

Santa Barbara City Fire Department - Standard Operating Procedures Safety Operations	Code: S-V-3
Life Hazard Zones	
Chpt: V Fire ground Safety	Revised: 3/5/12 Pages: 5

I. PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this policy 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.

B. To maximize safety of firefighting personnel while operating at the scene of an emergency, and provide a means for the identification and notification of Life Hazards, and required isolation measures.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. **Life Hazard:** The existence of a process or conditions that would likely cause serious injury or death to exposed persons.

B. **Life Hazard Control Zones:** A system of barriers surrounding designated areas at the incident scene that is intended to **STOP** fire personnel and other responders from entering a potentially Life Threatening, Hazardous area.

C. **Life Hazard Lookout:** A qualified 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 IC approves the release of the Life Hazard Zone. IC should consider establishing a safety officer for this incident.

III. POLICY:

A. This policy applies to all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency incident, and is to be communicated to all additional responding resources.

B. Conditions found on the emergency scene requiring isolation in a Life Hazard Control Zone may involve, but are not limited to:

1. Downed power lines
2. Energized electrical equipment
3. Collapse zones
4. Large unprotected holes (swimming pools, trenches, etc.)

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5. Ruptured gas line
6. Ammunition
7. Hazardous Materials

C. Firefighting activities may progress if they can be accomplished after adequate notification and isolation actions have been completed. All objective and tactical considerations must take the Firefighter Life Hazard Control Zones into account.

D. The approved method for identifying a Life Hazard Zone shall include the use of three (3) horizontal strands of yellow “Fire Line” barrier tape securely fixed to stationary supports, and in sufficient locations to isolate the hazard. Following the policy established below meets the suggested Firescope 420-1 policy for incidents involving firefighter Life Hazards.

IV. PROCEDURE:

A. Identification and Notification of Life Hazards. The following procedure shall be initiated for each Life Hazard identified on an incident to ensure all personnel are made aware and acknowledge receipt of the information.

1. 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 IC using “Emergency Traffic” to advise of the situation. Tell the IC you have a “Life Hazard Alert” and include the following information:
 - a) Type/Nature
 - b) Specific location
 - c) Resource needs
 - d) Actions taken
2. Once notified, the IC 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.)
 - a) Upon notification of a known or suspected life safety hazard, the Incident Commander shall transmit the location, nature, extent of the hazard, and identify the Life Hazard Control Zone.
 - b) Incident Commander shall perform a roll call of units assigned to the incident. Each unit shall acknowledge the hazard by repeating the message back. The IC, Operations or Safety Officer shall conduct the roll

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call. Note must be made of any units **not** acknowledging the message. Incident Commander shall notify Dispatch when roll call is complete.

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

3. If Dispatch is notified of hazard by Reporting Party or prior to arrival of first unit, Dispatch shall notify responding units of hazard and conduct a roll call of units responding to the incident. Each unit shall acknowledge the hazard by repeating the message back.

a) Dispatch is responsible for all other incident resources (incoming or yet to arrive) and shall notify the IC when these units have **ALL** received the notification.

b) Dispatch will include the Life Hazard information on all subsequent dispatch notifications to additional resources.

B. Establishing a Life Hazard Control Zone

1. The person that first recognizes that a Life Hazard is present and an immediate threat shall establish a Life Hazard Control Zone. That person also has initial responsibility to isolate and deny entry until a Life Hazard Lookout has been assigned.

2. Deploy yellow "Fire Line" barrier tape in the following manner to prevent entry and identify the hazard zone.

a) Deploy yellow "Fire Line" barrier tape in three horizontal strands approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fixed to stationary supports to establish the LIFE HAZARD ZONE.

b) The establishment of the Life Hazard Control Zone shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation and distance from the hazard, and to provide complete protection away from the hazard.

c) Supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.

3. The use of illumination to further identify the Life Hazard Control Zone (i.e., orange cones with each cone having a **flashing strobe light** on the ground, or red glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape) is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility. **Each engine has been issued a flashing strobe as well as all the shift BC vehicles**

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- a) Only red glow sticks will be used to indicate firefighter hazards. No other color glow stick is to be used.
4. Maintain the Life Hazard Control Zone throughout the duration of the incident unless the Life Hazard is abated. Removal of the Life Hazard Control Zone shall be by approval of the Incident Commander ONLY.
5. The Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures are intended to provide a visual cue to all persons. 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.
6. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall provide the physical barrier between personnel and the Life Hazard Control Zone through effective communication and notification.

C. Remote Locations

1. In cases where the extent of the hazard zone is so large that it 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:
 - a) The IC must approve the use of these minimum standards for each Life Hazard.
 - b) The IC shall assign a Life Hazard lookout at appropriate access point to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed.
 - c) Three horizontal stripes of yellow "Fire line" barrier tape 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 tope to the hazard shall be attached at each location.
 - d) All Personnel working in the area or Division shall be notified of the Life Hazard immediately. Incident personnel may be notified through emergency traffic, routine briefings, IAP's and the incident map.
 - e) The location(s) of the Life Hazard(s) and Life Hazard marker(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 red octagon with three white horizontal lines with a description of the hazard noted underneath. (see diagram below)

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V. LIFE HAZARD LOOKOUTS

- A. When determined necessary by the I.C., a Life Hazard lookout will be established
- B. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall report to the Incident Commander or Incident Safety Officer when assigned.
- C. The Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall not be used for, or engaged in, any other fireground activities. Personnel who assume this function should have sufficient training and authority to carry out the duties as outlined. Life Hazard Lookout(s) shall be exclusively responsible for the following responsibilities:
 - 1. Provide verbal notification to approaching personnel.
 - 2. Isolate and deny entry to all personnel.
 - 3. Request additional resources, as needed, through the Incident Safety Officer.
 - 4. Notify the Incident Safety Officer of any changes in the hazard or Life Hazard Control Zone and make recommendations to mitigate changes.
 - 5. Maintain Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures (i.e. barrier tape, supports, additional lighting, etc.).
 - 6. Allow entry into the area only with the approval of the Incident Commander.

VI. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Personnel shall not breach, alter, or remove Life Hazard Control Zone identification measures until the hazard has been abated and at the direction of the Incident Commander. When the Life Hazard Control Zone is no longer needed the IC should have the identification measures removed.
- B. Personnel on scene have a personal responsibility to be aware of Life Hazard Control Zones as well as the safety of others.
- C. Consider appointing a Safety Officer to oversee the Life Hazard Control Zone and reassign the Life Hazard Lookout to the Safety Officer.
- D. Remember the slogan: **THREE STRIPES AND YOU'RE OUT!**