officer is then to advise the Accountability Officer the members' name so that their tags can be moved to Rehab. It is preferred that companies stay together and go to Rehab as a group.

2.) Short Duration Emergencies

This type of incident may not require a Resource / Staging Area Manager, Division or Group Supervisor, or require more apparatus and personnel beyond the first alarm assignment. The Incident Commander shall be able to identify individual members of a crew and their assignment and account for the assignment of crews and units at an emergency scene. Transfer of passports may not be necessary. Assure automatic aid units are incorporated as part of the department's resources so all will be accounted for.

3.) Large or Extended Emergencies

This type of incident will likely require a Resource / Staging Area Manager, Division or Group Supervisor, or more apparatus and personnel beyond the first alarm assignment. Transfer of passports will be utilized to provide the Incident Commander with information concerning the Identity of individual members of a crew and their assignment and account for the assignment of crews and units at an emergency scene.

Upon arrival of a department Safety Officer, the Safety Officer shall ensure that passports are being transferred and all personnel working in the incident perimeter have assignments and are with a crew. If not yet established, the first arriving Safety Officer will become the Accountability Officer for the incident.

4.) Lost or Missing Firefighter

An absent crew member will automatically be assumed lost or trapped in the hazard zone until otherwise determined safe. Company Officers must immediately report any absent members to the Accountability Officer or Incident Command. For any reports of missing Firefighters Incident Command may initiate an immediate roll call (PAR) of all companies assigned to duty in the hazard zone. Simultaneously with these actions Incident Command may adjust on scene strategies to a priority search and rescue effort.

5.) Termination

Upon termination and release from the incident, the Company Officer will receive their crews' Accountability Passport and ensure that the passport is returned to the appropriate apparatus. Once back in quarters the Company Officer will hand the Accountability Tags back to the respective firefighters.

6.) Important considerations

- a. All personnel must keep track of their accountability tags. If one becomes lost the Company Officer must be notified ASAP.
- b. Some mutual aid partners may use different accountability systems. It is imperative that Falmouth Fire-EMS utilize our accountability system in conjunction with other departments' systems.
- c. Mutual Aid and Automatic Mutual Aid responders must be accounted for at all times on Falmouth incidents and training.

7.) Training

- a. Accountability Tags will be used at training events. There are accountability boards on the wall of the Central and West Station Training Rooms and on the upstairs door of the Station 1 Meeting Room.
- b. An Incident Commander shall be assigned for training events. The IC ("Training Command") has the overall responsibility to ensure proper accountability procedures are being followed.
- c. At the completion of training, individual accountability tags will be handed back to the members.

These guidelines may be changed or altered by the Fire Chief at any time.