

¹**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

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- 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.

- A. 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**.
- B. Communications shall transmit an alert tone and broadcast the message on all radio channels being used on the incident and incident travel frequencies².
- C. 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.
- D. It is the Incident Commander’s responsibility to ensure **ALL** on scene resources acknowledge the receipt of the message.
- E. 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.
- F. Communications will include the Life Hazard information on all subsequent dispatch notifications to additional resources.

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

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

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Life Hazard Control Zones

- A. 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.

- B. Establishing a Life Hazard Control Zone
 - 1. **RED AND WHITE BARRIER TAPE SHALL ONLY BE USED FOR LIFE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION.**
 - 2. 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.
 - 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

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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.

Remote Locations

In cases where the extent of the hazard zone is so large that is not practical to completely isolate the area, such as on large incidents in remote locations, the following will be the minimum standard for these situations:

- The Incident Commander must approve the use of these minimum standards for each Life Hazard. The Incident Commander shall assign a life hazard lookout at appropriate access points to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed: Three horizontal stripes of red and white Life Hazard tape or barrier tape (as described above) will be affixed to two vertical uprights at appropriate locations along the access route to the Life Hazard area. A description of the

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hazard, location of the hazard, and distance from the Life Hazard indicator tape to the hazard shall be attached at each location.

- All Personnel working in the area or Division shall be notified of the Life Hazard immediately. Incident personnel may be notified through the routine briefings, emergency traffic radio messages, the Incident Action Plan and the Incident Map.
- The location(s) of the Life Hazard(s) and Placard(s) shall be marked on the Incident Map using standardized symbols. The symbol to mark the Life Hazard Zone on the Incident map is a red octagon (Stop Sign) with three white horizontal lines with a description of the hazard noted underneath.



The “NWCG Red Book” found at https://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_redbook.html recommends the following Safety Zone/Escape Route flagging for wildland fire activities:

- Hot-pink flagging marked “Escape Route” (NFES 0566). Crews with colorblind members may wish to carry and utilize fluorescent chartreuse flagging (NFES 2396).



- Yellow with black diagonal stripes, 1 inch wide (NFES 0267) for Hazards.



Personnel shall not breach, alter, or remove any LIFE HAZARD ZONE identification measures until the hazard has been abated and approval has been granted by the Incident Commander. All personnel have a personal responsibility to be aware of LIFE HAZARDS and make proper notifications when they are encountered at an incident.

Remember the slogan: **THREE STRIPES, YOU’RE OUT!**