AIR MANAGEMENT

ADOPTED 1/31/2007

PURPOSE

The intent of this Guideline is to implement a policy that requires members to exit the IDLH environment prior to the activation of the low air alarm. This will be accomplished by requiring members to maintain an awareness of their individual air pressure at all times and providing an early notification of low air situations. In the event of a low air alarm activation, members will be required to provide immediate notification to Command. This guideline will also define actions associated with low air emergencies.

INTRODUCTION

Until now, firefighters typically work until their low air alarm, End of Service Time Indicator (EOSTI), on their Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) has activated. This alarm served as the indicator for firefighters to leave the IDLH environment. Initiating egress after the activation of the EOSTI, requires the individual to utilize the reserve air supply to exit the IDLH. This has had tragic consequences. Evidence shows that firefighters do not call for help until they have consumed their reserve air supply. This practice puts the Rapid Intervention Team at a severe disadvantage and lessens the likelihood of a successful rescue.

In addition, the sounding of multiple alarms are common place and therefore not seen as an indicator of a firefighter in trouble. Many firefighter testimonials have documented that the individuals in trouble, with alarm bells ringing, went unnoticed by crews working in the same area.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of **<YOUR AGENCY NAME HERE>**, that members exit the IDLH environment prior to the activation of the EOSTI.

OBJECTIVE

To actively monitor and manage air consumption while performing firefighting functions and to calculate air usage so that exiting the IDLH environment occurs prior to the activation of the low air alarm (emergency air reserve).

This objective will assist **<YOUR AGENCY NAME HERE>**, in meeting the intent of NFPA 1404 regarding the individual Air Management Program.

PROCEDURE

- Check your SCBA (SCBA Daily Check) upon arrival for duty.
- Individuals will check air pressure with their team or crew prior to entry of IDLH environment.
    a. Initial entry shall be with a FULL cylinder.
- Continually monitor air consumption and pressure as an individual and/or team by following the suggestions below:
    a. Regular time intervals (approximately every 5 minutes)
    b. 10 minute CAD safety time notification from dispatch
    c. Change of work area (floor level change, area searched)
    d. Passing of major landmarks within the structure
    e. Completion of assignment and prior to accepting another assignment

f. As situation dictates

- Crew/team to give an automatic air status report to team leader when the first member of the crew/teams air pressure falls to 2000 psi.
- Manage air level and request relief so that egress from the IDLH occurs prior to the activation of the low air alarm (use of reserve air supply begins).
- If a low air alarm activates in the IDLH environment, it calls for an immediate action item for the individual and team. This action shall be a radio transmission to Command specifying **WHO** you are, **WHERE** you are and **WHAT** your status is.
    a. Example: "Command from E 4, we're on the first floor in the Bravo – Charlie corner. A crew member's air status is 1100 and I am in sight of the door on the bravo wall and exiting."
- Command will confirm that the Rapid Intervention Team Leader has received the low air member's message of status, possible location and egress path.
- The Rapid Intervention Team will evaluate the need to reposition to confirm members exit.
- The RIT Leader will then track the low air members remaining time in the IDLH and notify Command if member has not exited within one minute of low air notification.
- Command will evaluate the need for an immediate RIT response.
- Crew will notify command and RIT immediately upon exit from building.
- Command will confirm this message with RIT.
- All members shall maintain a heightened awareness of low air and PASS alarm activation. A low air alarm activating without a notification to Command will produce a call to command from any crew or member in close proximity of the alarm, reporting a low air alarm activation and the possible location.
    a. Example: Command from E-5, we hear a low air alarm on the second floor in the Bravo-Charlie corner.
- The crew shall constantly monitor the member in low air alarm. In situations of low visibility and with crews of 3 or more members, the member in low air alarm should be moved to the second position from the front and remain in touch contact at all times.

The following conditions are considered automatic criteria for calling "Mayday":

a. Member in low air alarm and disoriented or unsure of location
b. SCBA failure
c. Trapped, entangled, or unable to free self within approximately 1 minute
d. Finding a firefighter in distress
e. At the discretion of Command

If a low air alarm activation occurs in the IDLH, the Incident Safety Officer shall investigate the situation and report his/her findings to the Chief Safety Officer for appropriate action.