

SOUTH PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

SOG #:	6.305	Effective Date:	7/22/2005
Title:	Safety Officer	# of pages:	7
Category:	Safety	Classification:	Red

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this guideline is to assist in ensuring that Safety Officer responsibilities are assigned in order to provide a minimum level of safety during all operations.
2. **PROCEDURES:** This guideline shall apply to all emergency scene operations and training sessions which involve manipulative skills. This guideline does not relieve Officers for the responsibility of the safety of their crews, nor does it relieve other members for their own individual responsibility for personal safety.

Assignment

1. During all emergency calls of a single alarm or less and all training sessions, the Incident Commander and/or person in charge shall assume responsibility of all safety officer functions. In the event that due to the nature and/or complexity of the situations that it is deemed necessary to delegate these safety functions, the Incident Commander and/or person in charge reserves the right to so delegate.
2. In the event of a multiple alarm incident, the first full-time fire officer reporting back to call back on the second alarm shall automatically assume the responsibilities of safety officer upon reporting to the Incident Commander. In the event that the Incident Commander deems it more beneficial to the outcome of the operation to utilize this officer elsewhere, he/she may assign the safety officer function to another officer, senior firefighter, and/or mutual aid fire officer. In any event, the safety officer function shall be assigned as a separate responsibility at all multiple alarm incidents.

Responsibility & Functions

1. The Safety Officer shall report directly to the incident commander and shall not be assigned any other function.
2. The Safety Officer shall be responsible to ensure that safety regulations are being followed and that adequate rehabilitation of personnel is being provided for.
3. The Safety Officer shall be responsible for observing all operations at emergency incidents and if required at training sessions. This responsibility is not a stationary position. The Safety Officer must be mobile and be visibly identified in order to keep abreast of all operations.
4. If due to the size, hazard and/or complexity of the incident that the safety officer deems this responsibility to be overwhelming, he/she shall request that the Incident Commander assign additional assistance safety officers to assist in this function. In this event the safety function shall become a separate sector under the supervision of the Safety Officer.

5. At an emergency or training incident where a Safety Officer identifies unsafe conditions, operations or hazards that **do not present an imminent danger**, the Safety Officer shall take appropriate action and in cooperation with the Incident Commander to mitigate or eliminate the unsafe condition, operation or hazard.
6. At an emergency or training incident where a Safety Officer identifies unsafe activities which involve and **imminent hazard which may affect the immediate health, safety and welfare of personnel** if not corrected immediately, shall have the authority to alter, suspend or terminate those activities until said corrections are complied with. The Safety Officer shall immediately inform the incident commander of the situation and any corrections taken to eliminate the imminent hazard.
7. Upon termination of the incident, the safety officer shall provide the Incident Commander with a listing of any safety hazards noted and those actions taken to mitigate those hazards, prior to being relieved of duty from the incident.

Safety Officer

1. Obtain a briefing from the Incident Commander.
2. Wear all protective clothing and command identification if it is used in your department.
3. Watch for safety problems/hazards with the incident scene, operations and personnel.
4. Identify unsafe conditions associated with the incident and develop measures to ensure personnel safety. Especially watch for the effects of the weather. If any problems or hazards are noted, advise the Incident Commander.
5. Before leaving the scene, check out with the Incident Commander
6. After the incident, prepare a report in memo form for the Incident Commander.

The Incident Safety Officer's primary job is to watch for unsafe or hazardous conditions, operations, or acts. Some typically unsafe conditions found on the fireground are those which involve backdrafts, flashovers, structural collapse, (partial or total) and the condition of personnel. More specific indicators of these conditions follow

Backdraft (outside indicators)

1. Heavy, thick, grey, yellowish, smoke.
2. Smoke being forced from cracks or small openings in tightly sealed buildings and then being sucked back in.
3. Window glass or doors hot to the touch with little or no visible fire.
4. Tar-like only substance running down the inside of windows.
5. Swirling smoke within the building.

Flashover Indicators

1. Significant free burning fire in a room.
2. Increasing hear build-up in the area.
3. Heavy, hot, dark smoke banking down inside the building.

Collapse Indicators

1. Little or no progress on a fire after 10 to 12 minutes of operating well placed handlines in ordinary construction buildings.
2. Walls or floors bowing or sagging.
3. Distortion of doors and windows.

4. Beam ends pulling away from supports.
5. Floor joists bowing.
6. Little or no run-off while using heavy streams.
7. New cracks developing and moving.
8. Plaster or brickwork falling.
9. Walls disassembling under stream impact.
10. Shifting of stock off shelving.

Personnel Conditions

1. Overexertion/exhaustive/fatigue
2. Overexposure to weather conditions.
3. Exposure to smoke or hazardous materials
4. Unreported injuries.

Quite often operations themselves can be overlooked as being hazardous. The Incident Safety Officer should assure that the following are provided for:

1. Proper incident management procedures. Is the scene organized through the use of an incident management system?
2. Coordinated advancement of hoselines. (no opposing streams)
3. Adequate lighting during the night and interior operations.
4. Utilities are secured.
5. Dangerous areas are barricaded inside and outside the structure, including holes/excavations, partial collapse areas and weakened areas.
6. Special considerations during the operations:
 - a. Type of construction versus severity and location of fire.
 - b. Two means of access/egress.
 - c. Roof ladder used, if applicable.
 - d. Protection hoseline on roof.
 - e. No unnoticed dead loads. (billboards and air handlers)
 - f. Not many firefighters on the roof.
7. Special considerations during flammable liquid and hazardous materials operations:
 - a. Personnel staged out of hazardous area and away from vapors, uphill and upwind from the incident with a clear escape route.
 - b. Attack is made on fire from uphill and upwind and only if adequate resources are present.
 - c. A back-up (rescue) crew is in position and watching the operation before any entry to the hazardous area is made.
 - d. Unstaffed or truck-mounted equipment is utilized to attack the fire whenever possible.
 - e. Any citizens, personnel or equipment exposed to smoke, vapors or the hazardous material itself are decontaminated.

All officers, especially the Incident Safety Officer, should be wary of unsafe acts. This not only means prohibiting horseplay, but also assuring that there is:

1. Proper use of personal protective clothing and equipment, including SCBA and PASS devices.

2. Proper positioning of apparatus on the scene with regard to safety.
3. Personnel accountability
4. Applicable SOG's are being followed, particularly those which deal with safety.
5. Free-lancing is never allowed.

An area of concern that is often overlooked at emergency incidents is the rehabilitation of personnel. Particularly, this is important during periods of hot or cold weather. A rehab sector should be established, usually under the direction of the Incident Safety Officer, at all incidents that take place during temperature extremes. One member, not necessarily an officer, should be designated as the rehab officer and should report to the Incident Safety Officer.

A proper rehab area for summer weather conditions consists of a shady area, away from both the working scene and the command post, which has significant air movement, fluids and an EMS crew for medical evaluation. Most of the necessary equipment is available at any incident scene: salvage covers held up by pike poles and sash cord (for shade), fans for air movement, (if the breeze is not strong enough) and water coolers.

The rehab process itself has four or five steps and requires close coordination between the Incident Safety Officer, Rehab Officer, EMS Control Officer and the Operations Officer. These steps are:

1. Ensure that personnel go to a rehab area which is away from the hazards and hustle of the incident.
2. Have personnel remove all protective clothing.
3. Have personnel rest by sitting in the shade with air moving over them (from the wind or fans) and have them drink a lot of fluids.
4. Have a designated crew perform basic medical exams.
5. On incidents with a long duration, move those personnel who are sufficiently cooled down into an air-conditioned environment. There they can recuperate faster and be coordinated into a staffing pool for further use at the scene.
6. Cold weather operations may require windbreaks or shelter for personnel at the operating scene. These should be established whenever necessary to prevent cold related injuries.

As mentioned previously, a formal report is usually addressed to the Incident Commander, noting observations and recommendations relating to safety at the incident. If the incident was relatively in

3. REFERENCES:

- None

By Order Of:

Kevin W Guimond

Kevin W. Guimond
Fire Chief