

# **Interboro Mutual Aid Group**

## **Operations Guideline**

**Subject: Evacuation Signal**

**Effective Date: January 1, 2010**

**Review Date: July 2014**

**Purpose: This guideline is to aid and assist fire departments in complying with the regulatory requirements of NJAC 5:75-2.7 and to ensure that when the risk posed to firefighters is so great that an incident commander or his or her designee must order an evacuation from a hazardous area, a uniform procedure and accompanying audible signal recognizable by all personnel operating on an incident scene has been established, adopted and utilized by all fire departments.**

**Scope: This guideline shall be utilized at all emergency incident.**

**Responsibility: This guideline shall apply to all members and all other emergency responders at the scene of a significant emergency regardless of their unit, agency or affiliation.**

### **Procedure:**

(a) The evacuation signal shall consist of repeated short blasts of an air horn for a period no longer than 10 seconds, followed by 10 seconds of silence. This sequence of repeated short air horn blasts for 10 seconds followed by a 10-second period of silence shall be done three times; the total evacuation signal, including periods of silence, shall last 50 seconds.

1. To reduce the possibility of missing radio messages while the evacuation signal is sounding, incident commanders shall designate apparatus away from the command post as the signal sounder.
2. For fire departments operating at multi-discipline scenes, the evacuation signal shall be as designated in the incident action plan.

(b) Whenever an emergency evacuation signal is being sounded, there shall also be a radio message transmitted either from the incident scene or from the designated fire department dispatch center announcing the evacuation order. To the extent possible, the radio message should be coordinated with the sounding of the evacuation signal to insure the radio messages are heard.

(c) The emergency evacuation signal shall be activated whenever it becomes necessary for firefighters and related agency personnel to immediately evacuate a building or an area in which emergency operations are taking place due to conditions posing an immediate and probable hazard to life. The evacuation order shall only be conducted upon the order of the incident commander or his or her designee.

(d) Upon being alerted to an emergency evacuation signal, all personnel shall evacuate the hazardous area to an area of obvious safety. As all personnel evacuate, they shall warn others in the event they have not been alerted by the signal. During an emergency evacuation, it may be necessary to abandon equipment in order to evacuate the hazardous area quickly and safely. Firefighters should retain any equipment needed to insure

personal firefighter safety during the evacuation, that is, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.

(e) Once personnel have exited the hazardous area, they shall report to their company officer or assemble in a predetermined area where officers shall take roll of those present. Personnel accountability tags (PATs) shall be retrieved by firefighters at the time of roll call. A personnel accountability report (PAR) shall be communicated to the incident commander when the roll call is complete. If it is determined that personnel are missing, resources shall be immediately focused on the goal of rescuing or locating those persons missing.

(f) All Rapid Intervention Crews (RIC's) on scene shall establish themselves in a state of readiness to respond immediately if needed.

(g) Re-entry to an evacuated hazardous area for normal firefighting-rescue operations shall be permitted only upon the order of the incident commander or his or her designee.

(h) Fire departments shall assure that all emergency response personnel receive training adequate to ensure proficiency in the procedures as set forth in this section.