

ELECTRONIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Grace Watchdog System

December 2009

A. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure that all members on the fireground understand the systems uses and limitations. Electronic Accountability is another part of an effective incident management system. This guideline will be used in accordance with the Accountability guideline. 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 Hazardous-Materials incident other than fuel spill type incident.

C. Accountability System

The Grace Accountability system will be the system used on scene where individual accountability is required. The Grace Accountability system will be placed in a “pelican” style case allowing for portability. The Accountability Officer (AO) will be responsible for maintaining all accountability tags as well as monitoring the Watchdog system.

D. Activating the Grace Watchdog System

Upon arrival, the first arriving apparatus will initiate the PFD Accountability system, as well as the Electronic Accountability system. When the Electronic Accountability system is in place the statement “Electronic Accountability in Place” should be transmitted over the radio. The Incident Commander or first arriving officer shall assign someone to operate the Electronic Accountability system. If there are not enough personnel on the first arriving apparatus, either the D/O or IC will run the Watchdog system. This will happen until relieved by a qualified member.

The Accountability officer will monitor the display for the following items.

1. Panic or motionless alarm indications.
2. Loss of signal indications.
3. Continual display of all members from each unit on scene.

The IC or assigned Accountability officer will be responsible to verify positive firefighter health and safety when an alarm condition presents on the Watchdog system. This will be done by any of the following methods:

1. Contacting the member in alarm or with a loss of signal via radio.
2. The radio terminology used by the IC or AO to determine a member's health and safety after an alarm signal is received is "Engine 61-A, check par." If the member has accidentally caused a panic alarm from lack of movement, or has inadvertently hit the panic button, the proper response is "Engine 61-A, par ok."

E. Roll Calls and PAR's

1. Silent PAR's are configured to be performed every 3 minutes by the Watchdog system. The system silently confirms signals of all active TPASS devices. In the case of the Watchdog system being unable to find a signal for a TPASS, the IC or AO will be prompted to perform a manual "Roll Call" from the Watchdog system.
2. An audible signal will be sent to all active TPASS devices. All members will acknowledge the roll call by pressing both side buttons on the TPASS simultaneously. Failure to acknowledge the "Roll Call" in 60 seconds will result in the IC or AO requesting a PAR check of the unit over the radio.
3. Manual PAR's can also be initiated from the Watchdog system at any time deemed necessary by the IC. The Watchdog system is set up to prompt the Accountability officer every 15 minutes for a PAR check. Members will acknowledge the PAR audible signal by simultaneously pressing both side buttons of the TPASS.

F. Discontinuing Electronic Accountability

The Incident Commander will make the statement "Electronic Accountability is Discontinued" over the radio; only when the need for firefighter accountability no longer exists. Only after this statement is made will use of the TPASS devices and repeaters be discontinued.

G. TPASS Operations

1. TPASS devices will be placed on all PFD SCBA's
2. The TPASS device will be attached to the individual SCBA with removable clips.
3. All members will wear the TPASS assigned to their riding position, with the exception of a TPASS that is replacing a broken or lost unit during an emergency incident.
4. TPASS devices are activated when the clip is removed from the device. The black tether that connected to the accountability key will be attached securely to the upper left portion of the apparatus seat bracket.
5. When a firefighter exits the hazard zone, and/or is assigned to rehab, an orange rehab key will be attached to the TPASS device to de-activate the TPASS and to prevent any false activation. The Watchdog will show on the screen when a member is in rehab. When a firefighter re-enters the hazard zone, the orange rehab key will be removed to re-activate the device. The orange rehab key will

either be left with the apparatus D/O or with the member in charge of the rehab division.

6. When the SCBA is placed back into the apparatus the orange rehab key will be removed and the black tether strap key will be placed back onto the TPASS unit.

H. Receiving a TPASS alarm at the Watchdog system screen

1. Identify the firefighter in alarm by the position indicated on the screen.
2. Authenticate the situation as an emergency or accidental activation of the TPASS. This is done by calling the member on the radio to authenticate.
3. Inability to gain contact or to positively identify a member's health and safety with the member in alarm will require immediate action by the IC.
4. A loss of signal indication that occurs in conjunction with a serious or catastrophic fireground event, without a positive PAR, should be treated as a "MAYDAY."

I. Sending the Evacuation Call (Defensive Mode Transition)

1. IC orders all units to exit the building.
2. Send the evacuation tone from the Watchdog system. Signal any repeaters set up as exit locator devices to indicate which direction firefighters should exit the structure.
3. Request the defensive alert tone from Commcenter and 20 second air horn blast.
4. The Accountability officer should:
 - Monitor the progress of the electronic signal delivery and receipt to and from the TPASS devices on the screen.
 - Verify that all firefighters have manually acknowledged the signal within 60 seconds of sending the evacuation order.
 - If within 60 seconds no manual evacuation acknowledgement or positive PAR can be confirmed, initiate rescue procedures.

J. Repeater Operations

1. Repeaters will be deployed in large, heavily reinforced buildings, such as hospitals, high-rises, shopping malls, and metal commercial buildings. Placing repeaters in the highest position possible inside the building will increase the signal strength of the TPASS.
2. Repeaters can also be used as exit locators if the situation deteriorates and evacuation become necessary.