Standby Rescue Teams / F.A.S.T.
A-021
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The Union Vale Fire Department often responds to incidents that present an unusually high risk to firefighter safety.

This procedure identifies the requirements for and operations of standby rescue teams during offensive interior fire operations and special hazard operations. The objective of standby rescue teams is to have fully equipped rescue teams on-site, in a ready state, to immediately react and respond to rescue injured or trapped firefighters or civilians.

This procedure shall be implemented at all fires using offensive interior firefighting and other incidents where fire department members are subject to hazards that would be immediately dangerous to life and/or health in the event of an equipment failure, sudden change of conditions, or mishap.

Examples of special hazard operations include, but are not limited to:
1. Hazardous Materials Incidents
2. Confined Space Rescue
3. Offensive Interior Fire Operations
4. Any other incident having significant risk

Command will assign a crew, plus an ambulance, for rescue standby duties at the incident. The type of crew and treatment capability (BLS, ALS, or helicopter) will depend on the hazards of the situation. The ambulance shall be in addition to any ambulances that are needed for transportation of injured civilians at the incident. Command will normally determine the standby location near the command post, at an entry point or other selected location. Crewmembers will assume a ready state, including full protective clothing and SCBA. For other types of incidents, the protective clothing and equipment will be appropriate for the hazards. The rescue team will closely monitor the radio at all times. The team must be able to react immediately to a sudden emergency event at the incident site.

The standby rescue team should be reserved for immediate life threatening situations, such as a firefighter lost, trapped, or injured, or other critical situations. The rescue team could also be assigned to a civilian rescue situation, if needed.

During the course of an incident, Command may elect to assign the rescue team to a tactical function, but shall immediately replace the team with another one, as long as the hazardous situation continues.

Command will assign "RESCUE SECTOR" to the rescue team.

Command may assign more than one team and ambulance for standby duties if necessary. For extremely hazardous rescues (i.e., confined space rescues) there shall be a minimum of two firefighter rescuers on standby for each firefighter involved in direct rescue efforts.

Command should assign the standby rescue team from firefighters at the scene whenever possible. In other situations, it may be necessary to call additional mutual aid companies for standby rescue team duties. Additional firefighters, including additional mutual aid, will be requested and sent to the rescue area as the emergency dictates.

This procedure is intended to increase the overall level of safety for fire department members operating at emergency incidents.