



PROCEDURES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF LIFE HAZARD ZONES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guideline is to establish procedures for the identification and management of immediately life threatening conditions at the scene of an incident that on-scene emergency personnel and other responders do not have the capabilities, tools, or training to immediately mitigate. This guideline includes:

- Specific procedures for immediate notification of personnel
- Notification for on-going or long term life hazards
- Methods to isolate and clearly identify the life hazard with three strands of barrier tape
- Establishment of an easily recognizable method to prevent on-scene emergency personnel and other responders from entering into a Life Hazard Zone.
- Considerations for the assignment of Life Hazard Lookouts.
- Methods for remote or large area life hazards

The clearly identifiable method to assure that emergency personnel and other responders do not enter Life Hazard Zones includes the use of a minimum of three (3) horizontal strands of barrier tape that states **“Do Not Enter”** or **“Do Not Cross”**, to prevent entry to the hazardous area. The optimal tape configuration would be a 3 inch wide red and white barrier striped or chevron tape. However, three horizontal strands of any Fireline tape or flagging tape between 1 inch and 3 inches with the words **“Do Not Enter”** or **“Do Not Cross”**, securely fixed to stationary supports, and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard, will meet the intent of this guideline.



**Three Strands of “Fire Line, Do Not Cross”
tape used to isolate a life hazard due to structure
compromise. (Santa Clara County Fire photo.)**



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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 prevent access by incident personnel to prevent injury or death.
- 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.

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

This guideline applies to all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency incident, and is to be communicated to all additional responding resources. Whenever a life hazard is identified and an immediate threat to the health and safety of incident personnel is present, the person who recognizes the potential life hazard shall immediately contact the Incident Commander (IC) using **EMERGENCY TRAFFIC** to advise of the situation.

The following items shall be included in the Emergency Traffic notification:

- Type/Nature of the hazardous condition (i.e. downed electrical wires, imminent building collapse, etc.)
- Specific location
- Resource needs
- Any immediate exposure needs or issues

Once notified, the Incident Commander shall ensure that incident personnel are made aware of the life hazard and request the appropriate resource or agency to respond to the incident to evaluate and mitigate the life hazard (i.e., Utility Company, Structural Engineer, etc.)

Identification of Life Hazard Zones

Procedure

The following procedure shall be initiated following the identification of a life hazard to ensure that all personnel are made aware and acknowledge the receipt of the information. The Incident Commander shall assign a life hazard lookout to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed.



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A. The Standard for Identification of a LIFE HAZARD ZONE

1. Deploy barrier tape in the following manner to prevent entry and identify the hazard zone. The optimal tape would be red and white striped or chevron barrier tape that states “**Life Hazard - Do Not Enter**”, however, existing Fireline or Police perimeter tape that includes the words “Do Not Enter” or “Do Not Cross” will meet this standard.
2. The critical element in this guideline is that the 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.
 - a. The establishment of the LIFE HAZARD ZONE barrier shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation, distance, and protection from the hazard.
 - b. Supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.
3. The use of illumination is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility to further identify the LIFE HAZARD ZONE. Examples include orange cones with a flashing strobe light on the ground, or glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape.

B. The Established LIFE HAZARD ZONE

1. THREE HORIZONTAL STRANDS OF RED AND WHITE STRIPED OR CHEVRON BARRIER TAPE SHALL **ONLY** BE USED FOR LIFE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION. WHEN INCIDENT PERSONNEL SEE THE THREE STRAND CONFIGURATION OF BARRIER TAPE IT SHALL BE RECOGNIZED AS THE STANDARD FOR ISOLATING A LIFE HAZARD, AND INCIDENT PERSONNEL SHALL NOT ENTER THE LIFE HAZARD ZONE.
2. Ensure the LIFE HAZARD ZONE identification measures are adequate to provide visibility to approaching personnel to prevent personnel from entering the area throughout the duration of the incident.
3. Maintain the LIFE HAZARD ZONE for the duration of the incident or hazard. Approval from the I.C. is required prior to the removal of the Life Hazard Zone barriers.
4. The LIFE HAZARD ZONE identification measures are intended to provide a visual cue to all incident personnel. Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall be considered to ensure a physical barrier between personnel and the LIFE HAZARD ZONE through effective communications and notifications.



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5. The Incident Commander shall be responsible for ensuring that all incident personnel are notified of the Life Hazard Zone. This may be accomplished through any approved method such as face-to-face, emergency traffic radio messages or the Incident Action Plan.

C. Remote Locations

In cases where the extent of the hazard zone is so large that is not practical to completely isolate the area, such as on large incidents or remote locations, the following will be the minimum standard for these situations:

1. The Incident Commander must approve the use of these minimum standards for each Life Hazard.

The Incident Commander shall assign a life hazard lookout at appropriate access points to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed

Three horizontal stripes of red and white Life Hazard tape or barrier tape (as described above) will be affixed to 2 vertical uprights at appropriate locations along the route of travel adjacent to the Life Hazard. A description of the hazard, location of the hazard, and distance from the Life Hazard indicator tape to the hazard shall be attached at each location.

2. All Personnel working in the area or Division shall be notified of the Life Hazard immediately. Incident personnel may be notified through Emergency Traffic Radio Messages, routine briefings, Incident Action Plan and the Incident Map.
3. The location(s) of the Life Hazard(s) and Placard(s) shall be marked on the Incident Map using standardized symbols. The symbol to mark the Life Hazard Zone on the Incident map is a solid red octagon (Stop Sign) with three white horizontal lines inside the octagon. Below the octagon, a description of the hazard will be noted.



WIRES



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SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO LIFE HAZARD ZONES

- Personnel shall not breach, alter, or remove any LIFE HAZARD ZONE identification measures until the hazard has been abated and the Incident Commander has granted approval.
- All personnel have a personal responsibility to be aware of LIFE HAZARDS and make proper notifications when they are encountered at an incident.
- The Incident Commander or Incident Safety Officer should consider appointing an Assistant Safety Officer to oversee the LIFE HAZARD ZONE(S) and directly supervise Life Hazard Lookouts.

Remember the slogan: THREE STRIPES, YOU'RE OUT!