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OPERATIONS MANUAL

STANDARD INSTRUCTION 14 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

SECTION 02 PERSONAL ESCAPE SYSTEM

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I. PURPOSE

To provide personnel with guidelines for the use of the Personal Escape System (PES) for emergency egress (bailout). In addition, this will provide instructions for post-PES deployment procedures and the care/maintenance of PES equipment.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel.

III. AUTHORITY

The fire chief authorizes the information within this policy.

IV. POLICY

A. Personal Escape System (PES) Use

1. The PES is an SDFD approved National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) compliant rope system that provides rapid emergency egress from above ground areas.
2. The PES is only to be used for emergency egress in situations when conditions such as the following exist:
 - a. Firefighter is cutoff from other means of egress (stairs, fire escapes, ladders, etc.) and conditions warrant an emergency bailout via PES.
 - b. Firefighter is low on air and unable to locate a normal means of egress.
 - c. Firefighter is low on air and to exit the structure would require the firefighter to go back into the IDLH.
 - d. Fire conditions are deteriorating with no sign of control and emergency egress is necessary.

There are many other conditions where an emergency bailout should be used. It is ultimately the decision of the firefighter in distress to bailout when they feel death or injury could occur if not used to escape.

B. Wearing of PES

1. The PES is part of the structural personal protective equipment (PPE) turnout ensemble. It consists of the following department issued equipment:
 - a. Class 1 harness belt
 - b. Bag with 50' of rope
 - c. Descending device
 - d. Hook
 - e. Self-locking carabineer
 - f. Pigtail belt to bag system attachment
2. When wearing structural PPE the PES shall be properly hooked into the harness belt and in the ready-to-deploy mode at all times.

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3. The PES shall only be disconnected from the belt/harness and the PES system bag removed from the structural PPE ensemble, when the firefighter is properly relieved. The PES system bag must be turned over to the oncoming personnel.
4. The entire PES system is subject to existing structural PPE policies and is not to be altered or modified in any way. The PES will be accounted for and surveyed for general serviceability by the respective battalion chief during annual PPE inspections.
5. The PES is to be worn anytime turnouts are donned.

C. PES Training

1. Initial training: All personnel who are eligible to work in operations (including straight day personnel) will receive initial PES certification training
2. Annual training: All personnel who are eligible to work in operations (including straight day personnel) must show proficiency annually and complete refresher training to remain eligible to work in operations.
3. Battalion chiefs may arrange for PES refresher training. All practice PES deployments will be performed utilizing training PES gear under the supervision of a PES instructor.
4. A department approved belay system must be used during any above ground PES training.
5. Frontline PES bags shall not be used for practice deployments in any manner where the systems will be loaded with the weight of the user.

D. PES Deployment Procedures

1. Follow the SDFD mayday policy and call a mayday.
2. Isolate space and control flow path by closing doors between the escaping firefighter(s) and fire.
3. Firefighter opens or clears window of glass. If possible provide chafe protection for escape rope.
4. Firefighter selects an anchor (remote or sill), deploys the PES and bails out.

E. Post PES Deployment Procedures

1. Once firefighter(s) are safe from the bailout, immediately notify the incident commander.

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2. Upon return to quarters, all of the deployed PES equipment needs to be inspected for damage.
3. The deployed PES is out of service until the rope officer inspects the rope. Contact Logistics or the battalion chief for a replacement PES.

F. Care and Maintenance of PES

1. Personnel will inspect the system quarterly, after exposure to heat (interior fire attack operations), or any other suspected damage. Battalion chiefs will inspect the systems during PPE inspection.
2. All of the PES components can be washed.
3. Use lukewarm water only to wash the PES components. Do not use detergent or extractor chemicals.
4. Always dry out any wet or damp PES component before repacking.
5. Air dry the rope out of direct sunlight as UV rays will damage the rope.