

# San Mateo County Fire Service POLICIES AND STANDARDS MANUAL

Title: Hazard Flagging Tape & Notifications

Policy No. 2005-01

Adopted 08/08/05

Revised 11/24/09

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide a standard procedure for flagging, identification and notification of hazards at incident scenes in San Mateo County.

**Policy:** It shall be the policy of San Mateo County Fire Agencies to follow these guidelines for hazard flagging, identification and notification at incidents. There are three major types of hazard flagging to be utilized at incidents in San Mateo County.

**Background:** Emergency incident sites contain numerous health and life hazards for citizens as well as for emergency responders. Use of hazard flagging at an incident is to protect citizens from harm as well as to protect emergency responders from hazardous conditions and life threatening situations.

The standard tape shall be 3" wide plastic tape. One inch tape may be used on Wildland incidents for marking hazards.

Notification to resources responding and or at scene of an incident will ensure that all personnel are aware of these hazards.

**References:** CAL FIRE Policy 4306.5, PROCEDURE NO. 002: Life/Safety Alert (8100), NWCG Fireline Handbook

FIRESCOPE, Procedures for the identification and management of life hazards zones. "Three stripes You're Out."

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## **Procedure:**

### 1. YELLOW FIRE LINE TAPE:

***Yellow with black lettering:*** This tape is to be used to barricade areas around an incident to keep the public away from an incident, an incident command post, or a hazardous situation that is not life threatening. A hazard that may be life threatening to the public should be flagged with fire line caution tape and have an emergency responder from fire, law enforcement, or public works assigned to monitor the area and prevent people from entering.

### 2. RED FIRE LINE / HAZ MAT TAPE:

***Red with black lettering:*** This tape is to be used at incidents to secure areas and prevent emergency personnel from entering unless instructed to do so by the Incident Commander or his/her designee, i.e.: Operations Chief, RIC Supervisor, Haz Mat Team Leader, etc.

These areas will require the proper level of PPE (Level A, B, or C) which is being utilized at the incident. No one shall enter these areas without proper PPE, level to be determined by Incident Command. All crews entering these areas shall be accounted for through the Incident Command System.

### 3. LIFE HAZARD TAPE:

The clearly identifiable method to assure that emergency personnel and other responders do not enter Life Hazard Zones is the use of a minimum of three (3) horizontal strands of 3" Red and White barrier tape that states "**Do Not Enter**" or "**Do Not Cross**," to prevent entry to the hazardous area. If this tape is not available, three horizontal strands of any fireline tape or flagging tape between 1 inch and 3 inches with the words "Do Not Enter," "Do not Cross," or 1" yellow and black life hazard tape securely fixed to stationary supports, and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard, will meet the intent of this guideline in the absence of the standard.

Tape shall be configured in **three horizontal strands** approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fixed to stationary supports to establish the LIFE HAZARD ZONE.

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- a. The establishment of the LIFE HAZARD ZONE barrier shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation, distance, and protection from the hazard. All life hazards should be flagged a minimum of 25' radius from the hazard if possible.
- b. Supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.

The use of illumination is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility to further identify the LIFE HAZARD ZONE. Examples include orange cones with flashing strobe light on the ground, or glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape.

In remote areas, such as on a Wildland fire, 1" yellow and black life hazard tape may be used in place of the 3" tape. The three horizontal strand standard is recommended, but NOT required.

**Battalion Vehicles, engines & trucks shall carry a minimum of two rolls of 1" tape and one roll of the 3" life hazard tape.**

4. **Under no circumstances will any fire personnel cross the line identified by the Life Hazard Tape.**

If the hazard is eliminated, such as PG&E securing an electrical hazard, then the Life Hazard Tape may be removed.

Any time the Life Hazard Tape is used it must be immediately reported to the Incident Commander and Incident Safety Officer who may then advise personnel operating at the incident, such as a radio announcement identifying the hazard and it's location on the incident ground.

Upon receiving this information, the Incident Command Team may determine that a safety officer should be assigned to the hazard or hazard areas to ensure all personnel are kept away from the hazard.

All life hazards shall be flagged a minimum of 25' radius from the hazard.

**LIFE HAZARD TAPE SHALL ONLY BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE.**

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## 5. NOTIFICATION OF LIFE HAZARDS:

All resources assigned to an incident shall be notified of any life Hazard.

Any life safety hazard known to Public Safety Communications (PSC) prior to dispatch shall be included in the initial broadcast (dispatch) and all subsequent alarm level broadcasts. See 1998-02 for Dispatch Delivery.

The Dispatcher shall immediately inform the IC or responding BC if no IC is established of any life safety hazard PSC becomes aware of after the initial dispatch.

It shall be the responsibility of the IC or responding BC to gain the acknowledgment of all responding resources via a roll call. Responding resources will confirm they copied the life hazard information provided upon dispatch.

All resources shall acknowledge by re-stating the hazard.

e.g. *"Engine 34 copies, powerlines down"*

Once all resources have acknowledged the hazard, the IC or BC enroute shall advise PSC that all resources have acknowledged the hazard. The Dispatcher shall document the information provided by the IC or BC in CAD.

If a hazard appears on the incident after the initial dispatch, the IC shall be responsible for ensuring that all resources assigned to the incident are aware of the hazard. The IC shall advise PSC of the hazard so that the hazard information will be included on subsequent broadcasts.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

- A. LIFE HAZARD: The existence of a situation or condition that would likely cause serious injury or death to exposed persons
- B. LIFE HAZARD ZONES: An area within the incident perimeter that has been identified as life threatening and hazardous to emergency responders and isolated through the use of barriers that clearly identify an area as hazardous and prevents access by incident personnel to prevent injury or death.

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- C. LIFE HAZARD LOOKOUT: A person assigned to safely observe a Life Hazard Zone, monitor resources and personnel in the area and communicate with resources keeping them a safe distance away. The Life Hazard Lookout will isolate and deny entry to any responders or resources until the life hazard is mitigated and the Incident Commander approves the release of the Life Hazard Zone (collapse, etc.)

