



# California State Fire Training

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**Date: October 10, 2011**

**To: Statewide Training Education Advisory Committee (STEAC)**

**From: Ramiro Rodriguez, DSFM III Spec. SFT - Southern Region Training Specialist**

**Subject/Agenda Action Item:** FIRESCOPE Safety Specialist Group – Emergency Traffic Guidelines, Issue Paper “Mayday” vs. “Emergency Traffic”

**Recommended Actions:** State Fire Training staff, FIRESCOPE Safety Specialist Group, and Firefighter Survival Cadre meet with Cal EMA. Report back to STEAC regarding status.

## **Background Information:**

FIRESCOPE has led the nation’s fire service since 1972 in the development of programs, products and implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS has been adopted throughout the country and has brought common language and standardized operations for responders to “all hazard” types of incidents. ICS has been adopted as the foundation for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) for all agencies that could be called on to respond and work together at a major incident.

ICS is based on common operational procedures, but more importantly, common language to assure efficient emergency operations and responder safety. ICS has recognized the term “Emergency Traffic” and clear text to declare and manage firefighter emergencies. FIRESCOPE has taken the position that the term “MAYDAY” is not to be used in a region that may have a wildland or nautical interface, as the term is reserved for air and water born resources. More importantly, the term does nothing to describe the nature of the emergency, and MAYDAY could truly be considered a “code word”.

Management of Firefighter Emergencies as addressed in NFPA 1500 Standard, Chapter 8, and Emergency Services Incident Management System, NFPA 1561 Standard, Chapter 6, where it states that the term “Emergency Traffic” shall be used to clear the radio channel and clear text shall be used to manage the rescue of the lost, trapped, down or missing firefighter. Only in the Appendix, or supporting material, is Mayday addressed, where in bold print it is stated that Mayday should not be used for fireground communications in that it could cause confusion with the term used for aeronautical and nautical emergencies.

The use of Mayday does not provide a clear message for the firefighter emergency.



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## **Analysis/Summary of Issue:**

Review of the Firefighter Survival, RIC Operations and Command and Control of the RIC Deployment curriculums are consistent with FIRESCOPE ICS 910, Firefighter Incident Safety and Accountability Guidelines, NFPA 1500 and NFPA 1561. Continue to promote and teach the clear text term, "emergency traffic" as the fire service hailer for radio silence, which precedes a description of the actual emergency.