

Rapid Intervention Crew Tactics Course Development Position Paper

Background:

In the mid-1990's federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations changed requiring emergency workers to apply certain practices for respiratory protection in atmospheres that are Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH). One of those changes was to require a rescue crew to be available on-site prior to any worker (firefighter) entering an IDLH environment (structure fire). Commonly referred to as the "two-in two-out" rule, this required significant change in how fire departments were operating on the fireground.

In 1998, the Northern California Training Officers Association (NorCal), a section of the California Fire Chiefs Association, hosted workshops and began research into best practices to meet the safety needs of the California fire service. NorCal completed the project by submitting a new course to State Fire Training called "Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) Tactics." The course was approved in December 2000.

NorCal considered the course to be a prototype and assumed the course would be updated in future years. During the nine years this course has been taught experience has shown the need to expand the course to include more information and methods.

In January 2008, the State Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) approved a request from an Ad Hoc committee to update and expand the current RIC curriculum. The committee, comprised of technical experts in RIC training from all over California, met in March and June. After much discussion the committee members agreed that it would be in the best interest of the California Fire Service to rewrite the RIC curriculum into three separate but complementary courses.

Proposal:

The RIC Curriculum Committee proposes that the current curriculum be expanded into three separate courses rather than one 40-hour course.

- A 16-hour Firefighter Self-Survival Techniques course would be developed at the Firefighter I level, allowing for easy incorporation into the most State Fire Marshal approved academies. Academy candidates, probationary firefighters, paid-call and volunteers would learn proper self-survival techniques during the course.

- A 24-hour Rapid Intervention Crew Operations course would be developed at the Firefighter II level. Probationary firefighters as well as seasoned full-time, paid-call and volunteers would learn proper techniques in firefighter rescue techniques.
- An 8-hour Command and Control of the Mayday course would be developed at the Company Officer and Chief Officer levels. This course would focus on the techniques needed to properly manage a firefighter rescue.

Each course would be developed to stand alone or as a part of a comprehensive training program based on departmental and/or student needs.

Reason:

The body of knowledge regarding rescue of down firefighters in structures has increased over the past ten years. We have learned that rapid intervention is not rapid. We have learned there are many ways to anticipate and avoid these situations. We have learned we need to do a better job of managing these events to make the outcome successful.

When discussing the curriculum we have found the need to include more information and skills to provide a comprehensive course. We are aware of the need for time management related to certification requirements. We are constantly looking at the course material to see where items are already being covered and where we can eliminate subjects to keep courses within acceptable time frames.

We felt the best approach was to divide the subjects into three courses that would allow for the most flexibility based on student needs as well as their department needs. A recruit firefighter may need self survival techniques to allow them to be more comfortable with SCBA use and limitations. A more experienced firefighter may need to focus on RIC tactics to learn and develop teamwork related to rescue. Officers may want to learn how to manage a situation where they need to save one of their own. This three-course approach allows us to include most of the body of knowledge and skills we feel need to be included while providing the academies and departments the flexibility to choose what best fits the student needs.

Recommendation(s):

The RIC Curriculum Committee requests that STEAC approve the development of three separate courses including:

- Firefighter Self-Survival Techniques – Firefighter I Level 16 hours
- Rapid Intervention Crew Operations – Firefighter II Level 24 hours
- Command and Control of the Mayday – Company Officer 8 hours

and Chief Officer Level

Consider a separate effort by some members of this committee to develop a one-day course on Building Construction for the Fire Service.