

Chester County Fire Chiefs Association  
Rapid Intervention Team Response Guideline:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Guideline is to establish the minimum criteria for Chester County Fire Companies operating as a firefighter rescue team. This guideline will:

1. Provide a definition of a firefighter rescue team.
2. Establish multiple options for the dispatch of a firefighter rescue team and activation recommendations.
3. Establish a minimum amount of required training.
4. The minimum amount of required equipment to be carried.
5. Minimum response staffing levels.
6. Types of apparatus to be used.
7. Recommended fireground operations.
8. A minimum basis to implement a more definitive operational procedure.

1. Definitions

- a. Firefighter rescue team: A dedicated group of firefighters tasked with the sole responsibility rapidly assisting any distressed fireground personnel. This team may be identified using any of the following, but not limited to; Rapid Intervention Team, On-Deck manpower pool, Firefighter Assist Team, Rapid Intervention Crew. For the purpose of this guideline, a firefighter rescue team will here on be referred to as RIT.
- b. RIT Apparatus: The piece of apparatus designated by the fire company as the primary response vehicle for a RIT assignment.
- c. RIT Company: An individual fire company either dispatched or designated as Rapid Intervention Team.
- d. RIT officer: The line officer or senior firefighter designated to lead the RIT when dispatched and activated for service.

## 2. Alerting the RIT.

- a. The RIT can be activated through the following;
  - i. Automatic aid on the initial dispatch.
  - ii. Working Fire Dispatch.
  - iii. Special Called by the incident commander
  - iv. Box Alarm assignment (i.e. assignment upgraded to a second alarm, the RIT would be added)
- b. In the event that a fire company does not intend to utilize any of the above options, the Chester County Fireboard will prompt the highest ranking officer of the specified district upon confirmation of a working alarm and ask if he/she would like RIT added.

(RIT should be in within the first alarm assignment and within the first few arriving units.)

## 3. Minimum levels of training.

- a. The minimum recommended levels of training should be in place for all RIT members. The minimum recommended classes are:
  - i. National Fire I (or equivalent training and years of service)
  - ii. PA State Rapid Intervention Teams (3hrs)
  - iii. PA Firefighter Survival (16hrs)
  - iv. Chester County Rapid Intervention Teams, Operations (16hrs)
- b. Additional training should be conducted for specific operations, such as,
  - i. Large area search
  - ii. Chester County RIT Officer
  - iii. Monthly in-house training
  - iv. SCBA air management
- c. Fire Companies responding as a RIT should recertify annually with in-house training from a specific curriculum.

#### 4. RIT Equipment:

- a. The RIT should have the minimum amount of equipment staged in the front of the building, but out of the collapse zone.
- b. The RIT equipment should be designated by some sort of orange marking and only used by the RIT.
- c. The following is the minimum recommended equipment that should be in staging
  - i. Thermal Imaging Camera
  - ii. Hand Lights for each member
  - iii. Portable radio for each member
  - iv. Forcible Entry Tools
  - v. 1 married set of irons
  - vi. One search rope bag – 150ft
  - vii. Two work rope bags
  - viii. RIT escape pack or a complete spare SCBA
    1. Take note that with each individual fire company on-scene, many different types of SCBA may be needed.
  - ix. 6ft roof hook
  - x. Ventilation saw
  - xi. Roof ladder
  - xii. Extension ladder

#### 5. Minimum Staffing Levels

- a. The primary RIT apparatus should be staffed with a minimum of 5 qualified firefighters.
  - i. If the driver meets the requirements and is capable of participating as a RIT member, he/she could be counted as the minimum of 5.
- b. Additional members from the RIT Company may respond in another piece of apparatus, but the initial apparatus should not respond unless they meet the minimum level.

#### 6. Types of Apparatus

- a. The primary RIT apparatus should be capable of carrying the minimum required equipment and staffing level.
- b. The primary RIT apparatus should conform to all Chester County Apparatus specifications.
- c. The following types of apparatus could be used as a primary RIT apparatus:

- i. Class A Engine
- ii. Rescue-Engine
- iii. Heavy Rescue
- iv. Quint
- v. Straight Ladder
- vi. Tower Ladder
- vii. Ladder Tower
- viii. Pumper-Tanker
- ix. Tele-Squrt

## 7. Recommended Fireground Operations

- a. The RIT should be in constant communication with the Incident Commander.
- b. The RIT officer is the liaison between the IC and the RIT members.
- c. The RIT should be activated upon a Mayday radio transmission, a visual observation of a distressed firefighter, or an order by the Incident Commander.
- d. The RIT, IC, and distressed firefighter(s) should remain on the initial fireground frequency.
- e. In the event of a mayday, all firefighting activities must continue.
- f. If fire company A has an agreement with fire company B to provide RIT, but the RIT will take a long period of time to establish, a RIT should be established within the initial assignment until the designated RIT arrives.
- g. If a RIT is activated, the incident commander should have numerous additional resources dispatched to the scene.

## 8. Additional policies.

- a. The guideline only serves as a start point. It was not intended to be the primary operating guideline for a RIT response.
- b. Any fire company that is responding as a RIT should have a more definitive operating policy in place.
- c. Any guideline, procedure, or policy that governs a RIT response should be thoroughly explained to all fire company members.

- d. If at all possible, the RIT Company should attempt to obtain a written agreement for those fire companies it will serve as a RIT.