



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:
Section:
Original Date:
Revised Date:

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the use of a Safety Officer (SO) on every emergency scene. This policy will also define the responsibilities of the SO.

POLICY

The IC should appoint a Safety Officer at every significant emergency event. Complex incidents or those that cover a large geographic area may require the appointment of Assistant Safety Officers. All Russellville Fire Department emergency scenes shall follow the guidelines of this policy.

The officer must monitor and assess the safety hazards and unsafe conditions to develop measures for ensuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer has the authority to bypass the chain of command when it is necessary to correct unsafe acts immediately. The Safety Officer must be assigned as early in the incident as possible.

A Safety Officer should be appointed on the following types of incidents:

1. Commercial fires
2. Multiple alarm fires
3. Responder injury or member transported for treatment
4. Hazardous materials incidents
5. Technical rescue incidents
6. At the request of the Incident Commander

Function of the Safety Officer:

The following items should be considered regarding the appointment of the Safety Officer:

1. The Safety Officer reports directly to the Incident Commander and is integrated within the Incident Command System as a member of the Command Staff.
2. The Safety Officer reconns the incident to survey and identify existing or potential hazards and informs the Incident Commander of any findings.
3. The Safety Officer recommends to the IC any changes to the Incident Action Plan as a result of the ongoing surveys.
4. If the conditions, activities or operations do not conform to the fire department's risk management plan, the Safety Officer shall have the authority to alter, suspend, or terminate those activities.
5. If the conditions are identified that are unsafe but there is no presence of imminent danger, the Safety Officer should take appropriate action through the Incident Commander to mitigate or eliminate the unsafe conditions.
6. The Safety Officer should ensure the personnel accountability system is being utilized and an Incident Scene Rehab is established.
7. The Safety Officer should confirm with IC that a Rapid Intervention Crew/Company is available and ready for deployment.

Approved

Fire Chief

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Other responsibilities of the Safety Officer include:

1. Monitor condition of personnel for signs of exhaustion and effects of products of combustion or toxic materials.
2. Observe operations for proper observance of safety procedures and precautions by all personnel.
3. Assure proper use of protective clothing and equipment by all personnel in operating areas.
4. Observe general fireground for unsafe or hazardous conditions and interact with Officer to take adequate precautions.

Any safety hazards in the hazard area on the emergency scene shall be communicated to all personnel on the scene.

Scene traffic hazards and unsafe apparatus placement shall be evaluated and corrected if necessary.

Radio traffic should be monitored by the Safety Officer and communications mistakes affecting safety should be corrected.

Personnel assigned to function as Safety Officer, recognizing a safety problem, must take appropriate action to cause its correction. The ability of the Safety Officer to "roam" at an incident increases his effectiveness over that of Command who must remain in a stationary position.

The command structure must be used to appropriately respond to a safety problem. The Safety Officer will communicate with Command and with functioning officers to deal with identified safety concerns.

When the urgency of the situation demands it, the Safety Officer has full authority to cause immediate action by direct order to any personnel or officer. The normal chain of command is used during less urgent situations.

Operating personnel receiving safety instructions from a Safety Officer shall immediately take appropriate action. Failure to comply will be subject to subsequent review and disciplinary action.

Command should implement the Safety Officer's position when incident conditions or complexity would limit his ability to effectively handle both Command functions and Safety. If it is not delegated, Command retains the responsibility for the position.

A member, who assumes or is appointed to the role of Safety Officer, should have considerable knowledge, training and experience about incident scene operations. The SO should be able to discern building conditions that indicate a safety hazard to firefighters.

Approved

Fire Chief

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