

This guideline provides Department procedures to assure the safety of firefighting personnel while operating at the scene of an emergency by establishing procedures for the identification and notification of life hazard zones. In addition, this guideline identifies required isolation measures. The approved method shall include the use of a minimum of three (3) horizontal strands of red and white barrier striped or chevron tape, 3" optimum and 1" minimum width, securely fixed to stationary supports, and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard. This tape may also state, "Do Not Enter." Identification of general hazards, other conditions, and their markings are also included.

It is the responsibility of all members to identify safety hazards and communicate their presence to the incident commander. This policy establishes a standardized system of hazard marking that all personnel can readily identify and interpret. It is vital that all personnel know, understand and respect the proper use of these marking procedures. It is never acceptable to use these marking devices for any other purpose than herein described. In the absence of tape or flagging, a uniformed member(s) shall be posted as a "lookout" to communicate the appropriate safety information.

DEFINITIONS

- Life Hazard: The existence of a process or condition that would likely cause serious injury or death to exposed persons.
- Life Hazard Zones: A system of barriers surrounding designated areas at the emergency incident scene that are intended to stop people from entering a potentially life threatening or hazardous area.
- Life Hazard Lookout: A person in a location where they can safely observe a life hazard, watch resources in the area, and communicate with resources to keep them a safe distance away. The lookout will also isolate and deny entry to life hazard control zones.

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

- This guideline applies to all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency event and is to be communicated to all additional responding resources. Whenever a life hazard is present, or an immediate threat is present at an incident, any person who recognizes the potential life hazard shall immediately contact the Incident Commander (IC) using the emergency traffic/life hazard alert to advise of the situation.

The following items shall be included in the alert:

- Type/Nature
- Specific location
- Resource needs
- Any immediate exposure needs or issues
- Identification of Life Hazard Zones

IDENTIFICATION OF LIFE HAZARDS

Upon notification of a known or suspected life safety hazard, the IC shall request an alert tone from the Communications Center to transmit the location, nature, extent of the hazard, and identify the Life Hazard Zone.

- The Communications Center shall transmit an alert tone and broadcast the message on all radio channels being used on the incident and incident travel frequencies.
- The Communications Center shall perform a roll call of units en route to the incident. Each unit shall acknowledge the hazard by repeating the message back.
- The IC or designee shall conduct a roll call of all units assigned to the incident and document their acknowledgement.
- The Communications Center will include the life hazard information on all subsequent dispatch notifications to additional resources.

LIFE HAZARD ZONES

The person that first recognizes that a life hazard and an immediate threat exists shall establish a life hazard zone. This person is responsible to isolate and deny entry until a life hazard lookout has been assigned. Sufficient resources shall be requested and assigned through the Incident Commander.

A. Establishing a life hazard zone

- Deploy red and white striped or chevron barrier tape in three horizontal strands approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fixed to stationary supports to establish the life hazard zone. Supports shall be capable of sustaining the barrier tape throughout the incident. The tape may state: "Do Not Enter."
- The establishment of the life hazard zone barrier shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation, distance, and protection from the hazard.
- The use of illumination to further identify the life hazard zone (i.e., orange cones with each cone having a flashing strobe light on the ground, glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape, or scene flood lights) is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility.

B. Established life hazard zone

- Red and white striped or chevron barrier tape shall only be used for life hazard identification.
- Ensure the life hazard zone identification measures are adequate to provide visibility to approaching personnel to prevent personnel from entering the area throughout the duration of the incident.
- Maintain the life hazard zone for the duration of the incident or hazard. Approval from the IC is required prior to the removal of the life hazard zone barriers.
- The life hazard zone identification measures are intended to provide a visual cue to all persons. In the absence of tape or flagging, a Life Hazard Lookout should be posted.
- The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall provide the barrier between personnel and the life hazard zone through effective communications and notifications.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Personnel shall not breach, alter, or remove any life hazard zone identification measures until each hazard has been abated and the IC has granted approval.
- All personnel have a personal responsibility to be aware of life hazard.
- Consider appointing an Assistant Safety Officer to oversee the life hazard zone(s) and reassign the Life Hazard Lookout to the Assistant Safety Officer.

NON-LIFE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND MARKING

When a non-life hazard is identified it shall be marked as follows:

- Scene boundaries or areas where active operations are underway and pose a hazard to the general public should be marked with yellow tape (flagging). This tape may be plain yellow or stenciled with “Fire Line – Do Not Cross.” Areas marked in this manner should be considered by all personnel to be hazardous areas and an attitude of safety awareness shall be maintained. Being within this area may require the use of safety clothing, helmets and/or SCBA.
- When a specific hazard is identified such as a trip/fall hazard, low head clearance, uneven footing, snag hazard, etc., it should be marked with yellow/black-striped tape. If feasible, write on the ribbon the nature of the hazard. (i.e., “snags 200 feet up slope.”) Yellow/black-striped markings are intended to communicate information to firefighters and scene personnel, not the public. Full attention must be given to these markings.
- Escape routes and safety zones should be marked with hot pink colored tape. The tape may be plain hot pink in color or may be stenciled with “Escape Route” or “Safety Zone.”