

Firefighter Assist and Search Team (FAST) Policy

Purpose

The main purpose of the Firefighter Assist Search Team (FAST) is to provide immediate assistance to any firefighter(s) in imminent danger as well as rescue a missing, lost, or trapped firefighter.

Response

When dispatched as the FAST unit, the dispatched department(s) shall respond with the apparatus they have designated as their FAST apparatus. This vehicle shall carry the necessary equipment listed under the equipment portion of this policy.

All personnel responding on the team shall be qualified FAST members, meeting all of the requirements listed under the Team Member Qualification section.

The minimum staffing for FAST Teams will be:

1. House Fires: One (1) FAST team will be dispatched with a minimum staffing of Four (4) Interior FAST members, One (1) being Team Leader and Three (3) Team Members.
 - a. Optimum staffing Six (6) with One (1) Group Leader, One (1) Team Leader and Four (4) Team Members.
2. Building Fires: Two (2) fast teams will be dispatch with a minimum staffing of four (4) each for a total of Eight (8) Interior FAST members. One (1) Group Leader, One Team Leader and Seven (7) Team Members.
 - a. Optimum staffing Ten (10) with Interior FAST members. One (1) Group Leader, One (1) Team Leader, and Eight (8) Team Members.

Not having the minimum number of members at the time of response should not prevent the unit from responding with the members it has. However, the Team must initiate the response and advise Broome County Communications they are short staffed. This will be relayed to the incident commander who can request another team or may fill the team with other firefighters whom are FAST Qualified already present at the scene.

When the team responds they shall give the unit number and the number of Interior FAST and Support FAST (i.e. Rescue 56 responding, 8 Interior FAST, 1 Support FAST).

All FAST teams will be registered with Broome County Emergency Service, Office of the Fire Coordinator for inclusion in the CAD system.

The FAST team will be called upon, at the request of the host department. If the IC does not request a FAST team, then the Broome Communication dispatch shall prompt the IC to inquire if they need a FAST Team.

Duties

1. The main purpose of the FAST team is to identify hazards on the fire scene and to immediately assist a firefighter in imminent danger and rescue a missing, lost, or trapped firefighter.
2. Upon arrival at the scene, the FAST team and/or Group Leader shall report to the command post (the Group Leader shall remain at the command post as part of the IC structure if staffing permits). The Team Leader shall be identified at the command post with a vest (refer to identification section for vest requirements). They shall inquire the number of personnel in operation, their location in the structure, and whether there is an offensive or defensive operation ongoing. The FAST Team or Group Leader shall leave a set of ID tags for the Incident Commander.
3. Upon arrival at the scene, the FAST members shall set up a staging area for their personnel and equipment as designated by the Incident Commander (IC). This position shall be picked very carefully so as not to interfere with any firefighter operations. Every Team Member shall take note of construction techniques, all entrances and exits from the structure (doors and windows), all portable and aerial ladder locations, area of involvement and fire conditions, specific hazards, location of personnel, and the locations of any EMS crews on standby at the scene.
4. If more than one FAST Team is called to the scene, the first Team to arrive will establish the FAST Group Leader. When the second Team arrives there should be a face to face report and to establish a Team Leader. The Team Leader shall assign two Team Members to conduct a walk around (360 degree survey) of the structure and report back to the whole team every 15 minutes. While making this walk around, if the team notices any hazards that impede a firefighter from abandoning the building they shall remove the hazard immediately, without entering the building. If able, Team Members should talk with firefighters coming out of the structure and try to obtain a detailed layout of the interior of the structure.
5. FAST teams should be monitoring the fire ground frequency.
6. **The team shall also set ladders at the rescue angle, to the second floor, on at least two sides of the building. The team shall stand by and be ready at a moment's notice, but shall not go into operation until commanded to by the IC.**

FAST Team Members will report any unsafe acts, or potential hazards to the Group/Team Leader who will report them to the IC.

Deployment

Deployment of the FAST team shall commence when a “MAYDAY” is transmitted or at the request of the Incident Commander. The FAST team shall stay as one group throughout the operation; a “Team Leader” will lead the team, and act as the interior liaison to the Incident Commander or FAST Group Leader.

At the completion of the rescue or upon exiting the building the team shall report a PAR to the Group Leader or Incident Commander.

Communication

The FAST Team shall utilized for all non-emergency communications;

Low Band Fire Operations: Broome County Channel #5 (33.86 mhz)

Western Broome Fire Operations, Western Broome Channel #9 (Spec Ops)

When a MAYDAY is transmitted the Incident Commander or Broome County Communications shall clear the air for “Emergency Radio Traffic Only”. The unit(s) calling the Mayday shall give their LUNAR information. Broome County Communications shall activate the “Alert 2” tone and broadcast all Mayday information. At the completion of the announcement the dispatcher will assign a secondary fire ground operations channel for the fire ground/suppression operations to continue on. Incident Command, FAST Team Leader, and/or FAST Team Group Leader and the person(s) calling the Mayday will be the **ONLY** people on the MAYDAY channel. All other units operating on the fire scene will change their radios to the newly assigned fire ground operations channel.

Broome County Communications shall, upon FAST team deployment, prompt the Incident Commander and inquire if they request another FAST Team to respond. Additionally, Broome County Communications shall dispatch;

1. An additional ALS ambulance to the scene.
2. Fire Coordinators and Fire Investigation.

If a FAST Team is deployed to an area in-which they have no capability to talk/listen to fire ground operations, they shall make every attempt to acquire a portable radio capable of communicating on the fire ground channels.

For more information of fire-ground radio communications, particularly the radio procedures during a Mayday call refer to the BC Communications policy.

Team Member Qualifications

Interior FAST members shall have the following qualifications:

- Be an active member and have a minimum 3 years of service in a Fire Department
- Be a certified green tag in one’s fire department for a minimum of 2 years.(In

- accordance with the OSHA standard for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus)
- Be recommended by his/her department chief
- Have the following training classes:
 1. Firefighter 1 (or equivalent)
 2. SCBA Confidence (or Smoke Divers)
 3. Firefighter Safety and Survival
 4. FAST

The chief shall complete the authorization form, taking into consideration the applicants firefighting experience. Forms can be obtained from the Broome County Office of Emergency Services.

Support FAST Members Shall Have:

- Firefighter 1 (or equivalent)
- Be an active member and have a minimum 3 years of service in a Fire Department
- Is a Yellow Tag in his/her department and has been a yellow tag for a minimum of two (2) years.
- Be recommended by his/her department chief

The chief shall complete the authorization form, taking into consideration the applicants firefighting experience. Forms can be obtained from the Broome County Office of Emergency Services.

FAST Team Leader or Group Leader:

- All FAST Team Leaders or Group Leaders must have Fire Officer 1 completed no later than January 1st, 2018.

Equivalent to Firefighter 1:

- Fire Essentials, Initial Fire Attack, and Haz-Mat First Responder Operations
- or
- Basic Firefighter, Intermediate Firefighter, and Haz-Mat First Responder Operations

All Team Members (Support and Interior)

Optional training should include:

Firefighters on the FAST team need to understand the importance and the need for additional training to maintain their skills. Any course of study that deals in structural collapse, interior fire attack, air pack usage, rope work or NYS Courses on confined space awareness or operations, rescue operations I and II or Incident Safety Officer.

Minimal Mandatory Training

Each fire department or regional team, shall mandate that each team member shall participate in two trainings annually. The fire department or regional team shall submit to the County Fire Coordinator by December 31st a copy of the training record indicating each member who attended the trainings. Members failing to meet the training requirement shall be removed from the department or regional FAST team member roster.

Identification:

- Arm bands shall be worn to identify all FAST Team Members working on the incident scene. Red arm bands with Yellow letters will identify the Interior FAST members, and Blue arm bands with Yellow letters will identify the Support FAST members. All arm bands will be worn on each firefighter's left upper arm.

Dress Code:

Each FAST member on an incident scene shall be ready for deployment at a moment's notice.

- Will be in Full PPE (Bunker Pants, Bunker Coat, Helmet, and SCBA w/ Mask)
Members do not need to be on air while standing by.
- Arm Band on the left upper arm.

Equipment

Each FAST member shall be equipment with the following:

- Full PPE
- SCBA and Spare Bottle
- Portable Radio
- Flashlight

Each FAST team shall be equipment with:

- 2- Halogens
- 2- Axes (Flat headed)
- 1- RIT Pack or SCBA and Spare Bottle
- Cut Off Saw (Metal and Wood Blades)
- Chain Saw
- Pike Pole (Long and Short)
- Search Ropes
- Rescue Ropes
- Pulleys and Carabineers
- Stokes Basket
- Hand Tools (Wires Cutters, Wrenches, etc.)
- Thermal Imaging Camera(s)
- Each team should acquire an extension, roof, and attic ladder at the scene if they do not carry them on their FAST apparatus.

Optional equipment includes:

- Cribbing
- Airbags
- Smoke Ejectors
- Hydraulic Extrication tools
- Port a Power Tools
- AC or DC Reciprocating Saw
- AC or DC Circular Saw
- Door Chocks

Terms/ Definitions:

The following is a set of common terms (that are open for discussion) to be used county wide to clarify radio traffic.

FAST- Firefighter Assist and Search Team

Emergency Traffic- A term used to terminate ALL non-essential radio traffic on the fire ground channel for emergency radio communications. Essential communications shall be Mayday distress calls, Imminent Hazard Notifications and Emergency Firefighter Evacuation Orders.

Evacuate- The order to proactive remove civilians from a structure.

Rescue- Term used to define an immediate and calculated removal of endangered civilians whose location is known and verified by firefighter.

Search and Rescue- Term used to define a search of a structure when there is compelling evidence and/or convincing report of endangered civilian occupants, exact locations unknown.

Primary Search – Term used to define a search when no compelling evidence of a civilian life safety problem exists “unknown if occupied”

Withdrawal- Term used to define an orderly proactive removal of firefighter (with their tools and equipment) so they do not become a life safety problem.

Abandon- Term used to define an immediate removal of firefighter because they are in immediate danger. Firefighter must exit quickly and by whatever means possible. Firefighter may be on their own to survive, only survival tools and equipment retained.

Intervention- Term used to define and immediate and calculated removal of firefighters whose location is known and verified by the firefighter. This work shall be performed by the FAST.

MAYDAY- This term is used when the caller needs to transmit a priority message about a trapped or injured Firefighter. This term is recognized as a distress signal.

PAR (Personnel Accountability Report) - A report of all personnel on the incident scene.

LUNAR- Critical information needed by a person calling a MAYDAY. Location, Unit assigned to, Name, Assignment/Air supply, Resources needed for rescue

Appendix/ Forms

INTERIOR TEAM MEMBER AUTHORIZATION FORM

This form will certify Firefighter:

(Firefighters Full Name Here)

1. Is an active member of his/her department and has a minimum of three (3) years of service in a Fire Department.
2. Is a Certified Green Tag in his/her department and has been a green tag for a minimum of two (2) years. (Green tag status shall be in accordance with the OSHA standard for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus).
3. Is recommended by said chief below. (The chief should take into consideration the number of structure fire that the firefighter has been in before making his/her recommendation).
4. Has meet the following requirements
 - Firefighter 1 (or equivalent) Date:
 - SCBA Confidence (or Smoke Divers) Date:
 - Firefighter Safety and Survival Date:
 - FAST Date:
 - Green Tags issued Date:

Department Chief (print):

Signature:

Department: _____

Date:

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Approved: _____

Date: _____

SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER AUTHORIZATION FORM

This form will certify that Firefighter:

(Firefighters Full Name Here)

1. Is an active member of his/her department and has a minimum of three (3) years of service in a Fire Department.
2. Is a Yellow Tag in his/her department and has been a yellow tag for a minimum of two (2) years. It is highly preferred that all support members be certified Green Tags (Green tag status shall be in accordance with the OSHA standard for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus).
3. Is recommended by said chief below. (The chief should take into consideration the number of structure fire that the firefighter has been in before making his/her recommendation).
4. Has meet the following requirements(must have Firefighter 1, or equivalent)

- Firefighter 1 (or equivalent)

Date:

- SCBA Confidence (or Smoke Divers)

Date:

- Firefighter Safety and Survival

Date:

- FAST

Date:

Department Chief (print):

Signature:

Department:

Date:

OES USE ONLY

Approved: _____

Date: _____