



AMERICAN HEAT
presents

Accountability

500-0190

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I. SYNOPSIS

Firefighter protection is not merely providing adequate, personal protective equipment. Personnel accountability systems provide a critical element of firefighter protection. Knowing who and where a firefighter is, directly correlates to a reduction in firefighter casualties. The intent of this program is to present the concept of on-scene, personnel accountability. Fundamental components and their implementation will be delineated. The accountability system need not be an elaborate process, but it must be a process that everyone understands, follows and is enforced by all levels of the department.

II. OBJECTIVES

TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

Using nationally recognized standards and realizing the dangers of fireground operations, the firefighter shall utilize a personnel accountability system according to department policies and procedures.

ENABLING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall:

- define accountability according to the lesson plan and department policies/procedures.
- describe the benefits and consequences of using (or not using) a personnel accountability.
- cite examples of successful uses of a personnel accountability system.
- identify portions of codes and standards that address personnel accountability.
- describe different types of accountability systems.
- identify equipment necessary to operate a personnel accountability system.
- describe how an accountability system functions.
- develop an accountability system.
- review the accountability system used within their department.

III. INTRODUCTION

Line-of-duty deaths occur for a variety of reasons. Usually, catastrophic, fireground accidents occur as a result of a combination of factors. It is well recognized that implementation of the Incident Management System, together with a credible, personnel accountability system, has a profound impact on incident outcome. After a catastrophic event on the fireground, an Incident Commander can conduct a personnel accountability report and census. If any missing personnel are identified, strategies and tactics can be implemented to effect a rescue.

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There are many personnel accountability systems that can be implemented. The success in implementing all of these systems is can be measured in three parts: procedure, training and enforcement. The system needs to be clearly documented in a standard operating procedure or policy. The procedure/policy needs to be clearly defined in department documentation. The procedure/policy needs to be practiced by ALL members of the department and enforced for 100% compliance.

When the procedure is established, personnel are trained, the process is practiced and enforced, the potential for firefighter casualties is reduced.

IV. KEY POINTS

- Many Federal and NFPA standards address accountability.
- Accountability standards dramatically reduces firefighter casualties.
- Fire departments should have an established accountability policy and procedure in place.
- Firefighters and fire officers should practice the accountability procedure regularly.
- There are numerous approaches to personnel accountability.

V. PRESENTATION

MOTIVATION

Firefighters respond to a vast variety of emergencies. Sometimes experience, training and equipment cannot reduce the severity of the situation and the unforeseen occurs: firefighters trapped, down or missing. When this occurs, the incident commander needs to work quickly to account for all of the personnel working on the fireground.

In addition to this count of personnel, the incident commander working with the safety officer should be able to point the rapid intervention team into the right direction of where the firefighters in distress may be located. When the emergency of trapped firefighters on the fireground occurs, the incident commander is already playing catch-up and an accountability system that has been implemented and enforced may lead to the successful rescue of firefighters.

Accountability systems have been designed to protect firefighters in the event of an emergency on the fireground. There are many different ways to approach the accountability problem. However, in order for the accountability system to function effectively, the fire department needs to have an established program and enforce its use.

PRESENTATION

Objective #1

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall define accountability according to the lesson plan and department policies/procedures.

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NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Ask students to define accountability.

Write keywords and adjectives on a newsprint or marker board.

Create a definition of accountability for your organization.

Display and discuss any local accountability definition.

Personnel Accountability System – A system that readily identifies both the location and function of all members operating at an incident scene. (NFPA 1500 1-4)

Keywords that may be included in your definition:

Census

Identification

Account

Tally

Count

Recognition

Survey

Poll

OBJECTIVE #2

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall describe the benefits and consequences of using (or not using) a personnel accountability system according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Instructor asks: What are some of the benefits/consequences of using an accountability system in our department?

Write responses on newsprint or marker board.

Highlight appropriate answers, discuss inappropriate answers.

Benefits of using an accountability system:

- Assists in maintaining company integrity
 - Allows resources to be assigned as a whole
 - Assigned resources can be quickly evaluated
 - Provides a general location of assigned crews and personnel
 - Allows leadership to rapidly account for personnel
 - Aids in the identification of missing personnel
 - Assists in division of labor
 - Maintains span of control
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Consequences of not using an accountability system:

- Incident commander may inappropriately assign resources
- Freelancing may occur and is not controlled
- Personnel may not be recognized on-scene if an emergency occurs
- Accounting for personnel working on scene may be delayed

With the numerous benefits of using an accountability system and the numerous consequences of NOT using a system, firefighters should work towards using an accountability process on a regular basis, not because the fire department procedures dictate, but rather it is wise to do so.

OBJECTIVE #3

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall cite examples of successful uses of a personnel accountability system according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Divide class into groups. Have each group discuss experiences with personnel accountability systems. Discuss successes, problems and near misses with accountability. Interview some of the recent incident commanders ask them for successful examples.

Some examples of accountability success may include:

- Rapid count of personnel after collapse
- Increased company integrity
- Identification of missing personnel
- General location of company (or missing member) recognized

OBJECTIVE #4

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall identify portions of codes and standards that address personnel accountability according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Instructor should familiarize themselves with the wide array of different standards that effect

NFPA 1001 -Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications (1997 edition)

- Referenced in Section 3-3.4
- Requires Prerequisite Knowledge: Personnel accountability systems...

NFPA 1500 - Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program (1997 Edition)

- Referenced 18 times in standard and appendix
 - Accountability referenced in the introduction
 - Section 6-3 Accountability
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- Requires written procedure
- Allows for local conditions and characteristics
- All member participation
- IC is overall responsible
- Requires IC to know location and function of all members
- Requires company officer to know location and condition of all members
- System used on all incidents
- Requires department to make system effective
- Allows accountability system to be expanded based upon incident size

1561-“Standard on Fire Department Incident Management Systems” (1995 edition)

- Section 2-6 Personnel Accountability
- Incident Management System (IMS) shall provide accountability
- Fire department establish and practice an accountability for all personnel on emergency incidents
- Awareness of the position and functions of all personnel
- Personnel accountability by apparatus
- Personnel accountability by privately owned vehicle
- Means of tracking personnel entering hazardous areas
- Evacuation methods and accountability

Other Accountability references in NFPA include:

600, 921, 1000, 1006, 1021, 1031, 1035, 1404, 1521, 1561, 1582, 1620, 1670, 1710, 1720, 1851, 1982

Federal Standards that address accountability:

- Confined Spaces
- Two in, Two Out
- Respiratory Standard

OBJECTIVE #5

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall describe different types of accountability systems according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Review each type of system. Cite local examples if possible.

MANUAL SYSTEMS

Clipboards

- Use pen and paper on a clipboard
 - Can be used on small incidents
 - May be overwhelmed if the incident escalates
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- Difficult to rapidly account for missing personnel
- Total census of operating personnel takes time
- Subjected to adverse weather conditions

Passport/Tag

- Uses a series of ID cards on hooks or velcro
- ID cards may contain: name, rank, skills, emergency medical information
- Individual cards may be combined with an apparatus tag
- Tag is given to command, safety or staging officer

Company officer

- Maintains visual/audio control of each of the individual team members
- Command and safety contact each officer for PAR's
- System can lead to "company freelancing"
- Difficult to ascertain location

Magnetic Boards

- Each personnel have a magnetic ID tag
- Tags are shuffled across a magnetic control board

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

Technology

- Use of proprietary computerized devices
- Scan magnetic tags or strips
- Some systems can be combined with radio equipment
- Information can be viewed rapidly
- Data can be reviewed after the incident for trends, quality improvement, documentation
- Other systems integrated with PASS alarms
- Can be cost prohibitive
- Devices may fail due to low batteries or damage

Computerized

- Proprietary applications can be developed, installed
- Laptops using common office type of software can be configured
- Can be costly
- Process development can be extensive

OBJECTIVE #6

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall identify equipment necessary to operate a personnel accountability system according to the lesson plan.

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NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Instructor should gather department accountability equipment.

If a department does not have a system, investigate other department's systems and have components available for evaluation and comparison.

Passports/Tags

- Member name
- Rank
- Skills
- Medical Information
- Individual Tags vs. Apparatus Tags

Collection board

- Drawing of Incident
- By sector
- By apparatus
- By department

Accessory Equipment

- PASS Alarms
- Portable radio
- GIS Equipment

OBJECTIVE #7

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall describe how an accountability system functions according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Instructor should review department's standard operating procedure.

If the department does not have an established procedure, investigate neighboring departments or perform an Internet search for policies and procedures.

Identify key components of each policy.

General Steps for a functional accountability system.

1. Each person is issue a tag (or a set of tags).
 2. Personnel check into apparatus before responding (If responding in a privately owned vehicle then tag is given directly to safety officer or incident commander.)
 3. Officer or apparatus operator relays tags to officer or incident commander.
 4. Incident commander reviews tags for completeness.
 5. Safety officer uses tags for personnel accountability reports.
 6. Company retrieves tag before exit scene.
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OBJECTIVE #8

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall review the accountability system used within their department according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Prepare copies of the current standard operating procedure.

If a department does not have a have an established procedure, skip this objective and go to objective #9.

Review the procedure for compliance with NFPA 1500 and 1561.

Answer the follow questions and edit/amend the procedure as necessary.

Does the standard:

- Clearly address the purpose for development.
- State who is affected and who is responsible for compliance.
- Explain the importance of accountability.
- Identify equipment necessary for process.
- Outline the procedure for accountability.
- Describe enforcement procedures.
- Explain extraordinary circumstances: response in a private vehicle, mutual aid, staging, rehab, rapid intervention teams
- Describe use within IMS
- Identify other equipment/procedures that should coexist: PASS, Radio Procedures, RIT
- Define the evaluation and review process

OBJECTIVE #9

Upon completion of the lesson, the firefighter shall develop an accountability system according to the lesson plan.

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR:

Divide class into groups. Assign each group a portion of the standard. Have each group present their portion to the class, discuss and make any necessary adjustments.

Purpose

- The reason for the procedure
- Factors that may have contributed to development

Scope

- Who does the procedure affect?
 - When does the procedure come into practice?
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Equipment

- What are the necessary tools needed to conduct the process?
- Where is the equipment to be located?

Process

- Highlight process from issuing of tags until termination/resignation from the organization
- Include special circumstances
- Address uses of other processes (PAR's, mayday calls, RIT activations)

Enforcement

- Who has the authority to discipline?
- What are the penalties for failure to use system?

APPLICATION

- Review American Heat Video.
- Develop an accountability Standard Operating Procedure or review/amend the current procedure.

EVALUATION

Administer quiz.

VI. GLOSSARY

Incident Management System (IMS) – a management system utilized on the emergency scene that is designed to keep order and follow a sequence of set guidelines.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) – an organized roll call of units assigned to an incident.

Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) – a device that emits a loud alert or warning that the wearer is motionless.

VII. REFERENCE LIST

Firefighter's Handbook, Delmar Publishing, Stamford, CT. 2000.

National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269

NFPA 1001 - Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications (1997 Edition).

NFPA 1006 - Standard for Rescue Technician Professional Qualifications (2000 Edition).

NFPA 1500 - Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program (1997 Edition).

NFPA 1561 - Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System (2000 Edition).

VIII. CHECK SHEETS

No check sheets were developed for this lesson.