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Snapshot Size-Up #122



Calling a May-Day

On the fire ground, when a firefighter is in need of immediate help, he/she should call a MAY-DAY. Examples of immediate danger include running dangerously low on air, or becoming lost, trapped and/or seriously injured. Fire Departments should establish May-Day Guidelines and train all personnel on how to call for help. Below is a summary of the procedure featured in our book *Operational Guides for Fire Service Professionals*.

Sample MAY-DAY Radio Procedure for FF's in immediate danger:

1. Activate the EIB (*Emergency Identifier Button*) on your portable radio.
2. Provide as much useful information as possible in the shortest amount of time using the acronym **M3/W3**:

M - **MAY-DAY** (to be announced three times)

Who - Identify your radio designation - (Ladder 1 Alpha, Engine 2 Bravo, etc.)

What - Give your situation - (lost, trapped, injured, etc.)

Where - Give your location - floor, side, other (1st floor, Side C, etc.)

Ex: "MAYDAY-MAYDAY-MAYDAY from Ladder 1 Alpha, I'm caught up in wires. I'm on Div. 1, Side C"

The firefighter transmitting the MAY-DAY must pause after each message and then repeat the message until it is acknowledged by the Incident Commander. The FD Dispatcher must relay any MAY-DAY messages that are not immediately acknowledged by the IC. Distressed members should activate their PASS device in between each message & after acknowledgement. If the PASS remains activated during the transmission of the MAY-DAY, it will cause significant background noise making the message unreadable.

MAY-DAY transmissions take priority over all other transmissions. NO exceptions!

For additional tips, including the IC's role in managing MAY-DAY's, refer to the book *Fireground Operational Guides*



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