



Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS

Standard Operating Procedure

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Standard Operating Procedure: 4.1.4	Effective Date: 9/22/2025
Subject: Tactical Withdrawal & Emergency Evacuation	Section: Fire/Rescue Operations
Authorized: Deputy Chief Paul Supko	Revision Date: N/A

Applicability: ☒ Volunteer ☒ Career

I. PURPOSE

During the course of an incident, conditions within a structure may deteriorate to a point that precludes fire department personnel from operating in a specific area or the structure in its entirety. For example, this may be due to an area in danger of isolated collapse, advancing fire conditions, or temporary loss of water supply. When this situation occurs, the Incident Commander (IC) may consider issuing a tactical withdrawal order or an emergency evacuation.

II. DEFINITIONS

None.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Tactical Withdrawal

A tactical withdrawal is the relocation of units' hose lines and equipment, operating in an area deemed untenable and relocating to a specific area deemed safe to continue operations.

1. The IC or company officer may direct a tactical withdrawal by:
 - a. Requesting a command tone from the ECC
 - b. Communicating with all units in the affected area.
 - c. Providing clear and concise tactical directions as to where units should relocate.
 - d. Confirming that all units have withdrawn from the affected area and are PAR.
 - e. Notifying Carroll ECC of the tactical withdraw.

B. Emergency Evacuation

Should it become necessary to immediately evacuate operating personnel from an unsafe structure, or area the following evacuation procedure shall be initiated:

1. Immediately notify the IC of the unsafe condition or situation.
2. The IC shall immediately direct all units to evacuate the structure on the fireground tactical channel.
 - a. If a unit or Incident Commander calls for a structure to be evacuated, ECC will immediately sound the Evacuation Tone and state, "*Carroll to all units operating on Box Alarm XX-XX, EVACUATE THE STRUCTURE IMMEDIATELY, EVACUATE THE STRUCTURE IMMEDIATELY.*"
 - i. This will also be broadcast over A1-Main.

Any company operating without a hose line will cease work and immediately exit the structure.

3. **Any company operating a hoseline must be thoughtful and deliberate in their exit, making sure they are not removing a hoseline that is protecting a path of egress for any members operating between that hoseline and the fire.**
 - a. **This should in no way be interpreted as a justifiable reason to not comply with the directive to withdraw but provides a consideration that must be coordinated with the IC.**
4. Simultaneously, while the evacuation signal is being transmitted, all staffed apparatus operating in the immediate area shall sound the air horns continuously for a minimum of 15 seconds.
5. All officers will immediately notify the IC when their company is outside the building and prepare to report the same when the IC initiates the PAR check.
6. The IC shall initiate a unit-by-unit PAR check and record each unit's position and status.
 - a. *Reference SOP 4.1.2 Communications, for PAR Check process.*
7. The IC shall initiate a MAYDAY for any person who is not accounted for.
 - a. *Reference SOP 4.1.5 MAYDAY for MAYDAY process.*
8. Personnel shall not re-enter the structure or evacuated area until given the all clear signal by the IC.
 - a. The IC must size up and reassess the structure and conditions.
 - b. Upon re-entry, the IC must declare a mode of, operation which shall include any safety considerations or instructions.

IV. RESCISION

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Tactical withdrawal and Emergency Evacuation or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

V. RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / DOCUMENTS

Policy 4.1.1 Incident Management System

Policy 4.1.2 Communications

Policy 4.1.5 MAYDAY

Policy 4.1.6 Accountability

Policy 4.2.1 Structural Firefighting

VI. ATTACHMENTS

Emergency & Tactical Withdrawal Worksheet