



# HR/LF

## FFCC—Policy/SOG Program

**Operations**  
**Policy # 09-03**

**Safety—Emergency Evacuation**  
**Issued: 03/31/09**

**Subject:** Emergency Evacuation

**Purpose:** This policy identifies a standard system for the emergency evacuation of personnel at an emergency incident or training exercise. This policy is designed to meet the intent of the 2007 edition of NFPA 1500 and the 2005 edition of NFPA 1561.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all personnel of the Fire Department.

### **Policy:**

The Emergency Evacuation policy is intended for use in situations where a collapse, explosion or other event requires personnel to immediately leave an area. It is not intended for situations which would allow a further description of actions to be taken to alleviate the emergency.

When the order to retreat ("Evacuate the Building!") is broadcast, this shall be a notification that any personnel in the defined area are in imminent danger. Personnel shall react by safely yet immediately shutting down hoselines, discontinuing operations underway, etc., and leaving the area. **Failure to respond to this message may result in serious injuries or death.**

Because of the very nature of this procedure, it is imperative that the evacuation order be used with considerable caution and discretion. Inappropriate use of this message may result in unnecessary evacuations, delayed operations, potential injuries, and a reduction in the efficiency of operations.

In the event of any danger or change in tactics that requires the evacuation of personnel from a structure or to immediately notify all fireground personnel of a high risk hazard/event that is either about to occur or has occurred, the Incident Commander shall make an "**Emergency Traffic**" announcement. Examples of high risk hazards/events include:

- Loss of water supply to hoselines
- Sudden change in fire conditions (i.e. flashover or backdraft)
- Potential or actual building collapse

The IC will then transmit the critical information to all personnel operating on the incident.

### Example

"Emergency Traffic"  
All personnel at 123 Main, ***Evacuate the building***"

### **Repeat**

"All personnel operating at 123 Main, ***Evacuate the building.***"

In addition to the radio announcement, the Incident Commander shall direct one of the apparatus at the scene to sound the **Evacuation Signal**. The **Evacuation Signal** consists of five (5) repeated short blasts of the air horn. This cycle will be repeated if necessary. The apparatus selected to conduct the air horn signal should not be in close proximity to the Command Post, if possible, thus reducing the chance of interfering with radio communications.

A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) shall be initiated as soon as possible after the evacuation is initiated. At the conclusion of the PAR, and with all personnel accounted for, the Incident Commander shall transmit an "ALL CLEAR" and resume normal radio traffic. **Any PAR that is not complete shall be handled in accordance with Policy # \_\_\_\_\_, *Lost/Trapped Firefighters*.**

Crew procedures when ordered to evacuate:

- On receipt of the message, all personnel shall react immediately by closing nozzles, assemble their company and immediately leaving the building to a safe area where the company officer will again account for all company members.
- Personnel shall ensure that others in their immediate area are aware of the evacuation order.
- Officers shall keep their companies together and proceed to their assigned apparatus or other designated location.

Building evacuation generally involves a shift from offensive to defensive as an operational strategy. In such cases, Command must modify the Incident Action Plan and communicate this change to all sectors and companies. **It is extremely important and essential that the Incident Commander receives confirmation that all operating companies are aware that a shift in strategy has been made.**

Companies retreating from interior operations often require hose line protection. The personal protection afforded to firefighting personnel in such situations represents a major function of back-up lines.

**References:**

- NFPA 1500, *Fire Department Occupational Safety & Health Program*, 2007 edition, sections 8.2, 8.4
- NFPA 1561, *Emergency Services Incident Management System*, 2005, section 6.3

**Resources *(click title to access resource)*:**

- National Near Miss Reporting System—Special Report—"Emergency Evacuation"