



Keeping you Knowledgeable, Safe, and in Compliance!

**Ernest A. Emerson  
Fire Protection Resource Library**

## A Volume From the Library

### The Mayday Call

October 24, 2014

The Mayday call is an important weapon in every fire fighter's arsenal. It's one you hope to never need to use, but critical if you find yourself in a dangerous situation.

#### Origin as a Distress Call

"Mayday" originated from the French phrase "m'aidez" meaning "help me." It was established by an English airport radio officer, whose airport received a lot of traffic from Paris, when he was asked to think of a short phrase to indicate a flight emergency. It is traditionally called three times in a row (Mayday, Mayday, Mayday) in order to avoid confusion in hectic situations, like a live fireground. Now it is considered a universal distress call.

#### Mental Preparation

Your department likely has extensive SOPs that cover the scenarios in which a Mayday should be initiated. What may not be covered by

SOPs is the need to have the confidence to call a Mayday when it is necessary. The culture of bravado and camaraderie in the fire service - a benefit in building trusting relationships within a department - may become an obstacle in the acceptance of this life-saving measure. Before entering any dangerous environment, every fire fighter must be mentally prepared to make a Mayday call. After an event, joking about a "bad" Mayday or ridiculing a fellow fire fighter about a Mayday call should be avoided. It takes a special kind of strength to run into a burning building when everyone else is running out, but it takes an equal amount of courage to ask for help when needed. It is every fire fighter's duty to create a tradition of respecting every Mayday call, every time, so that everyone can go home alive and well.



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#### Additional Resources:

- ♦ [Everyone Goes Home](#) <sup>(R)</sup>
- ♦ [Fire Fighter Nation - Mayday Training Done Right](#)
- ♦ [Fire Engineering - Mayday Monday Blog](#)
- ♦ [Firefighter Close Calls - Mayday Drill \(PDF Download\)](#)
- ♦ [Courage to be Safe](#)

### Training Videos

#### CALLING THE MAYDAY (3 copies)

[AV07-2053](#), [AV07-2052](#), [AV06-2031](#)

**Length: 30:00 Format: DVD Author: FETN**  
Why is getting a firefighter to call a Mayday such a problem? This course explores the factors behind this issue: the definition of a Mayday situation, reasons firefighters may delay or fail to make the call, and Mayday decision-making parameters and calling procedure. FETN visits TrainingDivision.com in Texas and the 2005 Firehouse Expo in Baltimore, MD, where students drill Mayday through a series of obstacles and live fire drills. (2006) Note: there is a short news segment at the beginning of the program.

#### CALLING THE MAYDAY: HANDS-ON TRAINING FOR FIREFIGHTERS

(3 copies)

[AV07-2054](#), [AV07-2055](#), [AV06-2040](#)

**Length: 8:00:00 Format: CD Author: USFA**  
This CD contains 'Calling the Mayday: Hands-on Training for Firefighters' (H134), an eight hour course which includes the instructor's manual, job performance requirements, and skill-check forms to ensure that students can successfully perform the psychomotor components of the mayday doctrine. The CD also contains the 'Firefighter Safety: Calling the Mayday' (Q133) course which includes a 40 minute video presentation. The video covers the definition of a Mayday situation, reasons

firefighters may delay or fail to make the call, and Mayday decision-making parameters and calling procedure. (2006)

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

AV10-2417

**Date Acquired: 6/22/2010 Length: 52:00 Format: DVD Author: FETN**

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 course 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, everyone follows, and is enforced by all levels of the department.

#### FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES RESOURCE KIT, VOL. 4

(2 copies)

[AV10-2398](#), [AV10-2399](#)

**Length: 3:20:00 Format: DVD Author: NFFF**  
This 3 disc set (2 DVDs and 1 CDROM) is the latest in the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives Resource Kit series, which began in the summer of 2006. Through this newest kit, the

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation continues its mission in developing effective tools that will work as a catalyst in reducing firefighter line-of-duty deaths across the country. Disc 1: Seatbelts Reloaded, Who's In Your Wallet?, The Mayday, Reading Smoke, Seatbelt Safety Support Videos, RIT, Pre-planning, Situational Awareness. Disc 2: Fit to Fight, FDNY Legends. CDROM: Training Resources such as Powerpoint presentations, reports, handouts, SOPs on topics such as mayday, seatbelt safety, fitness, RIT, high visibility, pre-planning, risk based response, building construction hazards.

#### R.I.T. RAPID INTERVENTION TEAMS (2 copies)

[AV05-1865](#), [AV09-2351](#)

**Length: 28:00 Format: DVD Author: EMERGENCY FILM GROUP**

This program (DVD and Leader's Guide) is designed for fire departments, industrial fire brigades, and other emergency response personnel who may need to organize a strike team to rescue their own. Topics include: purpose of the rapid intervention team; OSHA 2 In/2 Out Rule; training requirements; duties of the RIT officer; maintaining a proactive stance; information gathering; equipment used; deploying the team; search techniques; and rescue techniques. (2001)