

# ACCOUNTABILITY

## A. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to help ensure the safety of personnel on the fireground. Accountability is one part of an effective incident management system. It is imperative that officers be able to account for personnel in order to determine if everyone is in safe areas. This guideline establishes procedures to be followed for the accounting of personnel at emergency incidents.

## B. Implementation

The procedures outlined in the guideline will be implemented as outlined below:

1. On any incident in which firefighters are at risk of becoming lost, trapped, or injured.
2. On incidents in which firefighters are operating in the defensive mode but are in close proximity to a structure in which the above hazards exist.
3. Ground cover or rescue operations that put personnel out of sight of command and/or operating for extended periods of time subjecting them to environmental injuries.
4. On any high-rise building fire.
5. On any Haz-Mat incident other than fuel spill type incidents.

## C. Nametags

Each member will be issued two nametags. The nametags shall be attached to the underside of the back brim of the helmet using Velcro. The tag will indicate PFD, have the members first initial and last name, followed by the appropriate station designation (61, 62, or 63).

## D. Passport

The passport is the foundation of the accountability system. A passport is the piece on which members' nametags are placed as they assemble into crews. Each apparatus will have a primary passport and one or more blank passports. The apparatus' primary passport will be attached to the dashboard using Velcro and/in the crew cab and will designate the apparatus' number at the top (E-61, E-63, T-61, Eq-62, etc). Blank passports will be carried in accountability kits on each engine. Blank passports will be used to assemble crews that do not arrive on a truck.

## 1. Forming the Passport

Apparatus passports are formed as the truck is responding to the incident. Each crewmember will affix their nametag to the passport. The person in the officer's seat will affix their tag to the top of the passport. If the apparatus crew is immediately assigned an operational task, and Level II Accountability has not begun, the officer will leave their passport in the apparatus. If Level II Accountability has been initiated, the passports should be delivered to the Accountability Officer in the area of their assignment. If the crew reports to the Personnel Resource Area, the officer will take the Passport with them. Blank passports will be assembled in the same fashion with nametags of personnel arriving in their own vehicles.

## E. Accountability Boards

Accountability Boards are used by Accountability Officers to gather passports of working crews. Each apparatus will have one Accountability Board available for use. The Passports are placed onto the Accountability Board to indicate that the crew has begun operations in which accountability is required.

Multiple Accountability Boards may be appropriate in large operations.

## F. Accountability Procedures

1. Generally, still alarm responses and some small structure fires are contained with minimal apparatus and manpower. Accountability of personnel at these scenes can usually be conducted through line-of-sight by the Officer in charge.
2. Multi-unit incidents (3+) require more control of personnel for accountability purposes. Accountability on these incidents will be conducted by the Incident Commander, a Division Officer, an Aide, or a specifically assigned Accountability Officer. Initial responsibility for accountability rests with the Incident Commander. Upon assignment, Division Officers assume accountability responsibility for their area of operation. If necessary, Division Officers may request an aide, or a specifically assigned Accountability Officer to assist them. In some cases, multiple Accountability Officers may be appropriate. Accountability Officers will be identified by Accountability Vests. Assignment of accountability will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander.
3. Upon initiation of operations in which accountability is required, the Incident Commander will collect or assign collection of the Passports of apparatus crews that receive assignments immediately upon their arrival. As Division

Officers are assigned, they are responsible for retrieving the Passports of crews that are operating within their geographical area. It is imperative that Command and/or Division Officers maintain awareness and an accurate accounting of personnel assigned to them.

#### G. Entry / Exit

1. As operations are initiated, accountability will begin automatically. As crews are formed in the Personnel Resource Area and given an assignment, the crew's Passport will be placed on the Accountability Board. When the crew exits, the Passport should be retrieved from that Accountability Board.
2. Tracking of personnel in dangerous areas is imperative as offensive operations are initiated. Command, Division Officers, Accountability Officers or Aides will monitor the entry and exit of crews via the Accountability Board. When assigned a task, the crew's Passport will be obtained by the Division / Accountability Officer and placed on the Accountability Board. The time of entry should be recorded. When the task is complete and the crew exits the area, the Passport will be returned to the crew's officer. Large incidents may require multiple entry and exit locations. In these events, the entry procedures should be followed for each location.
3. As crews exit, their Passport will be returned if all members of the crew are present. If the crew is not complete, individual nametags will be returned.
4. If exit is made at a different location than the one entered, the Division / Accountability Officer at the Entry Point will be notified that exit has been made. Preferably, the officer or a crewmember should make this notification by returning to the entry location to obtain the crews' Passport (or individual name tag if individual exit is made). The Division / Accountability Officer at the secondary exit point will obtain the secondary name tag of those exiting and record the time of exit. If the crew (or individuals) re-enter at that point, the nametags will be returned and there is no need to notify the original entry location.
5. The same procedures should be followed when individuals must exit for brief periods (i.e. to get a tool, or change air bottles). If exiting at the entry location, the original nametag will be obtained from the Division / Accountability Officer, and then returned to that Officer upon re-entry. If exiting at another location, the secondary nametag should be given to the Division / Accountability Officer at that location. Upon re-entry, the Officer at the secondary location will return the secondary nametag. Whatever the case, intentions should be communicated to the Division / Accountability Officer upon temporary exit.

6. A nametag must be presented in order to enter the danger zone. Personnel who have given up both nametags will be required to retrieve at least one before entry is granted.

#### H. Personnel Resource Area

1. As an incident progresses, Command will establish a Personnel Resource Area at the first in apparatus or other convenient location. The location of the Personnel Resource Area will be announced over the radio. For an accountability system to function, it is imperative that all apparatus crews not receiving an immediate assignment report to the Personnel Resource Area with their Passport upon arrival. Large incidents may have more than one Personnel Resource Area.
2. Those arriving in personal vehicles will report to the Personnel Resource Area before beginning any operations. Crews and Passports will be formed, and assignments will be delivered at the Personnel Resource Area. Crews will operate as a team upon receiving an assignment. In prolonged incidents, personnel will report back to the Personnel Resource Area upon rotation through the Rehab Area.
3. On incidents with a level two staging area, initial reporting will be conducted and assignments delivered at the Staging Area. The crew Passport will then be delivered to the Division Officer / Accountability Officer for the area that the crew is assigned to.

#### I. Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)

1. Personnel Accountability Reports will be called for by Comcenter every 15 minutes or in the event that a situation develops that could threaten the safety of those operating at the incident. Examples may include a building collapse, backdraft, flashover, explosion, strategy change (offensive to defensive), etc. In some cases, Command may request a PAR without a significant occurrence. Upon the call for a PAR, each Division Officer / Accountability Officer shall account for the crews operating under their jurisdiction. Upon accounting for those crews, the Accountability Officer will report a "PAR" for their area of responsibility. The term "PAR" indicates that all personnel within an Accountability Officer's area of responsibility have been accounted.
2. Upon evaluation of the hazard presented by the incident, Command may cancel Comcenter's calling for PAR. This action does not alleviate Command's responsibility to account for all operating personnel however.
3. A "No PAR" declaration should be made by the Accountability Officer(s) if all personnel cannot be accounted for within a reasonable time frame (three to

four minutes). In addition, the following events should trigger an automatic “No PAR” declaration:

- a. Loss of radio contact with an interior crew, or crew operating on the roof when out of visual contact. Three attempts to establish radio contact should be made before a “No PAR” is declared.
- b. Missing or downed firefighters
- c. Any abnormal or unexpected event that could reasonably place firefighters in life threatening situations.

#### 4. No PAR” Declarations

If a “No PAR” is declared, the following sequence of events should take place:

- a. Command will request an upgrade to the next alarm level (i.e., if incident is at 2<sup>nd</sup> alarm, call for 3<sup>rd</sup>)
- b. Command will call Comcenter and request an Alert / Emergency Traffic tone on all tactical frequencies being utilized in order to clear the air.
- c. If radio contact with a crew has been lost, one final attempt to establish contact will be made.
- d. A building evacuation will be called for by sounding solid blast on the air horns of the apparatus in the area of the building for a minimum of 30 seconds.
- e. If during or after the evacuation, the personnel are still unaccounted for, Command will initiate a search by the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT). The RIT will begin searching the area where the missing crew or individual was last known to be operating. Backup RIT’s will be established so there is no lapse of search operations. The search will continue until the missing personnel are located and evacuated or until conditions deteriorate to a point that the Rapid Intervention Crew’s safety is unreasonably compromised.

See also: Rapid Intervention Teams

Once all personnel have been accounted for, normal operations may be re-established.