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**C-5 THREE STRIPES YOU'RE OUT (LIFE HAZARD ZONES)**

Procedures for the Identification and Management of Life Hazard Zones.

**INTRODUCTION**

Incident Commanders are responsible for the safety of all incident personnel and may have to take action to protect personnel from life threatening conditions that on-scene fire personnel and other responders do not have the capabilities, tools, or training to immediately mitigate. These actions may include:

- Immediate notification of personnel
- Notification for ongoing or long-term life hazards
- Methods to isolate and clearly identify the life hazard with three strands of barrier tape
- Assignment of Lookouts or Assistant Safety Officers when needed
- Identification methods for remote or large area life hazards

The clearly identifiable method to assure that fire personnel and other responders do not enter Life Hazard Zones includes the use of a minimum of three (3) strands of barrier tape that states "**Do Not Enter**" or "**Do Not Cross,**" \*(note) to prevent entry to the hazardous area. Three horizontal strands of any Fireline tape or flagging tape between one inch and three inches with the words "Do Not Enter" or "Do Not Cross" securely fixed to stationary supports and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard will meet the requirement of identifying a Life Hazard Zone.

**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 incident scene that is intended to **STOP** fire personnel and other responders from entering a potentially life threatening, hazardous area.

**Life Hazard Lookout:** A qualified person in a location where they can safely observe a Life Hazard, monitor resources and personnel in the area, and communicate with resources keeping them a safe distance away. The lookout will also isolate and deny entry to any responders or resources until the life hazard is mitigated and the Incident Commander approves the release of the Life Hazard Zone.

**INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES**

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Whenever a life hazard is present, or an immediate threat to the health and safety of incident personnel is present at an incident, any person who recognized the potential Life Hazard shall immediately contact the Incident Commander using **PRIORITY TRAFFIC** to advise of the situation. Included in the Emergency Traffic notification:

- Type/Nature of the hazardous condition, i.e., downed electrical wires or energized electrical equipment, ruptured gas line, ammunition or unexploded ordnance, hazardous material, imminent building collapse, or large unprotected holes (swimming pools, trenches, etc.)
- Specific location
- Resource needs
- Any immediate exposure needs or issues

The Incident Commander shall request the appropriate resource or agency to respond to the incident to evaluate and mitigate the Life Hazard (i.e. utility company, structural engineer, haz-mat specialist, etc.) and assign a Lookout or Assistant Safety Officer until the Life Hazard Zone(s) is established and to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed.

**Identification of Life Hazard Zones**

a. The standard for identification of a Life Hazard Zone:

1. Deploy barrier tape in the following manner to prevent entry and identify the hazard zone. The optimal tape would be red and white striped or chevron barrier tape that states "**Life Hazard – Do Not Enter**," \* however, existing Fire or Police perimeter tape that includes the words "**Do Not Enter**" or "**Do Not Cross**" \*will meet this standard.
2. The tape shall be configured in three horizontal strands approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fixed to stationary supports to establish the Life Hazard Zone. The Life Hazard Zone barrier shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation, distance and protection from the hazard, and supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.
3. The use of illumination is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility to further identify the Life Hazard Zone. Examples include orange cones with a flashing strobe light on the ground or glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape.

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- b. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) (or Assistant Safety Officer) shall report to the Incident Safety Officer. They shall not be used for or engaged in any other fireground activities. Personnel who assume this function should have sufficient training and authority to carry out the duties as outlined below:
- Provide verbal notification to approaching personnel
  - Isolate and deny entry to all personnel
  - Request additional resources as needed
  - Notify the Incident Safety Officer of any changes in the hazard or zone and make recommendations to mitigate changes
  - Maintain Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures (i.e. barrier tape, supports, additional lighting, etc.)
  - Allow entry into the area only with approval of the Incident Commander.
- c. **The established Life Hazard Zone:**
- 1. The three horizontal strand configuration of red and white striped or chevron barrier tape shall only be used for Life Hazard identification. When incident personnel see the three strand configuration or barrier tape it shall be recognized as the standard for isolating a Life Hazard and incident personnel shall not enter the Life Hazard Zone \*.**
  2. Ensure the Life Hazard Zone measures provide visibility to approaching personnel to prevent entry into the area throughout the duration of the incident.
  3. Maintain the Life Hazard Zone for the duration of the incident or hazard. Approval from the Incident Command is required prior to the removal of the Life Hazard Zone barriers.
  4. The Life Hazard Zone identification measures are intended to provide a visual cue to all incident personnel. Life Hazard Lookout(s) or Assistant Safety Officers shall ensure a physical barrier between personnel and the Life Hazard Zone through effective communications and notifications.
  5. The Incident Commander shall be responsible for ensuring that all incident personnel are notified of the Life Hazard Zone. This may be accomplished

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through any approved method such as face-to-face, emergency traffic radio messages or the Incident Action Plan.

- d. Remote Locations: In cases where the extent of the hazard zone is so large that it is not practical to completely isolate the area, such as on large incidents in remote locations, the following will be the minimum standard for these situations:
1. The Incident Commander must approve the use of these minimum standards for each Life Hazard.
    - The Incident Commander shall assign a Life Hazard Lookout at appropriate access points to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed.
    - Three horizontal stripes of red and white Life Hazard tape or barrier tape (as described above) will be affixed to two vertical uprights at appropriate locations along the access route to the Life Hazard area. A description of the hazard, location of the hazard, and distance from the Life Hazard indicator tape to the hazard shall be attached at each location.
  2. All personnel working in the area or Division shall be notified of the Life Hazard immediately. Incident personnel may be notified through routine briefings, emergency radio traffic messages, the Incident Action Plan, and the Incident Map.
  3. The location(s) of the Life Hazard(s) and Placard(s) shall be marked on the Incident Map using standardized symbols. The symbol to mark the Life Hazard Zone on the Incident Map is a red octagon with three white horizontal lines with a description of the hazard noted underneath.
    - Personnel shall not breach, alter, or remove any Life Hazard Zone identification measures until the hazard has been abated and approval granted by the Incident Commander.
    - All personnel have a personal responsibility to be aware of Life Hazards and to make proper notification when they are encountered at an incident.
    - Remember the slogan: **THREE STRIPES, YOU'RE OUT!**

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Adapted from Incident Command System Position Manual, Firefighter Incident Safety and Accountability Guidelines, ICS-910, Firescope, July 1, 2008

\* In the event that the proper type of marking tape is not available, incident personnel shall use whatever tape is available on a temporary basis. Once the correct type of marking tape is available, it shall replace the temporary material as soon as possible.