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MANUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM:
Policy and Standard Operating Procedures

WHITE PAPER

SALAMANDER TECHNOLOGIES



PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM POLICY

POLICY

To ensure personnel and unit safety, it is the policy of the department that all personnel and units will be accounted for at the scene of an emergency incident. The personnel accountability system is intended to meet the requirements of NFPA 1561 and will be operational on all fire/rescue incidents and training exercises. The primary objective of the system is to assist supervisors in maintaining a constant awareness of the status, location, and functions of the personnel and/or units under their command. It is the responsibility of each member of the department to read and fully understand the policy and procedures for personnel accountability.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

-- PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY --

The accountability system is a conventional dog tag collection system. Personnel are equipped with two (2) ID tags. During a response, all personnel will check-in with their unit supervisors and attach one of their ID tags to a Collector mounted in the apparatus to document **Single Resource Accountability**. An Incident Commander (IC) will assume supervisory responsibility for all responding resources, including their deployment and functions, to achieve **Scene Accountability**. Depending on the complexity of the incident, the IC may gather all Collectors and attach them to a Collection Board to act as a visual representation of all resources on-scene.

If the incident involves tactical operations and/or a hazardous zone, the IC will assign an Entry Control Officer to collect the 2nd set of ID tags from personnel entering the zone. The IC will assign an Accountability Officer to manage the Collection Board, conduct periodic PAR checks, and post resource and command assignments on a Command Board to document full **Functional Accountability**. If a person is lost or missing, a **rapid intervention crew** will be dispatched for search and rescue. If the structure, fire conditions, or other hazards become too dangerous for tactical operations to continue, command officers shall initiate an **emergency evacuation**.

The IC shall be responsible for **site security** and the overall safety of non-departmental personnel at site. The IC shall maintain incident and hazardous zone perimeters as required. All mutual aid, on-site visitors, and civilians must check-in at the Command Post for inspection of credentials and permission to remain on-site or provide emergency services. All personnel permitted on-site will be properly tagged and accounted for per the Accountability SOPs.



PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to define the personnel accountability system and provide standard operating procedures for implementing the system.

DEFINITIONS

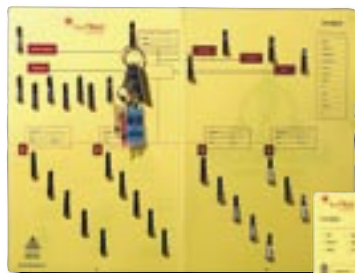
SYSTEM COMPONENTS

(Note: For illustration purposes, the component samples are of a specific commercial brand. The department should substitute the system components they purchased or made, as required. The functions of the components should be essentially the same.)



-- ID Tag --

2.5" by 4.25" laminated plastic tag displaying, at a minimum, the department name and logo, and the individual's name, rank, serial #, and qualifications/certifications. Emergency medical and contact information will be provided on the folded inside of the tag for privacy purposes. As an option, the tag may contain a photo, PDF417 bar codes, and/or a RFID tag encoded with the individual's ID and medical information. The tag is part of an assembly consisting of: paper tag stock, plastic laminate, nylon tie, ring, and snap. Personnel will be issued two (2) complete tag assemblies. The snap will be used to attach the tag assemblies to the individual's helmet.



-- Collector --

2.25" diameter ring attached to a 1" x 4" hard plastic tag with the unit designation (type and number) engraved on it. The Collector will hang on a spring-clip that is mounted inside the cab of all fire and rescue apparatus. Personnel attach their ID tag to the Collector during a response to document **Single Resource Accountability**.



-- Collection Board --

36" x 28" foldable plastic board with spring-clips mounted over color-coded board sections that define the type of unit. Unit Collectors are attached to a spring-clip over the appropriate section to document **Scene Accountability**. A smaller (13" x 16") First Due Board can be used by first responding units prior to the establishment of a Command Post.



-- Command Board --

12" x 14" sheet that is used to record command assignments, resource assignments, PAR checks, and to diagram resource deployments to document **Functional Accountability**. Alternately, an oversized sheet enclosed in Plexiglas may be re-used with grease-pen or markers. This oversized board may be mounted on a command table and tripod for greater visibility.





COMMAND STRUCTURE

Incident Command Post (ICP) -- The facility, vehicle, or field position where the command functions are performed.

Division/Group -- Established by the IC to divide the incident management structure into Geographic areas (Divisions) and Functional areas (Groups).

Incident Commander (IC) -- The senior or designated officer in charge of an incident, with overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations.

Safety Officer -- A member of the Command Staff responsible for the overall safety of responding units. The Safety Officer has the authority to designate Hazardous Zones and declare an Emergency Evacuation.

Accountability Officer -- Person designated by the Incident Commander to manage the personnel accountability system during an incident. He/she may gather Collectors and manage the Collection Board and Command Board.

Entry Control Officer -- Person designated by the Incident Commander to closely monitor all personnel entering a Hazardous Zone or other entry-controlled zones. The Entry Control Officer shall collect the 2nd set of ID tags from personnel to document their assignment to the hot zone.

Rapid Intervention Crew -- A Unit of Fire/Rescue personnel with two-way radio, full protective clothing, SCBA's and pass devices, staged at the Command Post ready to respond with emergency intervention to a unit or units that are in need of rescue. They may respond to locate a unit that has not responded to a personnel accountability report (PAR).



ACCOUNTABILITY LEVELS AND ACTIONS

Personal Responsibility -- The duty of all personnel is to understand his/her role in the accountability system including the use of ID tags, the requirement to remain under supervision, the prohibition against freelancing, and the need to be constantly aware of the status of fellow crew members.

Single Resource Accountability -- A state of awareness whereby the status, locations, and functions of all resources are monitored by the manager and other command officers on-scene. Single Resource accountability should be documented by attaching ID tags to Collectors.

Scene Accountability -- A state of awareness whereby the status, locations, and functions of all resources are monitored by the Incident Commander and other command officers on-scene. Scene accountability should be documented by attaching Collectors to a Collection Board.

Functional Accountability -- Enhanced scene accountability whereby an IC and/or an Accountability Officer formally track the status, locations, and functions of all resources. Functional accountability should be documented by recording assignments, tactical deployments, and PAR checks on a Command Board. Functional accountability is required for larger and more complex incidents involving tactical operations or a hazardous zone.

Check-in -- A positive acknowledgement to a supervising authority that a person or other resource has arrived at the incident.

PAR -- A Personnel Accountability Report that is conducted on a periodic basis (typically every 20 minutes) where each manager is contacted to positively affirm the resource's location/assignment and the number of personnel attached to the resource.

Rapid Intervention -- Occurs when the Rapid Intervention Crew is deployed to rescue a missing unit.

Emergency Evacuation -- Occurs when the Evacuation Alert is sounded and all units leave the Hazard Zone.



SITE SECURITY AND CONTROL

Site Credentials -- An official ID tag, card, or license that proves the individual is qualified to be on-site and/or perform certain functions.

Mutual Aid -- Neighboring fire departments, response agencies, or jurisdictions that have a formal agreement to assist one another on request.

Site Visitor -- A qualified emergency responder that is neither from the primary department or mutual aid. Upon validation of credentials, the IC may attach the site visitor to his/her command.

Freelancer -- An emergency responder that is operating independent of supervision.

Civilians -- Non-emergency services personnel that respond to the incident.

Incident Perimeter -- The area surrounding the site or incident that is off-limits to nonauthorized personnel.

Hot Zone or Hazardous Zone -- The area within the incident perimeter that is dangerous and where entry is strictly controlled.

Warm Zone -- The area within the incident perimeter, but outside the hot zone, where operations are conducted and apparatus are staged.

Cold Zone -- The area outside the incident perimeter where there is no danger to civilians and where civilians will not interfere with operations.

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTING – The 5 Ws

Who -- Who (or what) is the resource? **This could be a responder or equipment.** Identifies the responder by including name, rank, serial number, department, and qualifications/certifications.

Why -- Why is the person on scene? Identifies the person is a qualified responder (departmental, mutual aid, or visitor) with official **credentials**.

What -- What is the resource doing? Identifies the tasks, assignments, and functions of the resources.

Where -- Where is the resource located?

When -- When did the person or unit arrive on scene, last check-in (PAR), become reassigned, or demobilized?



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

PREPARATION

- a. All personnel will be issued two (2) ID tags to be attached to their helmets.
- b. All apparatus will be issued a Collector to be mounted in a convenient and visible location inside the cab. All apparatus will carry a set of blank ID tags.
- c. All first resources will carry a First Due Collection Board.
- d. All command resources will carry a Collection Board and Command Board and a set of blank ID tags for use by mutual aid or site visitors.
- e. All mutual aid departments shall have compatible accountability equipment, including ID tags and Collectors.

UNIT ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. During an alarm or response, all unit personnel will check-in with the manager to which they are assigned and attach their 1st ID tag to the Collector in the cab of the apparatus.
- b. The manager shall maintain constant awareness of the status, location, and functions of his crew throughout the duration of the response.
- c. Any department member who responds to the scene without a set of ID tags will create temporary tags using the blanks provided in the apparatus or the Command Post. The tag should be marked with the members name and rank.
- d. Any department member who responds directly to the scene in his/her own vehicle must first check-in at the Command Post for assignment. The IC may assign the individual to an apparatus as evidenced when the individual checks in with that manager and attaches his/her ID tag to the Collector. If the manager is not in proximity to the Command Post, the IC shall confirm this assignment using radio communications.
- e. When a crew enters a hazardous zone as a unit, they will also exit together as a Crew.
- f. ***Freelancing is strictly prohibited.*** All on-scene personnel must be under supervision at all times.



SCENE ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. The IC shall maintain constant awareness of the status, location, and functions of each resource throughout the duration of the response.
- b. Upon arrival on-scene, each resource shall check-in with the IC (via radio or in person) to receive its assignment.
- c. If the incident escalates to a 2nd Alarm, the IC will order all Collectors be gathered and posted on a Collection Board at the Command Post.
- d. To reassign an individual, the originating manager will release the individual to the new manager who will check-in the new individual by transferring his/her ID tag to the new Collector.
- e. The IC shall take note of responding resources, personnel counts, and on-scene/off-scene times to maintain on-scene awareness and to assist in documenting after-incident reports.

FUNCTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

If the incident involves tactical operations, a hazardous zone, or escalates to a complex or prolonged incident, the IC shall formalize scene accountability as provided below.

- a. The IC shall delegate command to Division or Group Supervisors (DSG) per incident procedures to optimize span of control and ensure accountability.
- b. The IC shall assign an Accountability Officer and deploy a Command Board at the Command Post to manage the accountability process.
- c. If there is a hazardous zone, the IC shall assign an Entry-Control Officer to collect the 2nd ID tag from personnel entering the hazardous zone. The ID tags will be returned to personnel upon leaving the hazardous zone.
- d. The Accountability Officer shall use the Command Board to note command assignments and resource deployments and to log PAR checks.
- e. The Accountability Officer will conduct a PAR check every 20 minutes from the initiation of tactical operations. Each resource shall be called and the manager will respond with a positive personnel count. If a Division or Group has been assigned, the Accountability Officer will contact the Division or Group Supervisor(s) for PARs. The Accountability Officer will compare the reported personnel count to the recorded personnel count on the Command Board or Collection Board and Collectors. Any discrepancies shall be immediately reconciled with the Division or Group Supervisor(s).

If the PAR check results in a lost or missing resource, the Accountability Officer will immediately notify the IC who will dispatch a rapid intervention crew to the last known location of the resource to begin search and rescue.



EMERGENCY EVACUATION

- a. When the IC, Safety Officer, or Accountability Officer has determined that the building, fire conditions, or other hazardous conditions are too dangerous for continued operations, he/she will declare an Emergency Evacuation.
- b. An Emergency Evacuation Alert will be sounded by a steady blast of the apparatus's air horns for at least 15 seconds. A Special Radio Alert Tone on the two-way radios followed by the statement, "Evacuate, Evacuate, Evacuate" can also be used to signal an evacuation.
- c. The alert advises resources to leave the Hazardous Zone immediately. The Entry-Control Officer shall ensure that all personnel have left the Hazardous Zone.
- d. After evacuation is complete, the Accountability Officer shall immediately conduct a PAR.
- e. While in Defensive Operations, the resources will be staged outside the Hazardous Zone perimeter and will remain intact at all times to ensure unit accountability and safety.

MUTUAL AID AND SITE SECURITY

- a. The IC shall be responsible for the safety and deployment of all resources responding to the site including mutual aid, on-site visitors, and civilians.
- b. Upon arrival at site, mutual aid resources shall first check-in at the Command Post for assignment and will be subject to the SOPs for accountability including the posting of Collectors on the Collection Board and recording command and unit resources assignments and PAR checks on the Command Board.
- c. Any site visitor who independently responds to the incident must first check-in at the Command Post to receive permission to remain at the site. Upon validating credentials, the IC may, at his/her discretion, issue a temporary ID tag and assign the individual to a unit.
- d. The IC shall designate and enforce a perimeter around the incident as well as a perimeter around the Hot Zone, if applicable.
- e. Only authorized personnel will be allowed within the incident perimeter.
- f. Entry into the Hot Zone shall be restricted to authorized resources with fully qualified and equipped personnel under the supervision of the Division or Group Supervisor and Entry Control Officer.
- g. Any civilian authority (e.g., government official, utility worker, reporter, doctor) requesting access to the Warm Zone must first check-in at the Command Post to receive permission to remain at the site. Upon validating credentials, the IC may, at his/her discretion, issue a temporary ID tag, "attach" the visitor to command, issue appropriate protective gear, and assign the visitor to an escort.



DEMOBILIZATION

- a. As resources are released from the incident, the Division or Group Supervisor will retrieve the Collector from the Collection Board and return it to the apparatus along with his/her intact assigned personnel. ID tags will be returned to personnel either at the station or in the field to volunteers who arrived in their own vehicles.
- b. The Accountability Officer will make sure that all Collectors are retrieved and that all resources have been demobilized. The Accountability Officer will note the resource release time on the Command Board.
- c. As resources are released, the IC will notify central dispatch that resources are available.
- d. The IC and/or Accountability Officer will collect all notes, command sheets, logs, etc., to be used in combination with central dispatch logs to complete after-incident reports. Copies of reports and all supporting documents will be filed together in an incident archive.

Appendix A - SOPs

The following section provides Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for a conventional dog tag collection system as well as an addendum for automating the system with the use of machine-readable media. A System Operating Guide (SOG) follows. The department should feel free to adopt the SOPs "as is," or modify them to meet their specific accountability needs and system requirements. *

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SYSTEM OPERATION GUIDE (SOG)

The following can be used as a quick reference guide for the accountability system SOPs. This can be copied, modified, shrunk, or packaged as desired.

ACCOUNTABILITY SOG

- **Personal Accountability** -- Responders carry two (2) ID tags.
- **Single Resource Accountability** -- Attach ID tags to Collector in apparatus.
- **Scene Accountability** -- Attach Collectors to Collection Board.
- **Functional Accountability** -- Control and Document Accountability.
 - a. Appoint Accountability Officer
 - b. Deploy Command Board
 - c. Control Entry to Hazardous Zone – Collect 2nd ID Tag
 - d. Conduct PAR's every 20 minutes – resource count
- **Rapid Intervention Crew** -- Deploy for search and rescue of lost resource.
- **Emergency Evacuation Alert** -- When Hot Zone is too dangerous (sound air horn/radio alert).
- **Perimeters** -- IC will designate and maintain incident and hot zone perimeters.
- **Mutual Aid** -- Must check-in at Command Post and follow SOPs.
- **Site Visitors** -- Must check-in at Command Post and present credentials.
- **Civilians** -- Must stay-out of incident perimeter unless authorized and escorted.
- **Demobilization** -- Release resources, clear all boards, collect documents/logs.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Manager** -- Constant awareness of status, location, and functions of personnel.
- **IC** -- Constant awareness of the status, location, and functions of resources.
- **Accountability Officer** -- Manages Command Board and PAR Checks.
- **Entry-Control Officer** -- Controls entry to hot zone and collects 2nd ID tag.

