

SANTA CLARA COUNTY LOCAL FIRE SERVICE AND MUTUAL AID PLAN

APPENDIX 14A – FIREFIGHTER LIFE HAZARDS AND IDENTIFICATION OF LIFE HAZARD CONTROL ZONES

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Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to maximize safety of firefighting personnel while operating at the scene of an emergency, and provide a means for the identification and notification of Life Hazards, and required isolation measures. The approved method shall include the use of a minimum of three (3) horizontal strands of red and white barrier striped or chevron tape that states **“Do Not Enter”**, 3” optimum and 1” minimum width, securely fixed to stationary supports, and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard.

Definitions

- A. **Life Hazard:** The existence of a process or condition(s) that would likely cause serious injury or death to exposed persons.
- B. **Life Hazard Control Zones:** A system of barriers surrounding designated areas at the emergency incident scene that are intended to **STOP** people from entering a potentially *Life Threatening, or Hazardous Area*.
- C. **Life Hazard Lookout:** A qualified person in a location where they can safely observe a Life Hazard, watch resources in the area, and communicate with resources, keeping them a safe distance away. With Life Hazard Control Zones, the lookout will also isolate and deny entry.

Information and Guidelines

This guideline applies to all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency.

- A. Conditions found on the emergency scene requiring isolation in a Life Hazard Control Zone may involve, but are not limited to:
 - Downed power lines
 - Energized electrical equipment
 - Collapse zones
 - Large unprotected holes (swimming pools, trenches, etc.)
 - Ruptured gas line
 - Ammunition
 - Hazardous Materials
- B. Whenever a person first recognizes a life hazard is present and an immediate threat at an incident, he/she shall immediately contact the Incident Commander (IC) using the phrase **“EMERGENCY TRAFFIC/LIFE HAZARD ALERT”** to advise them of the situation. The following items shall be included in the alert:
 - Type/Nature
 - Specific location

- Resource needs
- Actions taken

Identification of Life Hazards

Procedure The following procedure shall be initiated for each life hazard identified on an incident to ensure all personnel are made aware and acknowledge receipt of the information.

- Upon notification of a known or suspected life safety hazard, the Incident Commander shall request an alert tone¹ from communications to transmit the location, nature, extent of the hazard, and identify the **Life Hazard Control Zone**.
- Communications shall transmit an alert tone and broadcast the message on all radio channels being used on the incident and incident travel frequencies².
- Communications shall perform a roll call of units assigned to the incident. Each unit shall acknowledge the hazard by repeating the message back. The IC or Operations shall conduct the roll call if Communications is unable to do so. Note must be made of any units **not** acknowledging the message.
- It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to ensure **ALL** on scene resources acknowledge the receipt of the message.
- Communications is responsible for all other incident resources (on scene or yet to arrive) and shall notify the IC when these units have **ALL** received the notification.
- Communications will include the Life Hazard information on all subsequent dispatch notifications to additional resources.

Life Hazard Control Zones

- The person that first recognizes that a life hazard is present and an immediate threat shall establish a **Life Hazard Control Zone**. He/She is responsible to isolate and deny entry until a Life Hazard Lookout has been assigned. Sufficient resources shall be requested and assigned through the Incident Commander.
- Establishing a Life Hazard Control Zone
 - RED AND WHITE BARRIER TAPE SHALL ONLY BE USED FOR LIFE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION.**
 - Deploy red and white striped or chevron barrier tape that states "**Do Not Enter**", in three horizontal strands approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fix to stationary supports to establish the LIFE HAZARD ZONE.

¹ Not all agencies use the same alert tone at this time or the ability to transmit it on all tactical channels.

² Not all agencies have the capability to transmit on various tactical channel

3. The establishment of the Life Hazard Control Zone shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation and distance from the hazard.
 4. Supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.
- C. The use of illumination to further identify the Life Hazard Control Zone (i.e., orange cones with each cone having a flashing strobe light on the ground, or glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape) is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility.
 - D. Maintain the Life Hazard Control Zone throughout the duration of the incident unless the Life Hazard is abated. Removal of the Life Hazard Control Zone shall be by approval of the Incident Commander ONLY.
 - E. The Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures are intended to provide a visual cue to all persons. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall provide the physical barrier between personnel and the Life Hazard Control Zone through effective communication and notification.

Life Hazard Lookouts

- A. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall report to the Incident Safety Officer.
- B. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall not be used for, or engaged in, any other fireground activities. Personnel who assume this function should have sufficient training and authority to carry out the duties as outlined. Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall be exclusively responsible for the following responsibilities:
 - Provide verbal notification to approaching personnel.
 - Isolate and deny entry to all personnel.
 - Request additional resources, as needed, through the Incident Safety Officer.
 - Notify the Incident Safety Officer of any changes in the hazard or Life Hazard Control Zone and make recommendations to mitigate changes.
 - Maintain Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures (i.e. barrier tape, supports, additional lighting, etc.).
 - Allow entry into the area only with the approval of the Incident Commander.

Safety considerations related to Life Hazard Control Zones

- Personnel shall not breach, alter, or remove Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures until the hazard has been abated and at the direction of the Incident Commander. When the Life Hazard Control Zone is no longer needed, the IC will have the identification measures removed.

- Personnel on scene have a personal responsibility to be aware of Life Hazard Control Zones as well as the safety of others.
- Consider appointing an Assistant Safety Officer to oversee the Life Hazard Control Zone and reassign the Life Hazard Lookout to the Safety Officer.
- Yellow and Black “Caution” or “Fire Line Do Not Cross” tape shall then be used to establish a “Public Exclusion Zone” at a reasonable distance to prevent public contact with the hazard and any other emergency operations.
- Remember the slogan: **THREE STRIPES, YOU’RE OUT!**