

**Montgomery County Fire Chiefs' Association
Standard Operating Guidelines – Accountability Systems**

I. PURPOSE:

- A. This guideline identifies a system of incident site firefighter accountability that is standardized across Montgomery County.
- B. To account for all firefighters, at any time within the most dangerous area of an incident.
- C. Use of a Personal Accountability System will provide enhanced personal safety for the individual firefighter and will provide the incident command organization staff an improved means to track and account for all personnel and their location within the incident perimeter that is hazardous and where entry is strictly controlled. This would include entering a structure that is on fire, operating in close proximity to the structure during exterior operations, confined space or trench rescue, chemical leak, or other high risk operations occurring in an area that is off limits to non-authorized personnel.
To meet the goals of the NFPA 1561, the department shall implement the Personnel Accountability System at all incidents as described in Section 1C above.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the duty of all personnel to understand his/her role in the P.A.S., to work within the safety system, to keep their supervisors informed of their activities and whereabouts, to refrain from freelancing and if functioning as a unit officer, to be constantly aware of the status of fellow crew members.
- B. Each fire company will issue two personnel tracking tags to members of their company. One tag shall be fixed to a collector's ring or "First Due Collection Board" on the apparatus prior to leaving the station.
- C. All first-out resources will carry a First Due Collection Board or ring. All command resources will carry a Collection Board and blank ID tags for use as needed.
- D. All firefighters and officers will familiarize themselves with this guideline and ensure their compliance in order to ensure safety of all members.
- E. Individuals arriving via personal vehicles shall report to the Command Post and have their ID tag affixed to the unit, company or area to which they are assigned.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. Level I Accountability:** Will be established on all fire company responses where the unit goes into service. The Incident Commander is charged with tracking units operating on the fireground as well as their specific location. The unit officer is responsible for the accountability for each member of the crew and will keep I.C. apprised of the unit's and location within the structure. One accountability tag will be placed on the apparatus clip board during Level I accountability.
- B. Level II Accountability:** The I.C. will activate Level II accountability when the incident expands in scope or the span of control exceeds that which is recommended by the Incident Command System. The I.C. will designate an Accountability Officer who will immediately start to track operating units on scene, their function, the exact location where they are operating and their time of deployment. The Accountability Officer may need additional personnel to serve in support functions. This may include tracking individual units in operations as well as staging, base, R&R and those released from the fireground. If members are deployed from manpower pools, the Accountability Officer or his/her designee will organize the members as a unit, assign them a radio designation to be used strictly on the operating fireground frequency (if needed) and track individual members through the unit supervisor to whom they have been assigned. At this point, the member's second tag will be used to track the individuals.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY EQUIPMENT:

- A.** The accountability equipment shall include: Two (2) ID tags.
- B.** Each apparatus shall have one (1) collection ring or "First Due Board" with apparatus/department ID tag affixed.
- C.** A status board should be available to the incident commander and to any key sector or accountability officer collecting tags.
- D.** Blank tags should be available for other agencies, e.g. Police, Public Works, EMS and firefighters arriving via personal vehicles (marked with grease pencil).

V. ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER & DIVISION SUPERVISOR:

- A.** Accountability Officers will be responsible to track and account for all personnel working in the assigned divisions/group exposure or danger area. Accountability officer will report to the Safety Officer.

- B.** Division/Group Supervisor will always maintain an accurate tracking and awareness of crews/individual firefighters assigned to them. This will require the Division/Group Supervisor to be in his/her assigned area and maintain close supervision of crew assigned.

VI. TERMINATING THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM:

- A.** Accountability will be maintained at least through a report of “fire or situation under control,” at which time a roll call (PAR) for all crews should be obtained.
- B.** Command will determine at that time, based on the situation and risk as to whether to continue with the accountability procedure.
- C.** If visibility is still impaired or a significant hazardous condition still exists, command may choose to extend the accountability system beyond “situation under control”.
- D.** Upon determination or release from the incident, the Supervisors or crew leaders will ensure that the tags are returned to the firefighters.