

## **Operating Guideline # 207**

### **Accountability**

**Created March 23, 2022**

**Reviewed June 16, 2022**



**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines to track the attendance and location of firefighters and officers while they are performing their duties at an emergency incident (notably while in the “Hot Zone”).

**RATIONALE:** Accountability is a critical element in maintaining the safety of all firefighters working on the fire ground. It is necessary that the fire department have a program in place that is capable of tracking firefighters at all types of incidents. A good accountability program should complement and enhance the incident command system. It should be noted that “freelancing” – that is the *undirected* movement or unapproved independent actions of firefighters is not permitted. “Freelancing” can lead to serious injury or death.

### **GUIDELINE:**

1. All members of the department operating at an incident site must participate in the Accountability System. This includes Chief Officers, support personnel and firefighters who may arrive at incident scenes in their own Personally Operated Vehicles (POV's).
2. All members of the department are issued two “personal accountability tags” which are to be kept with their turnout gear at all times until used.
3. Any member who misplaces one or both of their tags is to contact the Deputy Fire Chief to arrange for temporary tags and replacements as required.
4. All MLFD apparatus shall be assigned a “Crew Accountability Tag” (CAT Card)
5. The CAT shall be located in each apparatus within reach of the front Officers seat.
6. The firefighter in the Officer's seat shall collect one personal accountability tag from each firefighter on the apparatus before arrival on scene of incident. These shall be clipped onto the CAT in the appropriate spot.
7. Personnel arriving at an incident scene in POV's shall “tag-in” with the designated Entry Control Officer by presenting them with one of their personal accountability tags.
8. Accountability boards will be placed on all Pumps.
9. Upon arrival at the incident, the accountability board and the CAT for the first truck will be hung nearest the driver door.

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10. CAT's received/collected from apparatus at an incident will be attached to the accountability board. Personal accountability tags (received from staff who report in POV's shall likewise be attached to the Accountability Board in an appropriate location.
11. Where more than one apparatus responds to an incident, other accountability boards will be used by the AEC to document crew assignments/movement.
12. Any firefighter who intends to enter a hot zone, must first have an IC approved function or job assignment and a partner (the team shall also have a radio amongst any other tools they may require). Each "team" intending to enter the hot zone shall clip their tags together in a cluster and provide them to the Entry Control Officer this will serve as their entry permit for the hot zone.
13. The vehicle operator of the first arriving apparatus at an incident involving a one apparatus response will assume the duties of Entry Control Officer, until and unless another Entry Control Officer is appointed by the Incident Commander.
14. Accountability will be set up outside of the apparatus.
15. For each crew entering the "Hot Zone", the EC Officer shall record the
  - a) radio designation (alias, Attack Team, Alpha Sector)
  - b) assignment,
  - c) crew members assigned (FF numbers),
  - d) time in/ time out/ time on air,
  - e) the targeted location/work area of each crew that enters the "Hot Zone" (generally any point or specific area inside a structure, i.e. – basement, or first floor C/D corner).
16. It is the responsibility of each member of the crew entering the "Hot Zone" to report to Entry Control Officer (ECO) prior to entry and immediately following their exit. Additionally, the crew will keep the ECO and the IC apprised (via radio) of their movements within the "Hot Zone" where these areas cannot be observed by the EC/IC Officers.
17. The AEC Officer will notify the IC of crew "on air" times at 20 minute intervals whilst the crews are operating in the work area.
18. Incident Command will assign the EC function to a **radio equipped** firefighter or officer as soon as possible after arrival on an incident scene. The operator of the first

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arriving apparatus at an incident will assume the duties of AEC until another AEC is appointed by the IC.

19. Accountability will be set up in a visible, safe, exterior location.
20. The Entry Control Officer should don the Blue vest for ease of identification.
21. Once set up, EC should be identified on radio and where it is located.
22. The EC Officer shall record the radio designation (alias), assignment, crew members assigned (FF numbers), time in/time out/time on air, along with the location of each crew that enter the area identified as the "hot zone" (generally any point inside a structure).
23. It is the responsibility of each member of the crew entering the "Hot Zone" to report to ECO prior to entry and immediately following their exit. Additionally, the crew will keep the ECO and IC apprised (via radio) of their movements within the "Hot Zone" where these cannot be observed by the EC/IC Officers.
24. The ECO will notify the IC of crews "on air" times at 20 minute intervals. (i.e. – Command, this is Accountability, Sector 1 has been on air for 40 minutes").
25. At large incidents where one entry control point is not practical, additional boards can be set up. Each board can be identified by letter, with the 1st board being assigned an identification letter 'A' and the 2nd board being assigned an identification letter 'B' and so on (in accordance with the side of the building the entry point is located on).
26. Upon arrival at the scene, members shall don their turnout gear (and SCBA if required) and present their personal accountability tag to the ECO as soon as is practical.
27. Firefighters shall then report to staging for assignment. If no staging area has been set up, report to an officer for assignment.
28. All crews operating in a "Hot Zone" or an IDLH/hazardous atmosphere shall utilize at least a two person buddy system and have a radio in their possession.
29. All P.A.S.S devices must be activated when crews wearing SCBA are operating at an IDLH environment.
30. Crews shall ensure their entry time, work assignment and expected location is logged with ECO and that their second entry control tag has been handed to the ECO. This will

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serve as their “authorization” to enter a “Hot Zone”. The ECO will collect these secondary tags.

31. At any time should a fire fighter become lost or injured, they shall immediately initiate “Mayday” procedures and then activate the P.A.S.S. alarm.
32. Upon exiting the “Hot Zone” or IDLH area, each crew shall ensure their exit time has been logged with ECO and their secondary personal entry control tags have been collected.

### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of all Emergency Operations Division staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

“Accountability” refers to emergency incident accountability, which will identify the fire fighters working on the fire ground.

“Entry Control” is used to identify and track fire fighter and officer movement and their time within the “Hot Zone”.

“Hot Zone” means the area of the incident that constitutes a heightened danger or threat because of situational issues (i.e. – the area inside a structure that is on fire and includes the area within a collapse zone). Also see “Hot Zone” definition within OG1409 – Initial Response Considerations for Hazardous Materials Incidents.

“IDLH” is any area that is immediately dangerous to the life and health of the firefighter.

“NIOSH” is the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (A U.S. based organization). It is responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illnesses and injuries. NIOSH has a firefighter fatality investigation and prevention program in place.

### **REFERENCES:**

- Occupational Health & Safety Act
- Section 21 Guidance Note GN-5-1, Firefighter Accountability and Entry Control
- Muskoka Lakes Fire Department OG 803 Staging
- Muskoka Lakes Fire Department OG 804 Initial Response Structural Fire Attack
- Muskoka Lakes Fire Department OG 817 Mayday
- Muskoka Lakes Fire Department OG 826 Responding in Privately Operated Vehicles
- Muskoka Lakes Fire Department OG 1409 Initial Response Considerations Hazardous Materials Incidents