

REDWOOD DISPATCH COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY STANDARD OPERATING POLICY

INCIDENT AND CREW RELATED EMERGENCIES

Policy 26

Effective Date: March 19, 2026

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Green Denotes Changes

Approvals



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26.0 INCIDENT and CREW RELATED EMERGENCIES

26.1 Any field resource or personnel may declare an Emergency utilizing one of the following methods:

26.1.1 Verbal declaration over the radio.

- a. If possible, verbal declaration of an emergency is the preferred method over any emergency button activation.
- b. In accordance with Firescope Field Operations Guide, when personnel are faced with life threatening emergencies, they may call for help using a variety of terms that might include the use of “Mayday,” “Help”, “emergency traffic” or “Firefighter Down.”
- c. “Emergency traffic” is not the appropriate term to advise the dispatch center of a new incident. The term “PRIORITY TRAFFIC” is to be used for that purpose.
- d. Once Emergency Traffic has been verbally declared, all pertinent channels and incident frequencies including control, tactical and support channels, belong to the individual declaring the emergency.
- e. The individual shall then identify over the air the nature of the emergency such as “Firefighter down”, “Crew being threatened”, “Firefighter trapped” OR “Evacuate the building”.

Reference to MDC emergency buttons removed

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26.1.2 Portable radio emergency button activation.

- a. If a portable radio emergency button is activated a notification will be displayed on REDCOM's radio screen as well as all logged on CAD screens in REDCOM.
- b. For consistency portable radio identifiers will be programmed with the following format: The engine identifier followed by the user's position. e.g. 9381.1, 9381.2, 9381.3, 9381.4. 1=Captain, 2=Engineer, 3=Firefighter1 and 4=Firefighter2.

26.2 Procedure for emergency declaration (verbal or emergency button) while committed to an incident.

26.2.1 A distinctive three tone alert shall be transmitted by the CRO on all channels dedicated to the incident followed by the CRO transmitting the identification of the person or unit the is declaring the emergency or button activation and a repeat a description of the emergency such as "9383 has activated their portable emergency radio button", "8380 reporting Firefighter trapped",

26.2.2 In instances where an Incident Commander has been established, the IC shall acknowledge the person in trouble and use the term "Emergency Traffic" to clear radio channel of all other traffic. If the radio operator does not hear the IC acknowledge, they will immediately notify the IC of the unit identifier that activated their emergency button or that declared the emergency.

26.2.3 If the CRO does not have transmit capability on the tactical channel(s) being used on the incident, then the IC (if capable) shall transmit a tone and repeat the information on the tactical channel.

26.2.4 The IC will then initiate appropriate action, including such things as evacuation orders, implementation of a [Personnel Accountability Report \(PAR\)](#), rescue actions by RIC(s) and ordering backfill or upgrade of equipment.

26.3 Procedure verbal emergency declaration while not committed to an incident.

26.3.1 If a verbal declaration has been received the radio operator will transmit a distinctive three tone alert on their channel identifying the crew and the nature of the incident.

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26.3.2 The REDCOM Dispatcher will immediately dispatch the appropriate emergency response along with pertinent BC, DC or Supervisor.

26.4 Procedure for emergency button activation while not committed on an incident.

26.4.2 When the REDCOM dispatcher receives an emergency button activation, REDCOM and all CROs will first attempt to hail the crew member or unit to verify if an emergency exists by stating the unit's identifier followed by, "MDC status check" or "Radio activation status check".

- a. If the emergency is valid, an appropriate emergency response will be immediately dispatched.
- b. If no response is received it will be treated as an active emergency.
- c. If there is no emergency the crew should reply with "MDC error", "Radio activation error" or "code 4".

Reference to MDC emergency buttons removed