

Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

Safety Officer

April 2000

201.04

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Purpose

It will be standard practice for the Salt River Fire Department to implement a "Safety Officer" at any multiple alarm incident, working fire, special operations rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, and first alarm or greater hazardous materials incidents. In addition, a Safety Officer should be implemented at any incident of special hazard presenting an unusual risk to firefighters, customers, or the general public.

This procedure in no way diminishes the responsibility of each and every member of the Salt River Fire Department to commit to safe work behaviors and to operate within standard operating procedures at all times. Company Officers carry an additional responsibility of ensuring that all members of their crew are operating in a safe manner. Chief Officers and Sector Officers must also insure that safe operations are conducted.

Command will be established by the first arriving member or company and the Incident Command System will be implemented at all working incidents involving three or more companies.

Command will be responsible for the early establishment of a Safety Officer at any incident requiring it.

Command should assign an Officer to Safety Officer duties on the above-cited situations when possible.

It will be the responsibility of Command to establish a strategy/action plan that includes a safety plan for the incident. This safety plan must be communicated to the Safety Officer and other sector officers.

Command may request the Safety Officer to develop and recommend an appropriate safety plan.

THE SAFETY OFFICER REPORTS DIRECTLY TO COMMAND AND HAS FULL AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE, SUSPEND OR ALTER ANY UNSAFE CONDITION OR ACTION.

The Safety Officer intervention on scene operations involves three approaches.

First is for life threatening situations, the second is for non-life threatening situations, and the third approach occurs in the on-going incident planning process.

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Any LIFE THREATENING conditions will be corrected immediately and directly. Where time permits, Command must be notified. Corrective action will be initiated by Command immediately. In obvious life threatening situations that do not allow time for Command's intervention, the Safety Officer shall immediately stop any action, or countermand any order, under these circumstances by DIRECT and IMMEDIATE intervention (i.e., order crews out of a building, countermand an order for crews to go to the roof etc.). Such action may be taken with the understanding that the Safety Officer works for Command and is accountable to command for actions taken. **COMMAND MUST BE IMMEDIATELY ADVISED OF ANY DIRECT INTERVENTION BY THE SAFETY OFFICER UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.** A change of strategy and/or tactics by Command or Sector Officers may be required as a result of the Safety Officer's actions. Sector Officers may have to be notified of hazards, required safety corrections, or updated on the strategic plan, tactics, and objectives.

“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” SHOULD BE USED FOR ANY CRITICAL EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS/ALERTS REQUIRED AT THE INCIDENT SCENE!

Command must be kept abreast of any and all corrections that affect overall site operations, or the strategic plan, via frequent and timely progress reports.

The second approach is for non-life threatening situations and involves a more "one on one" correction of safety problems with individual firefighters, company officers, and/or sector officers (i.e. require SCBA, correct ladder position) and often does not affect incident strategy. This approach is the most frequent type of interaction. Where corrective action does not affect Command's strategy, Command may not need to be notified. Corrected items should, however, be noted for discussion at a future critique of the incident.

The third approach occurs in the on-going incident planning process. Upon the implementation of the Safety Officer, Command must provide the Safety Sector an overview of the incident action plan and specific details of the safety plan. The Safety Officer, upon his/her arrival, will confirm that a safety plan is in effect, review it, and provide recommendations as needed. In some cases command may request that the Safety Officer develop a proposed safety plan and recommendations for command.

The Safety Officer must remain a part of the on-going planning process with command and/or the Planning Section.

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Safety Officer Responsibilities

1. Insuring that all crews and personnel are operating safely and consistently within existing safety standards.
2. Reviewing and insuring that Command has an effective safety plan as part of the incident's strategic plan.
3. Cause the termination, suspension, or alteration of any unsafe operations or actions. Operate as the safety eyes and ears of Command.
4. Observe all areas of the incident and identify any structural or hazardous conditions that could create a risk to firefighters or other personnel working at the incident and initiate corrective action.
5. Insure that all personnel are wearing proper protective clothing and equipment.
6. When assigned this function by Command, coordinate the use of Fire Protection Engineers, Building Department Officials, and other technical specialists, in the continual evaluation of incident risk and provide corrective measures as needed. These functions many times occur within the Planning Section.
7. Monitor the health and welfare of all personnel and insure that they are not over-extended, and are rehabilitated in an effective manner. Rehab Sector should be a component of the safety plan.
8. Provide Command frequent progress reports on safety related issues.
9. Maintain a liaison with Command and/or the Planning Section to update and revise the on-going incident safety plan.
10. Request additional resources through Command to support Safety Officer responsibilities.